



Interreg
Hungary – Slovakia



Co-funded by
the European Union

Guide for Applicants

Call for proposal – HUSK-2501

Interreg Hungary – Slovakia Programme

One-round, close-ended competitive call for proposals

#interreghusk

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Set of documents

The documents relating to this Call for proposals can be downloaded individually or as a single compressed file from the programme's website. The complete set of documents consists of the following:

Ruling documents

- **Guide for Applicants - Call for proposal – HUSK-2501 (EN/HU/SK)**
- Assessment grids (EN)
- Methodology and criteria for selecting operations (EN)
- Subsidy contract template (EN)
- Partnership agreement template (EN)

Templates of annexes

- Annex I – Partner's declaration of honour (EN/HU/SK)
- Annex III – Project concept (HU/SK)
- Annex V – Climate resilience declaration (EN)
- Annex VI – De minimis declaration (HU/SK)
- Annex VII – Technical-documentation.zip (Folder structure)
- Annex VIII – Test of undertaking in difficulty (HU/SK)

Guides and manuals

- Eligibility of expenditures (EN/HU/SK)
- Guide for the Resilience Assessment of projects funded in Interreg VI-A Hungary-Slovakia Programme (EN)
- Guidelines on project promotion (EN/HU/SK)
- User manual to the Interreg+ Application Module (EN)

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Introduction

Interreg Hungary-Slovakia Programme

The Interreg VI-A Hungary-Slovakia Programme is implemented under the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 of the European Union (EU) as part of the Cohesion Policy. The programme aims to relieve administrative and legal barriers at the Hungarian Slovak border, to build up mutual trust between the citizens of Hungary and Slovakia and to make the border area environmentally friendly, more competitive and inclusive. Objectives of the Programme are described in the Programme document approved by the European Commission on 3 November 2022.

Subject of the Call for Proposals

The Joint Secretariat (JS) of the Programme on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary as Managing Authority (MA) and the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic as National Authority (NA) launches a one-round, close-ended competitive call for proposals (Call) under the following Actions:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Action 1.1.2 | Short supply chains |
| Action 2.1.1 | Social innovations for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups |
| Action 2.2.1 | Inclusive and quality education |
| Action 2.3.1 | Family and community-based health care services |
| Action 2.3.2 | Cross-border development of healthcare institutions |

All applications must be submitted in English via the Interreg+ Monitoring System by 15 December 2025, 15:00. The applications are evaluated according to various quality criteria based on scores and qualitative assessment. As a result, applications with the highest scores will be selected for implementation within the financial framework of the present Call. The decision on approval is expected in July 2026. The duration for the implementation of the selected projects may not exceed 24 months.

Partnership

All projects must be implemented in a partnership consisting of at least one Hungarian and one Slovak partner. Partners who do not receive direct financial support can act as partners without budget. The number of partners within the project is not limited. For each project, the applicants select a Lead applicant from among themselves, who takes responsibility for the successful realisation of the entire project. If the project has more than one Slovak partner, the Slovak applicants choose a Lead cross-border applicant from among themselves, who concludes a contract with the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic for the provision of national co-financing.

Cross-border character

All projects must have evincible cross-border character and create potential for a long-term cooperation between the partners. If the project partners face **similar challenges** or pursue similar objectives, the cross-border character can be achieved through the knowledge and experience transfer and by sharing of good practices and innovative solutions between them. When partners share **common challenges** or have common goals, the cross-border character can be achieved by joint efforts to develop common,

cross-border solutions. Partners shall cooperate in the development and implementation of Interreg projects, as well as in the staffing or financing, or both.

Form of finance

The programme offers a non-repayable grant composed of an EU contribution and national co-financing for the selected projects. Except for simplified cost categories, partners' expenditures can be reimbursed after the costs have been incurred and paid.

Project durability

Partners involving investment in infrastructure or productive investment must sustain the project results at least five years after the 31 December of the year in which the final payment was made by the programme, or at least three years in the case of SMEs.

Modifications of the Call

The Managing Authority, in agreement with the National Authority, may modify the conditions of this Call at any time before the deadline for submission. The modifications shall not affect the eligibility and evaluation criteria. If the conditions of the call are modified, the Managing Authority may extend the deadline for the submission of applications. If applicants have submitted the application before the publication of an amendment, they must not suffer any disadvantages as a result of the amended conditions. The Managing Authority, in agreement with the National Authority, may decide at any time to cancel a Call that has already been published. Information about changes or cancellation will be posted on the programme website and on programme's Facebook profile. Any losses due to cancellation are not compensable.

Financial framework of the Call

| Specific objective | Actions | ERDF allocation | Minimum and maximum ERDF contribution per project |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Priority Axis 1 - Green cooperations | | 7 476 635,00 € | |
| SO 1.1 - Promoting transition to a circular and resource efficient economy | Action 1.1.2 - Short supply chains | 7 476 635,00 € | 150.000 € - 500.000 € |
| Priority Axis 2 - Social cooperations | | 14 926 271,00 € | |
| SO 2.1 - Enhancing access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure | Action 2.1.1 - Social innovations for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups | 3 271 028,00 € | 150.000 € - 400.000 € |
| SO 2.2 - Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education | Action 2.2.1 - Inclusive and quality education | 3 271 028,00 € | 150.000 € - 400.000 € |
| SO 2.3 - Ensuring equal access to health care | Action 2.3.1 - Family and community-based health care services | 3 271 028,00 € | 150.000 € - 400.000 € |
| | Action 2.3.2 - Cross-border development of healthcare institutions | 5 113 187,00 € | 300.000 € - 600.000 € |
| Total | | 22 402 906,00 € | |

The Monitoring Committee reserves the right to change the ERDF allocation for the above actions during the selection procedure.

Action 1.1.2 - Short supply chains

1.1.2 – Short supply chains

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Priority axis: | Green cooperations |
| 1.1 Specific objective: | Promoting transition to a circular and resource efficient economy |
| 1.1.2 Action: | Short supply chains |

Objectives

The action contributes to the creation of short supply chains involving farmers, food producers, craftsmen and consumers with close geographical and social links and a shared commitment to local economic development in the cross-border region of Hungary and Slovakia. The proposed actions contribute to increasing opportunities and knowledge about short supply chains (SSC), especially with regard to today's nutritional needs, food awareness and modern food production. The overall objectives of the Action 1.1.2 are the followings:

- development of cross-border collaborations to improve the position of smallholder farmers and food producers in value chains
- increasing the retention of money in the local economy and agrotourism by supporting local producers and suppliers, services and local businesses
- producing more environmentally friendly products by reducing food miles and pollution
- building knowledge about the link between consumption and its impact on the environment through mindful consumption
- support pilot projects of SSC actors which represent a small-scale, time-limited trial designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation.

The development of SSCs must be based on close cross-border geographical and social co-operation between food producers, traditional food processors, food distributors, advisors, communities, researchers and citizens in order to

- restore autonomy in the co-creation of local markets for locally produced food in the specified target area
- transform the food system into one that is fairer, safer and more respectful of life-sustaining processes
- introduce agricultural practises and food production methods that place nature at the centre of their operations
- promote the diversity of food production methods and models promoting safe, high-quality, hygienic small-scale food production
- facilitate and promote the exchange of knowledge, know-how and expertise between actors at the different stages of the value chain through a variety of means
- build on the added value of different generations resulting from the use of quality ingredients, traditional production methods and local expertise

- promote food sovereignty, empower communities to define their own food systems, and prioritise health, ecology and local control over the supply chain.

Measure 1.1.2/A - Collaboration to develop innovative short supply chains

The objective of measure 1.1.2/A is to develop sustainable and predictable markets close to home for different producers and to promote cooperation between producers, distributors, retailers, consumers and other supporting intermediaries in order to optimise the efficiency of the supply chain. Among others these objectives can be achieved by

- promoting and establishing short, efficient routes to market that connect small-scale food producers and craftsmen to the consumer
- establishing new SSC networks, shared IT solutions, online shops, online/offline warehouses and transshipment facilities
- providing advice, investment support for small food producers and craft producers who want to specialise in new products and innovative distribution channels
- providing marketing support for small food producers and craft producers who want to specialise in new products and innovative distribution channels
- investment in local processing and agritourism facilities to enable farmers to sell their products to the local and wider domestic market, and the establishment of open farm networks to combine active ecotourism with agritourism
- encouraging local authorities to organise farmers' markets and farm shops and to support the marketing and presentation of local food products
- boosting the local economy by involving local restaurants, hotels and food producers in the implementation of the regional "farm to fork" strategy.

Measure 1.1.2/B - Local food based public catering

The objective of measure 1.1.2/B is to bring together local food producers with actors that have a direct influence on public catering systems and to promote the operation of public catering services based on local food. Among others, these objectives can be achieved by

- strengthening the position of farmers in cross-border agri-food supply chains
- establishing mediation mechanisms between farmers and public canteens and achieving a higher level of trust between actors
- the introduction of local food in public canteens and the introduction of nutrition education in schools
- introducing a dynamic reduction of food waste through awareness programmes in schools.

Definitions

Measure 1.1.2/A - Collaboration to develop innovative short supply chains

- **Short supply chain (SSC)**

A short supply chain means a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers, processors and consumers¹.

The main forms of SSC are on farm sale, online sale, farmers' shop, farmers' market, direct sales to institutions, consumer groups (community gardens, consumer supported agriculture) and cooperatives, vending machines, Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafes (HoReCa) and food hubs.

The main actors of the SSC might be established by producers (farmers, craftsmen) and by their groups or organisations, food processors, intermediary organisation such as distributors, retailers, consumers and other supporting intermediaries such as municipalities, non-profit organizations.

- **Intermediary organization**

Intermediary is an entity that

- 1) buys the product from the producer for the purpose of selling it or
- 2) assists in the delivery of the product (organises the delivery points, animates the SSC groups) but does not buy and sell the product or
- 3) who operates online platforms, logistics points, warehouses, packaging and any other post-harvest plants, delivery platforms, services for producers.

Measure 1.1.2/B - Local food based public catering

- **Public catering**

An organized form of communal provision ensuring regular meals, provided in educational institutions, vocational training institutions, state- and municipally-funded summer camps, inpatient care institutions, within the framework of social care, child welfare basic care, and child protection specialized care, for persons of various ages and health conditions – usually based on advance orders – during a specific period of the day and for a defined duration.

- **Short food supply chain (SFSC)**

Short supply chain established solely for food products.

- **Local food hubs**

Local food hubs are community-based organizations that connect local farmers, food producers, and consumers in a specific geographic area. Essentially, they are platforms or spaces

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005

where locally grown or produced food can be distributed, marketed, and sold to local consumers, restaurants, and other businesses. These hubs help build a more resilient and sustainable local food system by promoting local agriculture and reducing reliance on large-scale, industrial food distribution systems.

- **Intermediary organization**

The entity that takes ownership of the product and then resells it (engaged in commercial activity), possibly after processing, as its own product, to the cooking kitchen. Intermediary is a food business operator, a market-organising organisation, a recognized Producer Organisation (PO) or a recognized Producer Group (PG).

Supported activities

Measure 1.1.2/A - Collaboration to develop short supply chains

1. Independent activities

Independent activities can be carried out by each partner in the partnership. In the case of measure 1.1.2/A, the following independent activities are supported:

- creating, maintaining or developing territorial food systems, hubs and structures and short supply chains by
 - conducting market research, target group analysis and analysis of local food systems and handicraft products on a specific geographical area
 - organising workshops, seminars, exchanges to jointly develop action plans based on common needs and local realities
 - employing SSC mentors/facilitators to organise study visits, networking workshops, conferences, P2P learning and maintain SSC collaborations
 - recruiting and improving the knowledge and skills of local food and/or handicraft producers and processors required for business development and product development
- development of a joint branding, labelling, certification and quality system to promote the SSC farmers, food producers and local products using available marketing channels (e.g. obtaining national or European certifications, creating new brands, organising open farm days, self-picking days, purchase of marketing and sales tools etc.)
- creation of networks of open farms, development of supporting material (guidelines, workshops, capacity building, marketing material for joint actions) for local actors to offer agritourism services
- establishing or integration of existing digital solutions and platforms for SSC producers and craftsmen (e.g.: online platform, online shopping facilities, QR code-based solutions, organisation of pick-up points, etc.)
- implementation of activities related for SSC producers and craftsmen to e-commerce and online, card and vending machine sales (e.g. setting up a webshop, purchase of info-communication devices).

2. Non-independent activities

Non-independent activities can be carried out by any partner who is directly involved into the realization of at least one independent activity. In the case of measure 1.1.2/A, the following non-independent activities are supported:

- improving the infrastructural background of the public and economic actors responsible for the processing and marketing of food in the areas of sales, storage, refrigeration and packaging:
 - renting, construction, extension or renovation of storage, refrigeration and packaging buildings, premises
 - purchase and installation of cleaning, sorting and packaging equipment
 - purchase and installation of refrigeration facilities
 - purchase of storage facilities, vending machines or containers for operations
- purchase of clean and energy efficient vehicles² or vehicle superstructure of N1 category for
 - transport (if necessary with cooling system) in order to set up transport logistics for SSC deliveries or/and
 - retail in order to support the direct sales of SSC deliveries to mitigate the food desert effect in rural areas and urban segregates
- organising events to sell and showcase local products (e.g. farmers' markets, food festivals, gastro-events, etc.) and to raise awareness of the citizens in particular the youth towards the territorial food system, SSC and local emblematic products/terroir products

Measure 1.1.2/B – Local food based public catering

1. Independent activities

Independent activities can be carried out by each partner in the partnership. In the case of measure 1.1.2/B, the following independent activities are supported:

- support for the formation and activities of SFSC associations and producers' organisations (PO) to facilitate the operation of local food supply
- capacity building, knowledge sharing (conferences, co-design workshops, training, webinars, guidelines etc.) to improve the knowledge level of public catering workers and SFSC stakeholders on local food based public catering
- improving process to reduce food waste and promoting reusable and recyclable packaging materials

² In line with the 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 and Directive 2009/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles

- certification of catering services in short food supply chains
- building cross-border partnerships with public catering services in short food supply chains
- support the creation or expansion of local food hubs.

2. Non-independent activities

Non-independent activities can be carried out by any partner who is directly involved into the realization of at least one independent activity. In the case of measure 1.1.2/B, the following non-independent activities are supported:

- improving the infrastructural background of public catering organisations:
 - construction, remodelling, extension, renovation of a building/premises
 - purchase and installation of refrigeration or storage facilities
 - purchase of clean and energy efficient vehicles³ or vehicle superstructure of N1 category for transport in order to set up transport logistics for SSC deliveries
- improving the infrastructural background of the public and economic actors responsible for the processing and marketing of food in the areas of sales, storage, refrigeration and packaging:
 - renting, construction, extension or renovation of storage, refrigeration and packaging buildings, premises
 - purchase and installation of cleaning, sorting and packaging equipment
 - purchase and installation of refrigeration facilities
 - purchase of storage facilities, vending machines or containers for operations
- purchase of clean and energy efficient vehicles⁴ or vehicle superstructure of N1 category for
 - transport (if necessary with cooling system) in order to set up transport logistics for SSC deliveries or/and
 - retail in order to support the direct sales of SSC deliveries to mitigate the food desert effect in rural areas and urban segregates

³ In line with the 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 and Directive 2009/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles

⁴ In line with the 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 and Directive 2009/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles

- organising events to sell and showcase local products (e.g. farmers' markets, food festivals, gastro-events, etc.) and to raise awareness of the citizens in particular the youth towards the territorial food system, SSC and local emblematic products/terroir products

Main target groups

Action 1.1.2 aims to achieve its objectives by involving the following types of stakeholders:

1. Primary target group

- Small and medium sized farmers
- Young farmers and or new entrants
- Producer organizations (POs) and Producer groups (PGs)
- Small and medium sized food processors (including small-scale producers)

2. Secondary target group

- Support entities for Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) or buying groups
- Social- and care farms employing disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- Non-governmental organizations providing services for SSC
- Non-profit organizations and social enterprises or cooperatives
- Local action groups (LAGs)
- Municipalities, micro-regions
- Public authorities, public institutions
- Churches

Potential applicants

Potential applicants of the Action 1.1.2 are the following type of organisations:

- Private entrepreneurs
- Small and medium enterprises
- Non-governmental organisations
- Non-profit organisations
- Semi-budgetary organisations⁵
- Local and territorial governments
- Public authorities, public institutions

⁵ Príspevková organizácia

- European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
- Churches

Specific terms and conditions

- All partners must be directly or indirectly involved in SSC or public catering committed to use local food.
- During project implementation, partners must actively realise the cross-border exchange of knowledge and experience with short supply chains.
- All projects must demonstrate environmental, social and economic sustainability in line with the EU Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan.
- All projects must involve local communities in the implementation of the project through educational activities or public awareness campaigns.
- In the case of measure “B”, only one actor in the short food supply chain may participate as an intermediary – namely the organisation that takes possession of the product and then resells it (as part of a commercial activity) – possibly after processing as its own product to the kitchen.

Compliance with EU and national policies

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding EU policies, with special emphasis on the following agriculture, food system and rural development policies:

- The Farm to Fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system
- The common agricultural policy (CAP) - (Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008)
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - (Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005)

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding Hungarian national legislations, with special emphasis on the following national regulations concerning Short Supply Chains:

- Act No. XLVI of 2008 on food chain safety and its supervision
- Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus
- 60/2023. (XI. 15.) AM Decree on the hygiene requirements for small-scale, local, and marginal food production and marketing
- 676/2020. (XII. 28.) Government Decree on the specific rules of procedures applicable to public procurement related to public catering

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding Slovak national legislations, with special emphasis on the following national regulations concerning Short Supply Chains:

- Codex Alimentarius of the Slovak Republic
- 152/1995 Law on foodstuffs
- 178/1998 Law on conditions of sale of products and provision of services at marketplaces
- 533/2007 Decree of Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic on details of requirements for catering establishments
- 163/2014 Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic on conditions for the use of voluntary labelling of agricultural products and foodstuffs for the purpose of consumer information

Key evaluation aspects

During the quality assessment of project proposals, assessors will pay special attention to the presence of the following aspects:

- **Cross-border and cross-sector character**

The project proposal is better if the partners can create cross-border supply chains based on a cross-border geographical and social connection between the SSC actors.

The project proposal is better if it involves more farmers who can benefit from the new distribution channels and if the SSC is created or developed on the basis of a cross-sector partnership between different actors, which are the most common type of SSC actors.

- **Innovative character, piloting, scalability and transferability**

The project proposal is better if it develops and implements new ideas, methods, products or services that transform creative ideas into practical and effective solutions. Innovations shall be introduced due pilot projects which are small-scale, time-limited trials designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation.

Pilot project is scalable if the capacity of a system, network, service, or organization can handle growth (increase in workload, users, data, or demand) without sacrificing performance or efficiency. The project proposal is better if the innovation can be efficiently adopted by other stakeholders without harming performance, quality or cost-effectiveness.

- **Strategic thinking and long-term sustainability**

The project proposal is better if it utilises the strategic aspect and provides a clear description of the actual local needs of the SSC actors, shows the possibility of short value chains based on a territorial retail and agricultural system and identifies the potential SSC actors.

The project proposal is better if it offers solid financial and human resources guarantees for the sustainability of the project results with the involvement of local communities.

Indicators

Output indicators

All projects must contribute to at least two output indicators.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|--------|---|------------------|---|
| RCO01 | Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large) | enterprises | The indicator counts all enterprises that receive monetary or in-kind support from ERDF and Cohesion Fund. |
| RCO02 | Enterprises supported by grants | enterprises | Number of enterprises receiving monetary support in the form of grants. |
| RCO87 | Organisations cooperating across borders | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentioned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under a Small Project Fund) are also counted. |
| RCO115 | Public events across borders jointly organised | events | The indicator counts the number of events across border which were jointly organised by the partners in supported projects or by interregional programmes, and not the number of participations in public events. A public event across borders is understood as a joint action which has been advertised through relevant means, to the general public of the area covered by the programme. |

Result indicators

All projects must contribute to at least one result indicator.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|---|------------------|--|
| RCR03 | Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation | enterprises | Number of SMEs introducing product or process innovation due to the support provided. The indicator covers also micro enterprises. Product innovation is the market introduction of a new or significantly improved good or service with respect to its capabilities, user friendliness, components or sub-systems. Process innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved production process, distribution method, or supporting activity. |
| RCR84 | Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating across borders after the completion of the supported projects. The organisations are legal entities involved in project implementation, counted within RCO87. The co-operation concept should be interpreted as having a statement that the entities have a formal agreement to continue cooperation, after the end of the supported project. The cooperation agreements may be established during the implementation of the project or within one year after the project completion. The sustained co-operation does not have to cover the same topic as addressed by the completed project. |

Action 2.1.1 - Social innovations for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

2.1.1 – Social innovations for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2. Priority axis: | Social cooperations |
| 2.1 Specific objective: | Enhancing access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure |
| 2.1.1 Action: | Social innovations for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups |

Objectives

The proposed action aims to improve the employability of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, facilitate their integration into the labour market, create quality and sustainable jobs and forms of employment, and combat poverty and social exclusion. Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups include persons excluded from the labour market, coming from segregated or marginalised communities and face various difficulties when entering the labour market (qualification, professional or personal deficits, regional disadvantages).

Social innovations should improve the employability, reduce unemployment and underemployment, strengthen labour market participation and integration, social inclusion and the quality of life of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Due to the complexity of the unmet needs of the target groups, complex projects should be developed, involving several complementary activities tailored to the needs of the target groups.

The action supports the joint development or adaptation of social innovations that representing new methods and approaches to address unmet social needs based on new knowledge, experience and expertise. The program promotes cross-border cooperation and partnerships involving multiple stakeholders, enabling joint innovation (development of new methods, networks, services, and cooperation) and joint implementation of pilot projects which are small-scale, time-limited trials designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation.

Definitions

- Social innovation**
 New ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations. These innovations can be products, services or complex models (based on cross-sectoral cooperation) addressing unmet needs more effectively.
- Vulnerable group**
 Groups of persons that are in a disadvantaged position or marginalised.
- Disadvantaged group**
 Groups of persons that experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population.
- Social inclusion**
 A process that ensures citizens have the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live

- **Integration**

A process that aims to promote the sharing of common values, common goals among individuals within a society or a social group.

- **Sustainable work**

Achieving living and working conditions that support people in engaging and remaining in work throughout an extended working life

- **Underemployment**

A situation where individuals are working, but their jobs don't fully utilize their skills, experience, or education, or they are working less than full-time when they desire full-time work.

Main target groups

Action 2.1.1 aims to achieve its objectives by involving the following types of stakeholders:

Primary target groups

- **Early school leavers and members of low-skilled social groups**

Individuals who have not completed school and/or have no professional qualifications and possess low-level basic skills.

- **NEET (Age 15-29)**

Young people, who are unemployed or economically inactive, and are not receiving any (formal or non-formal) education or training.

- **Older Workers (55+):**

Group of people who can face challenges related to age discrimination and the need to adapt to changing job requirements.

- **Parents and carers**

Having care responsibilities for young children (under 15 years of age) and/or in-capacitated relatives (15 years and older).

- **Segregated and geographical disadvantaged individual, groups and communities**

Inhabitants of rural areas and/or low investment area which has less favourable business environment and may include un-availability of basic infrastructures; segregated settlements, communities and dwellings (based on race, colour, language, religion, nationality, or ethnic origin).

Secondary target groups

- Policy makers, organizations, and institutions involved in reducing social exclusion and improving the labour market integration of excluded social groups.
- Service providers and methodological centres involved in improving the employability of excluded target groups and promoting their integration into the labour market.

Supported activities

Independent activities

Independent activities can be carried out by each partner in the partnership. In the case of Action 2.1.1, the following independent activities are supported:

- **strengthening cross-border institutional cooperation** through the development of cross-border strategies, plans and networks, cooperation and service provision between relevant institutions and authorities to improve the effectiveness of public services and institutional systems to support people excluded from the labour market and the social integration of target groups
- **developing and adapting innovative solutions** that represent new methods and approaches based on new digital technologies and sharing knowledge, experience and expertise (developing integrated labour market services, improving the supply and accessibility of social services using new technologies, disseminating and adapting best practises)
- **develop new methods and practises** to include disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in training and lifelong learning activities, such as learning groups, digital platforms, blended learning, modular training systems, experiential learning, etc.
- **increasing the competitiveness of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups** in the labour market through the development of innovative services, counselling and coaching programmes
- **creating and supporting internship opportunities** for young people, people returning to work and the long-term unemployed (preparing for entry into the labour market, promoting and expanding internship programmes, organising on-the-job training) to gain work experience and develop professional skills
- **developing social services that support work-life balance** and help to improve employment opportunities for people with young children and those caring for family members and facilitate their return to the labour market (special care and transport facilities, initiating and strengthening the formation of self-help groups, building and strengthening family support and life coaching networks)
- **involving members of local communities** in identifying and utilising available resources by strengthening community development (identifying and utilising usable real estate and productive resources for the development of the local economy, facilitating the formation of favour networks, strengthening reciprocity, promoting and applying shared economic solutions)
- **implement pilot projects** which represent a small-scale, time-limited trial designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation

Non-independent activities

Non-independent activities can be carried out by any partner who is directly involved into the realization of at least one independent activity. In the case of measure 2.1.1, the following non-independent activities are supported:

- **improving the working conditions of organisations** employing disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (purchase of equipment, creation of a barrier-free working environment, development of conditions for the use of digital technology)
- **development and modernisation of social or community infrastructure** to facilitate access to and dissemination of information on training, employment and support services
- **improving the mobility of unemployed people** to facilitate their access to available jobs and services that help them find employment by alternative tools and transport methods

Investments in infrastructure are only eligible if they're clearly and demonstrably linked to independently funded activities.

Potential applicants

- Labour market authorities
- Local and regional governments
- European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
- Social cooperatives
- Churches
- Non-governmental organizations
- Semi-budgetary organisations⁶
- Small and medium enterprises
- Universities and research institutions

Specific terms and conditions

- In order to achieve the objectives of this action in terms of primary target groups, personal data might be requested during the implementation of the projects.
- At least one of the target groups must be directly involved into the project implementation as well as benefit from project.
- The application must specify the minimum number of direct beneficiaries participating in the project and must address the issue of gender equality in the involvement of the target group.

⁶ Príspevková organizácia

- The target group(s) must be actively involved into the project implementation from the initial idea, through planning, creation/prototyping, implementation, to evaluation.
- The coherence and complementary nature of the soft and hard elements of the project must be demonstrated in the application. It is essential to explain in detail how the development of infrastructure or equipment will contribute to the implementation of other activities (e.g. counselling, skills development, training, supported employment, work experience, etc.)

Compliance with EU and national policies

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding EU policies, with special emphasis on the following agriculture, food system and rural development policies:

- Europe 2020 Strategy: social innovation has been presented as a key area for facilitating its achievement (COM(2010) 2020 final)
- ESF+ to help transfer and upscale innovative solutions to societal challenges, mainly in the fields of employment, education, skills and social inclusion. the European platform against poverty and social exclusion (launched in 2010 as a key initiative within the Europe 2020 strategy)
- Social Investment Package (COM(2013) 83 final (+ C(2013), European Pillar of Social Right (Com/2016/0127 final) mainly principles 1 and 4 on education and active support to employment.
- European Strategy for Vocational Education and Training (2024) (by 2025 at least 60% of recent graduates from VET should benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training) (Council Rec. 2020/C 417/01)
- National Social Inclusion Strategy (NTFS) – 2030 of Hungary⁷
- Hungary's Recovery and Resilience Plan (HET), which had been prepared with support from the EU's NextGeneration EU program. It also includes programs aimed at helping disadvantaged people (including young people, Roma, and people with disabilities) enter the labour market. One of its key objectives is to modernize labour market services and support adult education.
- Human Resources Development Operational Program Plus (EFOP Plus) 2021–2027 whose main priorities are social inclusion, creating opportunities and improving employability among disadvantaged people.
- Economic Development and Innovation Operational Program Plus (GINOP Plus) (2021-2027) which also includes labour market integration and training programs, e.g., wage subsidies for

⁷ One of its main objectives is the integration of people living in extreme poverty, Roma, people with low levels of education and Roma into the labour market, as well as increasing employment in disadvantaged rural areas. (1092/2021 (III. 10) Government Resolution on the adoption of the social inclusion strategy for 2030; Government Decision No. 1426/2019 (VII. 26.) on the determination of tasks related to the New Roma Strategy (2019-2030)

disadvantaged people and provision of labour market services, as well as incentives for SMEs to employ the target group.

- Youth Guarantee Scheme / New Generation Program, which helps NEETs aged 15-29 enter the labour market through career guidance, training, mentoring, and support for the organization of internship programs. (EU Council Recommendation (2013/C 120/01) – On the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
- Catching Up Settlements Program (FETE) (1602/2019. (XI. 21.) Government Resolution – on the launch of the Catching Up Settlements Program)

Key evaluation aspects

During the quality assessment of project proposals, assessors will pay special attention to the presence of the following aspects:

- **Innovative character, piloting, scalability and transferability**

The project proposal is better if it develops and implements new ideas, methods, products or services that transform creative ideas into practical and effective solutions. Innovations shall be introduced due pilot projects which are small-scale, time-limited trials designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation.

Pilot project is scalable if the capacity of a system, network, service, or organization can handle growth (increase in workload, users, data, or demand) without sacrificing performance or efficiency. The project proposal is better if the innovation can be efficiently adopted by other stakeholders without harming performance, quality or cost-effectiveness.

For pilot projects, if the maximum project duration allows, applicants can also plan the project for the upscaling phase if the results of the pilot activities meet expectations. (e.g.: 12 months pilot phase + 12 months upscaling).

- **Cross-border and cross-sector partnership**

The project proposal is better if the partnership is created by wide range of different institutions improving the employability of the different target groups operating on both sides of the border.

- **Mutual and peer learning**

Projects should generate mutual value for all participating entities, initiate mutual or peer learning, mindset transformation, and increased understanding of diverse labour market and social contexts.

- **Involvement of target groups**

The project proposal is better if during the evaluation, particular attention will be paid to the stage of the project (initiation, planning, creation/prototyping, implementation, and evaluation) at which the target group is involved and the form of activities in which they participate. Preference will be given to projects that cooperate with the target group (end users) from initiation to evaluation and ensure their active participation in all stages of the project process through innovative working methods.

- **The complexity of the project activities**

The project proposal is better if it is able to answer several social problems at the same time, and it offers complex solutions that include several complementary activities tailored to the special needs of the target groups.

- **Environmental and cultural sensitivity**

The project proposal is better if the participants pay special attention to environmental awareness and openness to cultural diversity in all activities and program elements during implementation. A successful project will show measurable progress in this regard in terms of changes in the attitudes of participants.

Indicators

Output indicators

All projects must contribute to each output indicator.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|--------|--|------------------|--|
| RCO87 | Organisations cooperating across borders | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentioned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under a Small Project Fund) are also counted. |
| RCO113 | Population covered by projects in the framework of integrated actions for socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups | persons | Population benefitting directly from projects in the framework of integrated actions for socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups. Integrated actions combine investments in two or more of the following social inclusion areas: employment, education and training, housing, health and social care. Marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups are defined at national level. The indicator is also relevant under RSO4.4 Integration of third country nationals, incl. migrants. |

Result indicators

All projects must contribute to each result indicator.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|---|------------------|--|
| RCR84 | Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating across borders after the completion of the supported projects. The organisations are legal entities involved in project implementation, counted within RCO87. The cooperation concept should be interpreted as having a statement that the entities have a formal agreement to continue cooperation, after the end of the supported project. The cooperation agreements may be established during the implementation of the project or within one year after the project completion. The sustained cooperation does not have to cover the same topic as addressed by the completed project. |

Action 2.2.1 - Inclusive and quality education

2.2.1 – Inclusive and quality education

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2. Priority axis: | Social cooperations |
| 2.2 Specific objective: | Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education |
| 2.2.1 Action: | Inclusive and quality education |

Objectives

The action aims to promote cross-border co-operation in building inclusive and high-performing education systems for educational communities with the presence of disadvantaged learners, aiming to foster their inclusion and equal participation. Disadvantaged learners include students from low-income families, coming from segregated or marginalised communities and students with learning, behavioural or developmental difficulties and disabilities.

The action aims to improve educational outcomes and ensure equitable access to meaningful education and reduce the number of early school dropout. Integrated development – linking infrastructure investments with pedagogical innovation – is at the centre of this approach, as is the strengthening of teachers' skills and the use of digital and AI-powered educational tools.

The programme promotes cross-border cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships that enable mutual learning in particular local adaptation of best practises, knowledge exchange, joint innovation and the joint implementation of pilot projects aimed at sustainable change in formal and non-formal education institutions.

Definitions

- **Inclusivity in education**

Principle that all children – particularly those requiring special attention due to social, economic, behavioural, or learning-related disadvantages – must be educated within the general education system, in a non-segregated environment.

- **Disadvantaged learners**

In the present Call disadvantaged learners are considered as children with:

- poor socio-economic background (poverty, low parental education, parental unemployment),
- segregation, marginalisation (e.g. Roma community),
- behavioural or learning-related disadvantages (HU: BTMN/SNI, SK: ŠVVP),
- physical disabilities
- children at higher risk of dropping out of school
- children in state care.

- **Diverse learners' needs**

The term refers to the wide range of learning requirements, preferences, and challenges that students may have due to their varied backgrounds, abilities, and circumstances. Recognising

diverse learners' needs is a cornerstone of inclusive education, requiring differentiated teaching methods, flexible learning environments, and personalised support.

- **Digital including AI-powered education**

Teaching and learning that is supported and enhanced through the use of digital technologies. It includes digital tools, methods, and environments that promote active, inclusive, and personalised learning. It aims to build a high-performing digital education ecosystem and strengthen digital skills and competences for all learners and educators.

- **Whole-school development approach**

A strategic, institution-wide framework that engages all members of the school community – including leaders, teachers, students, parents, and support staff – in creating an inclusive, safe, and high-quality learning environment. It aligns pedagogy, school culture, infrastructure, and leadership to address the diverse needs of learners, improve outcomes, and promote equity and well-being. This approach ensures that inclusive and innovative education is embedded in all aspects of school life, not limited to individual classrooms or initiatives.

- **Pilot project**

A time-bound, small-scale, and targeted educational initiative designed to test, evaluate, and refine new methods, tools, curricula, or approaches before broader implementation. Pilot projects aim to generate evidence, identify best practices, and reduce risks associated with full-scale roll-out. They are often implemented in selected schools, classrooms, or communities and include built-in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

- **STEM approach**

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) refers to an interdisciplinary approach to learning that integrates these four disciplines in a cohesive and applied manner, rather than teaching them as separate subjects. STEM education combines academic concepts with real-world applications, enabling students to use scientific and technical knowledge in meaningful contexts that connect school, community, the workplace, and the broader global environment.

- **Mutual learning**

A structured, reciprocal process in which education stakeholders exchange experiences, reflect collaboratively, and adapt proven practices to their own contexts. It fosters innovation, peer learning, and the development of inclusive, effective, and sustainable solutions across institutions and systems.

Main target groups

Primary target groups

- Primary and secondary schools⁸ with disadvantaged learners (see definition above)
- NGOs, civil society organisations, and community-based groups supporting inclusive education, mentoring, or intercultural learning for disadvantaged learners.
- Teachers, school staff, and school leaders working with disadvantaged learners, particularly in under-resourced schools or classrooms with high needs, especially those teaching STEM subjects.
- Educators requiring methodological, pedagogical, and digital support to address diverse learning needs effectively.
- Volunteers and youth workers involved in education or personal development of Roma children and other marginalised youth.

Secondary target groups

- Parents and caregivers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially those with limited access to educational resources or information.
- Policymakers and institutions engaged in teacher training, curriculum development, and inclusive education reform.
- Pedagogical and psychological support centres and research bodies involved in innovation in primary education.

Supported activities

Independent activities

Independent activities can be carried out by each partner in the partnership. In the case of measure 2.2.1, the following independent activities are supported:

- Joint development and implementation of professional activities that **strengthen the skills and competences of educational staff** to
 - better respond to diverse learners' needs, embedded in a whole-school development approach
 - focusing on using of digital tools (including AI), and STEM-related pedagogy.
- Joint development and implementation of **collaborative teaching and inclusive school practices** through adapted methods, staff mobility, and cross-border mutual learning to foster professional development and innovation across institutions.

⁸ Primary schools: 1-8/9 class

Secondary schools: 5/9-12 class

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- Joint development and implementation of **digital literacy** programmes and inclusive digital learning environments to ensure equitable access and effective technology use for all learners.
 - Joint development and implementation of differentiated and project-based **STEM teaching** methodologies that enhance instructional quality and promote equal access to science education for all learners.
 - Joint design, adaptation, and implementation of inclusive **foreign language teaching** methodologies and learning materials, tailored to the needs of diverse learner groups, including disadvantaged students and those at risk of exclusion.
 - Joint development and implementation of inclusive, **arts-based or creative learning** activities that foster cultural expression, personal development, and engagement among disadvantaged learners, including those with disabilities.
 - Joint development and implementation of **intercultural educational** activities aimed at promoting awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Roma cultural heritage among students, teachers, and local communities.
 - Joint implementation of **career orientation** and guidance activities that help students explore life and career paths, identify goals, and develop the skills needed for their future.
 - Joint development and implementation of integrated **mental health education and psychosocial support** practices, aimed at fostering emotional well-being, resilience, and inclusive learning through preventive, evidence-based, and whole-school approaches.
-

- Joint development and implementation of **awareness-raising campaigns** and educational workshops targeting students, parents, teachers, and the wider community, with the goal of promoting a deeper understanding of early school leaving and its long-term consequences.
- Joint development and implementation **prevention programmes and campaigns** to raise awareness of health and safety issues (e.g. drug use, cyber dangers, bullying, etc.) among students and their families.
- Joint development and implementation of **activities that engage parents and caregivers** to support learning, improve home–school cooperation, and strengthen inclusive school communities.

Non-independent activities

Non-independent activities can be carried out by any partner who is directly involved into the realization of at least one independent activity. In the case of measure 2.2.1, the following non-independent activities are supported:

- **Improvement and modernisation of educational infrastructure** to create inclusive, safe, and stimulating learning environments for students and improve working conditions for teachers (e.g. classrooms, schoolyards, corridors, and communal spaces).

- **Procurement of offline educational development tools and furniture** that support differentiated instruction and inclusive teaching practices.
- **Development and integration of digital education tools**, including STEM-related and AI-powered applications, to complement pedagogical innovation and support digital transformation in teaching and learning.

Potential applicants

- District school centres⁹ operating public primary and secondary schools
- Local governments and regional self-governments operating primary and secondary schools
- European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
- Registered church organisations operating denominational primary and secondary schools
- Church education offices or diocesan networks coordinating and supporting primary and secondary schools regionally
- Foundations or other legal entities operating non-state primary and secondary schools within the formal education system
- Foundations¹⁰ and NGOs collaborating with primary and secondary schools on inclusion, digital innovation, teacher training, mentoring, or youth development
- Universities and public research institutions¹¹ collaborating with primary and secondary schools on methodology development, teacher training, and mentoring

Specific terms and conditions

- In order to achieve the objectives of this action in terms of primary target groups, personal data might be requested during the implementation of the projects.
- The project must demonstrate¹² that the target groups of the project include disadvantaged learners from each side of the border.
- Teachers and relevant school staff must be actively involved in the planning and implementation phase to ensure pedagogical relevance and to promote ownership and sustainability.
- Proposals must demonstrate a coherent approach that combines infrastructure or equipment development with complementary pedagogical activities such as teacher training, curriculum enhancement, or inclusive teaching practices.

⁹ Tankerületi Központok

¹⁰ Including those operating “tanoda”-type community learning centres

¹¹ Eligible only for independent activities

¹² Acceptable forms of documentation include school public data (e.g. equity or inclusion reports), assessment summaries, statements from special education professionals, or records of involvement by school-based or family-linked educators.

- Improvement and modernisation of educational infrastructure does not include energy renovation or maintenance and repairs.

Compliance with EU and national policies

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding EU and national policies:

European Union

- Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027, issued by the European Commission, 2020.
- EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, adopted by the Council of the European Union, 2018.
- European Education Area – Strategic Framework, European Commission, 2020.
- Inclusive Digital Education: Ensuring Accessibility for All Learners, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2021.
- Ethical Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data in Teaching and Learning for Educators, European Commission, 2022.
- New European Bauhaus – Values, Principles and Guidelines, European Commission, 2021.
- Erasmus+ Youth Participation Goals, European Commission, part of the Youth Dialogue process, 2019.
- Inclusive Education in Europe: Policy Guidance, European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2018.

Hungary:

- Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education, adopted by the Hungarian Parliament – with emphasis on preventing social exclusion and promoting talent development.
- Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities, adopted by the Hungarian Parliament.
- Decree No. 2/2012 (X. 8.) of the Ministry of Human Resources – Guidelines on the kindergarten and school education of children with special educational needs.
- Inclusion Index – A Guide for the Development of Inclusive Schools, published by the Békés County Association of People with Disabilities (Mozgáskorlátozottak Békés Megyei Egyesülete), Hungarian translation of the Index for Inclusion, 2009.
- Information portal and advocacy on inclusive education, Hungarian National Council of Disability Organisations (MEOSZ), continuously updated.

Slovakia

- Standards for Compliance with the Prohibition of School Segregation, issued by the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic, November 2024.
- Strategy for Inclusive Education, issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MŠVVaŠ SR), 2022.

- Long-term Plan for Education and Vocational Training Needs 2023–2030, issued by MŠVVaŠ SR, 2023.
- Action Plan for the Digital Transformation of Education, issued by MŠVVaŠ SR, 2021.

Key evaluation aspects

During the quality assessment of project proposals, assessors will pay special attention to the presence of the following aspects:

- **Number of involved pupils and teachers**
The project proposal is considered better if a larger number of children are involved, especially those who need special attention. The number of teachers working with these pupils must also be taken into account.
- **Involvement of target groups from the planning phase**
The project proposal is considered better if it involves teachers, schools, and learner communities early in the design process and ensure their active participation throughout implementation.
- **Actively engage parents and caregivers**
The project proposal is considered better if it actively engages parents and caregivers – particularly from disadvantaged or Roma backgrounds
- **Cross sectoral cooperation**
The project proposal is considered better if it establishes meaningful collaboration among schools, NGOs, and/or public research institutions and municipalities, based on complementary roles and shared objectives in promoting inclusive and innovative education.
- **Integration of cross-border mobility and peer learning**
The project proposal is considered better if it includes structured opportunities for cross-border exchange, mobility, or peer learning among teachers, learners, and education stakeholders. These activities promote mutual understanding, cultural openness, and shared capacity-building between institutions in different national contexts.
- **Impact on institutional and pedagogical development**
The project proposal is considered better if it shows measurable progress in the areas of school climate, learning outcomes, teacher capacity and learner engagement especially for disadvantaged groups. Sustainable changes in teaching and school practise are essential.

Indicators

Output indicators

All projects must contribute to each output indicator.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|--|------------------|---|
| RCO67 | Classroom capacity of new or modernised education facilities | persons | Classroom capacity in terms of maximum number of pupils/students who can be enrolled in and use the education facilities. Classroom capacity should be calculated in accordance with national legislation, but it should not include teachers, parents, auxiliary personnel or other persons who may use the facilities too. Education facilities, such as schools and universities, can be newly built or modernised. Modernisation does not include energy renovation or maintenance and repairs. |
| RCO87 | Organisations cooperating across borders | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organisations, as mentioned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under a Small Project Fund) are also counted. |

Result indicators

All projects must contribute to each result indicator.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|---|------------------|--|
| RCR84 | Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating across borders after the completion of the supported projects. The organisations are legal entities involved in project implementation, counted within RCO87. The cooperation concept should be interpreted as having a statement that the entities have a formal agreement to continue cooperation, after the end of the supported project. The cooperation agreements may be established during the implementation of the project or within one year after the project completion. The sustained cooperation does not have to cover the same topic as addressed by the completed project. |

Action 2.3.1 – Family and community-based health care services

2.3.1 – Family and community-based health care services

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2. Priority axis: | Social cooperations |
| 2.3 Specific objective: | Ensuring equal access to health care |
| 2.3.1 Action: | Family and community-based health care services |

Objectives

The aim of the action is to improve access to healthcare, health literacy and thus the health status of the population living in the programme area by supporting communities and families with activities, services and equipment that can be used by the population on both sides of the border. The action promotes family-based healthcare characterised by

- holistic care for all family members across all ages
- prevention and early intervention such as immunisation
- maternal and child health services
- health education tailored to the family unit and
- support in managing chronic diseases in the home environment.

The action also promotes community-based health services provided locally by health centres, outreach clinics or mobile health units. These include

- involvement of community health workers or volunteers trained in primary health care
- public health programmes such as vaccination campaigns, sanitation and vector control
- health promotion activities such as awareness campaigns, screening and nutrition programmes and
- focus on equity and aim to reach underserved and vulnerable populations.

Both countries are struggling with a shortage of general practitioners and doctors in outpatient sector. The ageing of the medical population, especially of general practitioners, is a serious challenge for the healthcare system. It is therefore important to support young doctors entering general practise and ensure that the system allows them a smooth transition into the world of work. The action supports the introduction of new technologies and approaches that improve the accessibility, efficiency and quality of healthcare in the general practitioner's sector. The most important of these include digital transformation, personalised medicine, integrated care, prevention and education.

Definitions

- **Family based health care services**

A collaborative approach to healthcare that prioritizes the needs and preferences of both the patient and their family. This approach aims to improve the overall healthcare experience, reduce stress, and enhance communication, recognizing that health is deeply influenced by family dynamics and lifestyle.

- **Community healthcare services**

Community healthcare services are provided directly in local communities, often outside of traditional hospitals. Their aim is to ensure accessible, preventive and long-term health care, taking into account the specific needs of the population. These can include local health centres, home nursing care, support for people with disabilities, mental health, rehabilitation, or disease prevention programs.

- **General practice (GP)**

General practice is a branch of primary care that provides accessible, integrated, and ongoing health care services to individuals and families in the context of their community.

- **Access to healthcare**

Everyone has the opportunity to access the treatment they need in a timely manner, regardless of financial, geographical or social barriers. It includes sufficient health professionals, adequate infrastructure, available medicines and technological equipment, as well as an efficient funding system that does not disadvantage vulnerable groups.

Supported activities

Independent activities

Independent activities can be carried out by each partner in the partnership. In the case of measure 2.3.1, the following independent activities are supported:

- strengthening cross-border institutional cooperation between relevant organisations and institutions through the development of joint policies, strategies and plans to improve the family or community-based health services for a cross-border area
- promoting e-inclusion and e-health, and adoption of the existing technological and ICT innovations (e.g. telemedicine) that facilitate healthcare and prevention for populations with difficult access
- introduction of innovative community-based health services e.g. home nursery systems, regular screening programs for the population, development of professional platforms for more efficient utilization of medical staff capacity etc.
- development of joint programs to facilitate long-term care for chronic and geriatric patients, and introduction of innovative therapeutic methods for the development of motor, sensory and cognitive skills in older adults
- knowledge sharing and educational activities aimed at improving the health literacy of the population and awareness-raising campaigns in disease prevention, early diagnosis and rehabilitation
- incentive and motivation programs to reduce the shortage of healthcare professionals, thereby improving access on both sides of the border
- improve services that enable people working outside healthcare facilities to provide their services on an individual, family or community level.

Non-independent activities

Non-independent activities can be carried out by any partner who is directly involved into the realization of at least one independent activity. In the case of measure 2.3.1, the following non-independent activities are supported:

- improving the infrastructural background of the public and economic actors responsible for primary health care services:
 - modernisation and expansion of primary health centres in order to provide high quality healthcare services and/or to make room for various additional outpatient health services
 - purchase of healthcare tools that are essential for diagnosis, monitoring, prevention, and treatment of a wide range of conditions in particular diagnostic equipment, procedural tools, digital and IT tools, preventive care aids, patient education and communication tools and infection control supplies
- improving conditions of living offered by municipalities to medical and healthcare support staff to reduce the shortage of healthcare professionals, particularly in the field of general practice
- improve mobility services that enable medical and healthcare support staff working outside healthcare facilities to provide their services on an individual, family or community level.

Main target groups

- health service providers (even private, even public financed)
- doctors, and allied health workers
- patients and chronic patients
- seniors
- people in severely disadvantageous condition
- marginalized communities

Potential applicants

- Healthcare service providers
- Local and regional governments
- Non-governmental organizations
- Semi-budgetary organisations¹³
- Churches

¹³ Príspevková organizácia

- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation
- State owned companies
- Small and medium enterprises

Specific terms and conditions

- Proposals must demonstrate a coherent approach that combines infrastructure or equipment development with complementary healthcare activities.
- Modernisation does not include energy renovation or maintenance and repairs.

Compliance with EU and national policies

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding EU and national policies:

- Program EU4Health (2021 – 2027)
- Directive 2011/24/EU on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare
- Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides for a high level of human health protection in the formulation and implementation of EU policies
- Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care, Services Related to the Provision of Health Care and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended
- Act No. 577/2004 Coll. on the Scope of Health Care Reimbursed on the Basis of Public Health Insurance and on Reimbursement for Services Related to the Provision of Health Care, as amended
- Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on Health Care Providers, Health Care Professionals, Professional Organizations in Health Care and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended

Key evaluation aspects

During the quality assessment of project proposals, assessors will pay special attention to the presence of the following aspects:

- **Relevance and long-term sustainability**
The project proposal is better if it utilises the strategic aspect address specific cross-border challenges in healthcare, such as access to healthcare, coordination between healthcare systems or sharing of expertise.

The project proposal is better if it offers solid financial and human resources guarantees for the sustainability of the project results with the involvement of local communities.
- **Cross-sector character**
The project proposal is better if it involves the relevant stakeholders that have an influence on family and community health services, such as the competent authorities, regional and local governments and public or private actors responsible for primary health services in the region.

- **Size and type of the target area**

The project proposal is better if it concerns an area where primary health services are inadequate or non-existent, where a significant proportion of the population is severely disadvantaged or marginalised, or where the service can be provided on both sides of the border.

- **Impact on target groups**

The project proposal is better if during the evaluation, particular attention will be paid to the stage of the project (initiation, planning, creation/prototyping, implementation, and evaluation) at which the target group is involved and the form of activities in which they participate. Preference will be given to projects that cooperate with the target group from initiation to evaluation and ensure their active participation in all stages of the project process through innovative working methods.

- **Innovative character, piloting, scalability and transferability**

The project proposal is better if it develops and implements new ideas, methods, products or services that transform creative ideas into practical and effective solutions. Innovations shall be introduced due pilot projects which are small-scale, time-limited trials designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation.

Pilot project is scalable if the capacity of a system, network, service, or organization can handle growth (increase in workload, users, data, or demand) without harming performance or efficiency. The project proposal is better if the innovation can be efficiently adopted by other stakeholders without harming performance, quality or cost-effectiveness.

For pilot projects, if the maximum project duration allows, applicants can also plan the project for the upscaling phase if the results of the pilot activities meet expectations. (e.g.: 12 months pilot phase + 12 months upscaling).

Indicators

Output indicators

All projects must contribute to at least two output indicators.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|---|---------------------|--|
| RCO14 | Public institutions supported to develop digital services, products and processes | Public institutions | Number of public institutions supported to develop or upgrade significantly digital services, products and processes, for instance in the context of e-government actions. Significant upgrades cover only new functionalities. Public institutions include local public authorities, sub-national authorities, or other types of public authorities. The indicator does not cover municipal enterprises and public universities or research institutes. |

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|--|------------------|---|
| RCO69 | Capacity of new or modernised health care facilities | persons/year | The maximum annual number of persons that can be served by the new or modernised health care facility at least once during a period of one year. Healthcare facilities include hospitals, clinics, out-patient care centers, specialized care centers etc. Modernisation does not include energy renovation or maintenance and repairs. |
| RCO87 | Organisations cooperating across borders | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentioned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under a Small Project Fund) are also counted. |

Result indicators

All projects must contribute to each result indicator.

| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Description |
|-------|---|------------------|--|
| RCR84 | Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion | organisations | The indicator counts the organisations cooperating across borders after the completion of the supported projects. The organisations are legal entities involved in project implementation, counted within RCO87. The cooperation concept should be interpreted as having a statement that the entities have a formal agreement to continue cooperation, after the end of the supported project. The cooperation agreements may be established during the implementation of the project or within one year after the project completion. The sustained cooperation does not have to cover the same topic as addressed by the completed project. |

Action 2.3.2 - Cross-border development of healthcare institutions

2.3.2 – Cross-border development of healthcare institutions

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2. Priority axis: | Social cooperations |
| 2.3 Specific objective: | Ensuring equal access to health care |
| 2.3.2 Action: | Cross-border development of healthcare institutions |

Objectives

The action 2.3.2 facilitates border crossings, that will promote the mobility of patients and healthcare professionals and improve access to quality healthcare services in the border area.

In many cases there are parallel capacities and at the same time a lack of medical care on both sides of the border. The main aim of the actions is to further develop the healthcare facilities in the border region through a more efficient use of spatial, instrumental, electronic and innovative solutions in the provision of healthcare services and to use these improvements to provide services that can also be used for the population from the other side of the border.

The aim of the action is to modernise healthcare facilities in the border area based on the real needs and the potential cross-border mobility of patients, the lack of and parallel capacities and services of healthcare facilities in order to create truly cross-border healthcare services.

Definitions

- Healthcare facilities**
Healthcare facilities are places where healthcare services are provided to individuals. These facilities are designed to diagnose, treat and manage health conditions, promote well-being and prevent disease. For the purposes of this call, healthcare facilities are hospitals, outpatient facilities and specialty clinics, nursing homes and long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centres.
- Cross-border mobility of patients**
Cross-border patient mobility means that people can travel abroad for healthcare, whether because of the availability of specialists, shorter waiting times or financial advantage. Within the European Union, this is regulated by legislation that ensures that citizens have the right to seek healthcare in other member states and can claim reimbursement according to the rules of their home country.
- Modernising of healthcare facilities**
Expanding the range of services by introduction of new technologies, processes and approaches that improve the quality, availability and efficiency (digitization and e-health, automation and robotics, use of AI, mobile health services, introduction of new diagnostic methods, etc.).
- Artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare**
Artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare is revolutionizing patient diagnosis, treatment, and management. It helps doctors analyze vast amounts of data, identify patterns in health records,

and predict possible diseases. AI in healthcare is constantly advancing and its use is expanding to new areas, such as robotic surgery or intelligent patient monitoring.

Supported activities

Independent activities

Independent activities can be carried out by each partner in the partnership. In the case of measure 2.3.2, the following independent activities are supported:

- strengthening co-operation between healthcare institutions by developing common policies, strategies, plans, methods and studies for the provision of services to patients seeking healthcare in another Member State
- improving the quality of existing healthcare services to increase convenience for patients and healthcare professionals and to increase the capacity of the system, network, service or organisation to cope with growth in case of cross-border services (increase in workload, users, data or demand) without harming performance or efficiency
- expanding the range of services by introduction of new technologies, processes and approaches that improve the quality, availability and efficiency of healthcare services (e.g.: digitization and e-health, automation and robotics, use of AI, mobile health services, introduction of new diagnostic methods, etc.) that enable the cross-border mobility of patients and healthcare professionals
- strengthening the cross-border emergency care by introduction of new technologies, processes and approaches
- utilising cross-border telecommunication technology for rescue management, medical diagnosis, monitoring and therapy
- promoting the transfer of know-how between the relevant organisations (e.g. through the organisation of joint training events and rescue exercises), particularly in connection with pandemics and their effects.

Non-independent activities

Non-independent activities can be carried out by any partner who is directly involved into the realization of at least one independent activity. In the case of measure 2.3.2, the following non-independent activities are supported:

- improving the infrastructural background of the public and economic actors operating health care facilities through modernisation and expansion of healthcare facilities in order to provide high quality healthcare services
- purchase of healthcare tools that are essential for cross-border coordination of interventions, diagnosis, monitoring, prevention, and treatment of a wide range of conditions in particular diagnostic equipment, procedural tools, digital and IT tools, preventive care aids, patient education and communication tools and infection control supplies.

Main target groups

- health service providers
- doctors, and allied health workers
- citizens requiring emergency care
- patients and chronic patients
- seniors
- people in severely disadvantageous condition
- marginalized communities

Potential applicants

- Healthcare service providers
- Local and regional governments
- Non-governmental organizations
- Semi-budgetary organisations¹⁴
- Churches
- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation
- State owned companies
- National health authorities
- Small and medium enterprises
- Large enterprises

Specific terms and conditions

- Modernisation does not include energy renovation or maintenance and repairs.
- Improving the infrastructural background and purchase of healthcare tools must be planned according to the joint development plan between the relevant partners.
- In the case of replacement of equipment present in outpatient clinics, polyclinics or hospitals, the partners must submit a declaration confirming that the equipment to be replaced has exceeded its intended service life.

¹⁴ Príspevková organizácia

Compliance with EU and national policies

Project proposals need to be in line with the corresponding EU and national policies:

- European Parliament resolution on cohesion policy in the health sector
- Program EU4Health (2021 – 2027)
- Directive 2011/24/EU on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare
- Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides for a high level of human health protection in the formulation and implementation of EU policies
- Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care, Services Related to the Provision of Health Care and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended
- Act No. 577/2004 Coll. on the Scope of Health Care Reimbursed on the Basis of Public Health Insurance and on Reimbursement for Services Related to the Provision of Health Care, as amended
- Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on Health Care Providers, Health Care Professionals, Professional Organizations in Health Care and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended

Key evaluation aspects

- **Relevance and long-term sustainability**

The project proposal is better if it utilises the strategic aspect address specific cross-border challenges in healthcare, such as access to healthcare, coordination between healthcare systems or sharing of expertise.

The project proposal is better if it offers solid financial and human resources guarantees for the sustainability of the project results with the involvement of local communities.

- **Cross-sector character**

The project proposal is better if it involves the relevant stakeholders that have an influence on health care institutions, such as the competent authorities, regional and local governments and public or private actors responsible for primary health services in the region.

- **Cross-border character**

The project proposal is better if the applying institutions are geographically relatively close and are able to fulfil diverse needs of patients seek health care in other member state. The project proposal is better if it concerns an area where health services are inadequate or non-existent, where a significant proportion of the population is severely disadvantaged or marginalised.

- **Impact on target groups**

The project proposal is better if during the evaluation, particular attention will be paid to the stage of the project (initiation, planning, creation/prototyping, implementation, and evaluation) at which the target group is involved and the form of activities in which they participate. Preference will be given to projects that cooperate with the target group from initiation to evaluation and ensure their active participation in all stages of the project process through innovative working methods.

- **Innovative character, piloting, scalability and transferability**

The project proposal is better if it develops and implements new ideas, methods, products or services that transform creative ideas into practical and effective solutions. Innovations shall be introduced due pilot projects which are small-scale, time-limited trials designed to test the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of a concept, product, or service before full-scale implementation.

Pilot project is scalable if the capacity of a system, network, service, or organization can handle growth (increase in workload, users, data, or demand) without sacrificing performance or efficiency. The project proposal is better if the innovation can be efficiently adopted by other stakeholders without harming performance, quality or cost-effectiveness.

For pilot projects, if the maximum project duration allows, applicants can also plan the project for the upscaling phase if the results of the pilot activities meet expectations. (e.g.: 12 months pilot phase + 12 months upscaling).

Indicators

Output indicators

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Eligibility criteria

Location

Applicants are eligible if they are registered in any NUTS3 region of Hungary or Slovakia. All project activities must be carried out in or at least have an impact on the programme area. The programme area consists of the following NUTS(III) regions:

Hungary

- Győr-Moson-Sopron vármegye
- Komárom-Esztergom vármegye
- Pest vármegye
- Budapest
- Nógrád vármegye
- Heves vármegye
- Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén vármegye
- Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg vármegye

Slovak republic

- Bratislavský samosprávny kraj
- Trnavský samosprávny kraj
- Nitriansky samosprávny kraj
- Banskobystrický samosprávny kraj
- Košický samosprávny kraj

Cooperation

All projects must be implemented within the framework of a partnership consisting of at least one Hungarian and one Slovak partner. According to Article 23 (6) of Council and European Parliament Regulation 2021/1059, this requirement is automatically fulfilled by organisations operating as a legal entity in the form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The maximum number of project partners is not limited. For each project, the applicants select a Lead applicant (Lead Partner when implementing), who assumes responsibility for the successful implementation of the entire project. In addition, they shall cooperate in the staffing or the financing of projects, or in both as follows:

- **Joint development**
The criterion is fulfilled if the project idea is jointly developed.
- **Joint implementation**
The criterion is fulfilled if each Partner is responsible for at least one core activity.

- **Joint staffing**

The criterion fulfilled if each Partner involve own employee as staff into the project implementation.

- **Joint financing**

The criterion is fulfilled if at least two Partners are financing their project part by the programme.

Lead Partner principle

For each project, the applicants select a Lead applicant from among themselves, who takes responsibility for the successful realisation of the entire project. Lead Partner shall bear the responsibilities to represent the whole project towards the Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority. The Lead Partner shall meet the following main requirements (also see: General Terms and Conditions of the Subsidy Contract template and in the Partnership Agreement template):

- assume responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the entire project (however, each partner bears full responsibility for the appropriate implementation of its own project part),
- lay down the arrangements with the other partners in partnership agreement comprising provisions that, inter alia, guarantee the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the projects, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid,
- ensure that expenditure presented by all Partners has been incurred in implementing the project and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the Partners,
- is accountable for project reporting and administrative actions on project level.

If the project has more than one Slovak partner, the Slovak applicants choose a Lead cross-border applicant from among themselves, who concludes a contract with the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic for the provision of national co-financing.

Partners receiving no financial support

Partners that do not receive direct financial support can act as partners without a budget. Partnership can be extended with organisations assisting in project activities, without funding and, therefore, without budget in the application form. They can participate as professional advisors, observers or indirect beneficiaries.

Eligible applicants

Depending on legal status, the following organisations are eligible:

Public organisations

Public authorities

Public authorities are generally understood as the national or regional authorities assigned with special competencies and performing tasks in public interest and state-owned companies having portfolio according to national legislation.

Public bodies governed by public law

Bodies governed by public law means¹⁵ bodies that have all the following characteristics:

- a) they are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character,
- b) they have legal personality, and
 - a. they are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or
 - b. are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or
- c) have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

Private organisations

Private non-profit body

A private non-profit body (legal entities only – a legal personality is required) means¹⁶ bodies that have all the following characteristics:

- a) they do not have an industrial or commercial character,
- b) they have a legal personality, and
 - a. they are not financed, for the most part, by the state, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or
 - b. are not subject to management supervision by those bodies; or not having an administrative, managerial or
 - c. supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

Churches

In case of Hungarian partners, an ecclesiastical legal person based on Section 10 of Act CCVI of 2011 (established churches, registered churches and listed churches, and their internal ecclesiastical legal persons). In case of Slovak partners according to the Section 4 of Act No. 308/1991 Zb. (1): A church

¹⁵ Article 2.4 of Directive 2014/24/EU

¹⁶ Article 2.4 of Directive 2014/24/EU

or religious society is a voluntary association of persons of the same religious faith in an organisation formed according to their religious affiliation on the basis of the internal regulations of the respective church or religious society.

Small and medium and large enterprises

An enterprise is considered to be any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form. This includes, in particular, self-employed persons and family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity.

Financial criteria

Small and medium sized enterprises can be eligible if the following criteria regarding their financial background are fulfilled at once:

- **Duration of operation**
Enterprises must have the last two full (365 days) fiscal years closed.
- **Own equity¹⁷**
Own equity of applying companies cannot be lower than the half of the prescribed capital stock in the last fiscal year.

The Managing Authority reserves the right to ask for guarantees from private entrepreneurs, SME beneficiaries and to determine the means of safeguarding the future claims for the contracting procedures. In addition, the Slovak National Authority reserves the right to ask for guarantees from Slovak SME beneficiaries based on the obligations stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Hungary and Slovak Republic.

¹⁷ Not relevant for the private entrepreneurs not having double book-keeping.

Project activities

The project objectives must be clearly linked to the objectives of the relevant Action. The activities must describe the way in which the parts of the project will be carried out in chronological order. Please, take special care of the logical and chronological order when planning your project activities. If the proposed activities do not comprehensively describe the implementation of the project, the JS may amend the list of activities during the contracting phase. Applicants upload their activities and describe them using the following activity groups which might serve also as a monitoring tool:

Activity groups

Initial activities

All activities that must be planned before the main activities begin are considered initial. This might include in particular:

- elaboration of specific technical plans,
- obtaining specific permissions,
- preparation of specific realisation plans and concepts,
- launching the public procurements.

Core activities

Activities serving to achieve the main outcomes of the project are considered core activities. They might include activities such as:

- purchase of equipment
- construction works
- procurement of external services
- launching the operation of the new or developed services.

Promotional activities

Each partner must promote the visual identity of the European Union and the Programme and must communicate its objectives and results to stakeholders, decision-makers and the public. Promotional activities include the following activities:

- placing out the mandatory visibility measures of the Programme
- carrying out the mandatory communication measures of the Programme
- marketing activities to involve target groups and ensure the future exploitation of the project results.

For more information on eligible expenditures, please consult the Guidelines on project promotion published on the programme's webpage.

Description of the activities

The description of the activities must answer the following questions:

- Why is the activity relevant?
- What tasks are carried out as part of the activity?
- How are these tasks carried out?
- Who is responsible for the task (institution, position)?
- When will the activity be carried out?

Outcomes of the activity

Outcomes of the activity is a short and informative list of concrete results, which are provided with quantitative parameters.

Location of the activity

The location of the activity must be given at NUTS(V) level, indicating the settlement, street and house number and a Google Maps link. In the case of activities with multiple locations, the activity must be multiplied accordingly. For activities where the location is not relevant the applicant may provide the official address of the applicant organisation.

Specific conditions

Activities related to investments in infrastructure can only be carried out on land where the ownership rights of the applicants are guaranteed. Ownership rights can be guaranteed by ownership, purchase of land¹⁸ or by permission to use or operate the land for an indefinite period or for at least 10 years after the planned completion of the project.

Timeframe

The maximum duration of projects is 24 months. The expected start date for the projects is in the third quarter of 2026. Partners making investments in infrastructure or productive investments must maintain the project results for at least 5 years after 31 December of the year in which the last payment was made by the programme, or at least 3 years in the case of SMEs.

¹⁸ Please, consult the relevant chapter of the Eligibility of Expenditure

Eligible expenditures

Generally, expenditure is eligible for reimbursement if it is essential for the achievement of the project objectives and outputs and it would not be incurred if the project were not carried out. As a general rule, the expenditure can be reimbursed after it have been incurred and paid by the partner. Furthermore, the programme applies simplified cost option in certain cost categories.

The eligibility period starts on 1 January 2021. As a general rule, the latest possible date for payment of expenditure is 30 calendar days after the end date of the project. In the case, when the end date of project is fallen between 1 December 2029 and 31 December 2029, the payment of expenditures has to be made until 31 December 2029.

When uploading the application into the Interreg+ application module one of the following flat rate options must be chosen by each applicant:

- Flat rate for project management (Flat rate A)
- Staff costs as real cost (Flat rate B)

For more information on eligible expenditures, please consult the Eligibility of expenditures published on the programme's webpage. Please note that certain aspects of the Eligibility of expenditures document are not relevant for this Call for Proposals.

Source of finance

The projects are financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the central budgets of the Member States and the partners' own resources. The national co-financing rate of the partners depends on their legal form and location. The maximum EU contribution rate is 80% of the total budget. Please note that state aid rules must be respected and that in case state aid is relevant, the amount of aid granted may differ from the general model described below. As a main rule, the funding rates for eligible applicants are as follows:

Partners registered in Hungary

| Type of beneficiary according to national legislation | EU contribution | National co-finance | Own contribution |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Central state budgetary organisations | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| Entirely state-owned companies | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| Asset management foundation established by the state. Legal entity maintained by such a foundation | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| EGTC | 80% | 15% | 5% |
| Small and medium sized enterprises | 80% | 15% | 5% |
| All other beneficiary | 80% | 15% | 5% |

Partners registered in Slovakia

| Type of beneficiary | EU contribution | National co-finance | Own contribution |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Public authorities | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| Public bodies governed by public law | 80% | 12% | 8% |
| Non-profit organisations governed by private law | 80% | 12% | 8% |
| EGTC | 80% | 12% | 8% |
| SMEs or any partner receiving State aid or De minimis | 80% | 0% | 20% |

State aid rules

The notion of state aid

Funds granted by Interreg VI-A Hungary-Slovakia must comply with the state aid rules. According to the TFEU Article 107 (1) state aid is defined as *“any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the internal market”*. In practical terms, state aid applies when all five criteria listed below are met:

- 1) The recipient of the aid is an “undertaking”, which is carrying out an economic activity in the context of the project.
- 2) The aid is granted by the State or through State resources and it is imputable to the State, which is always the case for any Interreg programme.
- 3) The aid gives an economic advantage (a benefit), which an undertaking would not have obtained under normal market conditions.
- 4) The aid is selectively favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods or provision or certain services.
- 5) The aid distorts or threatens to distort competition and affects trade within the European Union.

Apart from compliance with the aid specific rules, state aid can be granted in consideration of the Chapter I-II of the Commission Regulation (EU) 651/2014¹⁹ (hereinafter referred to as: **“GBER”**) and the Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831²⁰ (hereinafter referred to as: **“de minimis regulation”**). Comprehensive information on state aid can be found on the [DG Competition website of the European Commission](#), where also a guideline on the notion of state aid is available²¹. Also relevant national or regional authorities may be consulted to obtain more specific information on rules and limitations concerning state aid.

State Aid assessment

Submitted application forms undergo a specific “State aid assessment” focusing on the five criteria listed above. This is offered for the applicants as part of the application form in the Programme as a self-assessment, with particular attention to the assessment of the status as “undertaking” (Criterion 1) of the partners (i.e. the lead partner or any project partner) and of the existence of an economic advantage for the undertaking (Criterion 3). Please note, however, that the state aid evaluation is the responsibility

¹⁹ Commission Regulation (EU) 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty Text with EEA relevance

²⁰ Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid Text with EEA relevance

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/competition-policy/state-aid/legislation/notion-aid_en

of the Member State, and the assessment by the responsible national bodies may overrule the applicants' self-assessment.

The results of the state aid assessment may lead to one or more of the following scenarios:

- 1) **No state aid relevance.** In this case, no contractual conditions are set on state aid.
- 2) **Risk of state aid that can be removed.** In this case, the MC may approve the project with certain conditions that are included in the subsidy contract in order to eliminate the state aid risks (e.g. wide dissemination, also to competitors, of certain project outputs).
- 3) **Direct state aid granted to one or more partners.** In this case, the entire budget allocated to the concerned partner, that is, the direct beneficiary of the project.
- 4) **Indirect state aid granted to third parties** outside the project partnership. The direct beneficiary of the Programme does not gain advantage. The partner confers the advantage on the third party, therefore the state aid evaluation must be carried out in the relation between the direct beneficiary and the final beneficiary. A contractual condition setting a threshold to the aid granted to third parties is set.

During the implementation of the project, the MA/JS verifies that the concerned partners fulfil contractual conditions on state aid. Any amendment to the project might be restricted if its activities are assessed as state aid relevant. Furthermore, additional contractual conditions on state aid may be given to projects in case of project amendments assessed as state aid relevant. For partners receiving additional national public co-financing to their budgets, the aid granting shall comply with the cumulation and aid intensity rules.

Common Provisions

Scope

- 1) This Call for proposal does not apply to:
 - with the exception of the Aid for costs incurred by undertakings participating in European Territorial Cooperation project, Limited amounts of aid to undertakings for participation in European Territorial Cooperation projects and De Minimis Aid;
 - any organisation which, at the time the aid was granted, has not yet fulfilled all its obligations to repay the aid resulting from the Commission's decisions ordering Hungary or Slovakia to recover the aid.
 - with the exception of De minimis aid - undertakings in difficulty;
- a) aid for production, processing, and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products as defined in Regulation (EU) No. 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 under Aid for culture and heritage conservation, Aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures, Investment aid for local infrastructures, and De Minimis Aid;
- b) aid granted in the primary agricultural production sector under Aid for culture and heritage conservation, Aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures, Investment aid for local infrastructures, De Minimis Aid;

- c) aid to an undertaking active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, if:
 - i) the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or marketed by the undertakings concerned; or
 - ii) the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
- d) aid to export-related activities, if directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution or to other current expenditure linked to the export activity;
- e) aid if it is made conditional on the use of domestic goods instead of imported goods;
- f) aid with conditions that result in a breach of EU law;
- g) Aid for costs incurred by undertakings participating in European Territorial Cooperation project, Limited amounts of aid to undertakings for participation in European Territorial Cooperation projects, Aid for culture and heritage conservation, Aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures and Investment aid for local infrastructures for uncompetitive coal mines, as covered by Council Decision 2010/787/EU.

Incentive effect

- 1) Aid granted under GBER – with the exception of Aid for costs incurred by undertakings participating in European Territorial Cooperation project, Limited amounts of aid to undertakings for participation in European Territorial Cooperation projects, Aid for culture and heritage conservation – may be granted only if the beneficiary has submitted a written application for aid containing the mandatory content elements specified in GBER Article 6(2) before the start of the project.
- 2) Only De minimis aid within the meaning of De minimis Regulation may be granted for costs incurred before the submission of the application for aid.

Cumulation

- 1) In the case of identical or partly identical identifiable eligible costs, aid may be cumulated with other State aid from local, regional, national or Union sources, provided that it does not lead to the maximum aid intensity laid down in the block exemption regulations or in the Commission's approval decision being exceeded.
- 2) Aid may be cumulated with other State aid from local, regional, national or Union sources for different identifiable eligible costs.
- 3) The aid intensity of all aid received for a project, whether financed from Union, national, regional or local sources, shall not exceed the aid intensity or aid amount laid down in the applicable Union State aid rules.
- 4) Limited amounts of aid to undertakings for participation in European Territorial Cooperation projects and De minimis aid that does not have identifiable eligible costs may be cumulated with any other State aid that has identifiable eligible costs. Aid with no identifiable eligible costs may be cumulated with any other State aid with no identifiable eligible costs up to the maximum overall funding ceiling laid down in the block exemption regulations and in the Commission's approval decision.

Aid intensity

In calculating the aid intensity all figures used shall be taken into account before deduction of taxes and duties. The aid paid in several instalments is discounted to the value at the date of the decision to grant aid, using the discount rate.

Miscellaneous

- 1) The beneficiary shall keep all documents and records relating to the aid for a period of 10 years from the date of the decision to grant the aid.
- 2) The aid measures in this Program only be granted in a transparent form, as direct grant.
- 3) The grantor must provide information on each individual aid award exceeding EUR 100 000 or for beneficiaries active in primary agricultural production or in the fishery and aquaculture sector on each individual aid award exceeding EUR 10 000.

Specific provisions

Aid for costs incurred by undertakings participating in European Territorial Cooperation project

- 1) In case of Aid for costs incurred by undertakings participating in European Territorial Cooperation projects covered by Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 the aid intensity shall not exceed the maximum co-financing rate provided for in Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 Art. 13 (1).
 - a. To the extent that they are linked to the cooperation project, the following costs, which shall have the meaning ascribed to them in Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, shall be eligible costs:
 - b. staff costs;
 - c. office and administrative costs;
 - d. travel and accommodation costs;
 - e. external expertise and services costs;
 - f. equipment costs;
 - g. costs for infrastructure and works.
- 2) Aid for costs incurred by undertakings participating in European Territorial Cooperation project cannot exceed EUR 2,2 million per undertaking, per project.

Limited amounts of aid to undertakings for participation in European Territorial Cooperation projects

In case of Aid to undertakings for their participation in European Territorial Cooperation projects covered by Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 the total amount of aid granted to an undertaking per project shall not exceed EUR 22 000.

Aid for culture and heritage conservation

- 1) Aid for culture and heritage conservation may take the form of:
 - a) investment aid, including aid for the construction or upgrade of culture infrastructure;

- b) operating aid.
- 2) The aid shall be granted for the following cultural purposes and activities:
- a) museums, archives, libraries, artistic and cultural centres or spaces, theatres, cinemas, opera houses, concert halls, other live performance organisations, film heritage institutions and other similar artistic and cultural infrastructures, organisations and institutions;
 - b) tangible heritage including all forms of movable or immovable cultural heritage and archaeological sites, monuments, historical sites and buildings; natural heritage linked to cultural heritage or if formally recognized as cultural or natural heritage by the competent public authorities of an EU Member State;
 - c) intangible heritage in any form, including folklorist customs and crafts;
 - d) art or cultural events and performances, festivals, exhibitions and other similar cultural activities;
 - e) cultural and artistic education activities as well as promotion of the understanding of the importance of protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions through educational and greater public awareness programs, including with the use of new technologies;
 - f) writing, editing, production, distribution, digitisation and publishing of music and literature, including translations. The maximum aid amount shall not exceed either the difference between the eligible costs and the project's discounted revenues or the 70 % of the eligible costs. The revenues shall be deducted from the eligible costs *ex ante* or through a clawback mechanism. The eligible costs shall be the costs for publishing of music and literature, including the authors' fees (copyright costs), translators' fees, editors' fees, other editorial costs (proofreading, correcting, reviewing), layout and pre-press costs and printing or e-publication costs.
- 3) For investment aid, the eligible costs shall be the investment costs in tangible and intangible assets, including:
- a) costs for the construction, upgrade, acquisition, conservation or improvement of infrastructure, if at least 80 % of either the time or the space capacity per year is used for cultural purposes;
 - b) costs for the acquisition, including leasing, transfer of possession or physical relocation of cultural heritage;
 - c) costs for safeguarding, preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including extra costs for storage under appropriate conditions, special tools, materials and costs for documentation, research, digitalisation and publication;
 - d) costs for improving the accessibility of cultural heritage to the public, including costs for digitisation and other new technologies, costs to improve accessibility for persons with special needs (in particular, ramps and lifts for disabled persons, braille indications and hands-on exhibits in museums) and for promoting cultural diversity with respect to presentations, programmes and visitors;
 - e) costs for cultural projects and activities, cooperation and exchange programmes and grants including costs for selection procedures, costs for promotion and costs incurred directly as a result of the project;
- 4) In case of the investment aid, the aid amount shall not exceed the difference between the eligible costs and the operating profit of the investment. The operating profit shall be deducted from the eligible costs *ex ante*, on the basis of reasonable projections, or through a claw-back mechanism. The operator of the infrastructure is allowed to keep a reasonable profit over the relevant period.

Alternatively, for aid not exceeding EUR 2,2 million, the maximum amount of aid may be set at 80 % of eligible costs.

Investment aid for culture and heritage conservation cannot exceed EUR 165 million per project.

- 5) For operating aid, the eligible costs shall be the following:
- a) the cultural institution's or heritage site's costs linked to continuous or periodic activities including exhibitions, performances and events and similar cultural activities that occur in the ordinary course of business;
 - b) costs of cultural and artistic education activities as well as promotion of the understanding of the importance of protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions through educational and greater public awareness programs, including with the use of new technologies;
 - c) costs of the improvement of public access to the cultural institution or heritage sites and activities including costs of digitisation and of use of new technologies as well as costs of improving accessibility for persons with disabilities;
 - d) operating costs directly relating to the cultural project or activity, such as rent or lease of real estate and cultural venues, travel expenses, materials and supplies directly related to the cultural project or activity, architectural structures for exhibitions and stage sets, loan, lease and depreciation of tools, software and equipment, costs for access rights to copyright works and other related intellectual property rights protected contents, costs for promotion and costs incurred directly as a result of the project or activity; depreciation charges and the costs of financing are only eligible if they have not been covered by investment aid;
 - e) costs for personnel working for the cultural institution or heritage site or for a project;
 - f) costs for advisory and support services provided by outside consultants and service providers, incurred directly as a result of the project.
- 6) In the case of the operating aid, the aid amount shall not exceed what is necessary to cover the operating losses and a reasonable profit over the relevant period. This shall be ensured *ex ante*, on the basis of reasonable projections, or through a clawback mechanism. Alternatively, for aid not exceeding EUR 2,2 million, the maximum amount of aid may be set at 80 % of eligible costs.

Operating aid for culture and heritage conservation cannot exceed EUR 82,5 million per undertaking per year.

- 7) Aid cannot be granted to press and magazines, whether they are published in print or electronically.

Aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures

- 1) Aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures may take the form of:
- a) investment aid, including aid for the construction or upgrade of sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructure;
 - b) operating aid for sport infrastructure;
- 2) Sport infrastructure shall not be used exclusively by a single professional sport user. Use of the sport infrastructure by other professional or non-professional sport users shall annually account for at least 20 % of time capacity. If the infrastructure is used by several users simultaneously, corresponding fractions of time capacity usage shall be calculated.

- 3) Multifunctional recreational infrastructure shall consist of recreational facilities with a multi-functional character offering, in particular, cultural and recreational services with the exception of leisure parks and hotel facilities.
- 4) Access to the sport or multifunctional recreational infrastructures shall be open to several users and be granted on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis. Undertakings which have financed at least 30 % of the investment costs of the infrastructure may be granted preferential access under more favourable conditions, provided those conditions are made publicly available.
- 5) If sport infrastructure is used by professional sport clubs, the pricing conditions for its use are made publicly available.
- 6) Any concession or other entrustment to a third party to construct, upgrade and/or operate the sport or multifunctional recreational infrastructure shall be assigned on an open, transparent and non-discriminatory basis, having due regard to the applicable procurement rules.
- 7) For investment aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructure the eligible costs shall be the investment costs in tangible and intangible assets.
- 8) In case of the investment aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructure, the aid amount shall not exceed the difference between the eligible costs and the operating profit of the investment. The operating profit shall be deducted from the eligible costs ex ante, on the basis of reasonable projections, or through a claw-back mechanism. Alternatively, for aid not exceeding EUR 2,2 million, the maximum amount of aid may be set at 80 % of eligible costs.

Investment aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures cannot exceed EUR 33 million or the total costs of the project cannot exceed EUR 110 million.

- 9) For operating aid for sport infrastructure the eligible costs shall be the operating costs of the provision of services by the infrastructure. Those operating costs include costs such as personnel costs, materials, contracted services, communications, energy, maintenance, rent, administration, etc., but exclude depreciation charges and the costs of financing if these have been covered by investment aid.
- 10) In case of the operating aid for sport infrastructure, the aid amount shall not exceed the operating losses over the relevant period. This shall be ensured ex ante, on the basis of reasonable projections, or through a claw-back mechanism. Alternatively, for aid not exceeding EUR 2,2 million, the maximum amount of aid may be set at 80 % of eligible costs.

Operating aid for sport infrastructure cannot exceed EUR 2,2 million per infrastructure per year.

Investment aid for local infrastructures

- 1) Investment aid for local infrastructures finances the construction or upgrade of local infrastructures which concerns infrastructure that contribute at a local level to improving the business and consumer environment and modernising and developing the industrial base. Investment aid for local infrastructures shall not apply to aid for infrastructures that is covered by other sections of Chapter III of GBER with the exception of Section 1. Investment aid for local infrastructures shall also not apply to airport infrastructure and port infrastructure.
- 2) The infrastructure shall be made available to interested users on an open, transparent and non-discriminatory basis. The price charged for the use or the sale of the infrastructure shall correspond to market price.

- 3) Any concession or other entrustment to a third party to operate the infrastructure shall be assigned on an open, transparent and non-discriminatory basis, having due regard to the applicable procurement rules.
- 4) The eligible costs shall be the investment costs in tangible and intangible assets.
- 5) The aid amount shall not exceed the difference between the eligible costs and the operating profit of the investment. The operating profit shall be deducted from the eligible costs ex ante, on the basis of reasonable projections, or through a claw-back mechanism.
- 6) Dedicated infrastructure shall not be exempted.
- 7) Investment aid for local infrastructures cannot exceed EUR 11 million or the total costs exceeding EUR 22 million for the same infrastructure.

De Minimis Aid

- 1) The gross grant equivalent²² of any de minimis aid granted on the basis of the Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 (hereinafter: De Minimis Regulation) to any single undertaking²³ shall not exceed EUR 300 000 over any period of three years per Member State taking into account Article 3 paragraph 8 and 9 of the De Minimis Regulation, which contain additional provisions for mergers, acquisitions and undertakings splitting into two or more separate undertakings.
- 2) Aid shall not be granted to undertakings active in the sectors listed in Article 1 paragraph 1 of the De Minimis Regulation, taking into account Article 1 paragraph 2, which contains additional provisions for undertakings active in sectors falling within the scope of the De Minimis Regulation and sectors excluded from the scope of the De Minimis Regulation as well.
- 3) De minimis aid may be cumulated with de minimis aid granted on the basis of other de minimis Regulations up to EUR 300,000 with the exception of aid granted on the basis of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2832.
- 4) De minimis aid may be cumulated with State aid in relation to the same eligible costs or with State aid for the same risk finance measure, if such cumulation would not exceed the highest relevant aid intensity or aid amount defined in a block exemption regulation or a decision adopted by the European Commission.
- 5) The beneficiary must submit a declaration in accordance with Article 7 paragraph 4 of the De Minimis Regulation about any other de minimis aid received to which the De Minimis Regulation or any other de minimis Regulations apply over any period of 3 years.
- 6) With a direct reference to the De Minimis Regulation the aid grantor shall inform the beneficiary by issuing a certificate stating the amount of the aid expressed in gross grant equivalent and its de minimis character, in accordance with Article 7 paragraph 4 of the De Minimis Regulation.

²² The gross grant equivalent can be calculated on the basis of Article 4 of the Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831.

²³ Undertakings within the meaning of Article 2 Section 2 of the general de minimis regulation are considered to be one and the same undertaking.

- 7) Aid payable in several instalments shall be discounted to its value at the moment it is granted. The interest rate to be used for discounting purposes shall be the discount rate applicable at the time the aid is granted.
- 8) The records regarding information on de minimis aid must be kept for 10 years from the date on which the aid was granted. On request by the European Commission information shall be provided within 20 working days on aid granted under the De Minimis Regulation.

Horizontal principles

All projects must be implemented in line with horizontal principles on sustainable development, climate resilience, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and equality between men and women.

Sustainable development

The EU and its Member States are committed to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The European Green Deal plays an important role in achieving some of these goals. The programme is in line with the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. As the focus is on capacity building, the supported actions should not have a significant negative impact on the environment and are fully compatible with the ‘Do No Significant Harm’ principle and the Programme’s SEA report. These measures should be consistent with the principle of sustainable development. At project level, this means that all partners must demonstrate how their project is consistent with and contributes to sustainable development.

Climate resilience

Climate change is one of the biggest problems and challenges of our time. Stopping or at least mitigating these processes and preparing for the expected impacts and consequences is a major challenge for humanity. For all infrastructural investments planned for a period of at least 5 years it is mandatory requirement to be assessed in terms of climate resilience (see Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council). The mandatory climate change resilience assessment aims to identify projects that may have significant greenhouse gas emissions or are highly exposed to climate change.

In the preparation phase, Applicants shall use the “Guide for the Climate Change Resilience Assessment of Infrastructure Projects 2021-2027” document. It will help project planners to design additional measures into their project to ensure that the infrastructure created will continue to operate cost-effectively and fit for purpose in the long term, by considering the likely impacts of climate change and the risks they pose.

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

The programme aims to promote equal opportunities and prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation at all stages of programme implementation and in particular in access to funding.

Beyond this focus, the programme takes up social inclusion as a cross-cutting issue, which means that all applicants must consider the needs of the different target groups at risk of such discrimination, and in particular the requirements to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Applicants must explain in their application form how their project respects and possibly even strengthens equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

Equality between women and men

The Programme shall strive to promote gender equality and prevent any discrimination based on gender at all stages of the implementation of the Programme and in particular in access to funding. The programme takes gender equality as a cross-cutting theme. This means that all applicants must explain in their application form how their project will address and possibly even strengthen gender equality.

Mandatory annexes

The mandatory annexes to the applications must be uploaded to the programme's online application system.

ANNEX I – Partners' declaration of honour (EN/SK/HU)

The partners' declaration of honour must be submitted by each partner on a predefined template published as part of this call. The template must be completed, signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation, scanned and uploaded into the relevant folder in any (EN/SK/HU) language.

ANNEX II – Specimen of signature

The Lead applicant must submit the specimen of signature of the legally authorised representative(s). The document must be uploaded into the relevant folder in national language.

ANNEX III – Project concept (HU/SK)

Project concept must be submitted by the Lead applicant on a predefined template published as part of this Call. The document must be submitted in two language versions in Hungarian and Slovak and uploaded into the relevant folder.

ANNEX IV – CV of the key expert (EN)

Each partner must submit the CVs of experts who have in-depth knowledge of the topic addressed by the project and have provided expert advice on the appropriate development and the future maintenance and operation of the project results. CVs must be uploaded into the relevant folder in English.

ANNEX V – Climate resilience declaration (EN)

The Climate resilience declaration must be submitted by each partner on a predefined template published as part of this Call. The template must be completed, signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation, scanned and uploaded into the relevant folder.

ANNEX VI – De minimis declaration (EN)

De minimis declaration must be submitted by each partner on a predefined template published as part of this Call. The template must be completed, signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation, scanned and uploaded into the relevant folder in national languages.

ANNEX VII – Simplified technical documentation

Each partner responsible for infrastructure investments must submit construction documents containing the following:

a) Technical description

The technical description describes the subject of the construction works including its location, purpose and the basic technical information. If the site is protected, details of the protection and a brief history and relevance of the site must be provided.

b) General site plan (preferred scale 1:1000-1:2000)

Shows the surroundings of the property, its relationships and connections.

c) Detailed site plan (preferred scale 1:200-1:500)

Shows all existing superstructures of the property,

- d) Layout drawings of the existing superstructure(s) (preferred scale 1:200)**
Shows the existing floor plans, elevations and two sections.
- e) Proposed detailed site plan (preferred scale 1:200-1:500)**
Show the proposed condition of the entire site, including all buildings and a sketch of the proposed landscaping and layout.
- f) Layout drawings of the planned superstructures (preferred scale 1:200)**
Floor plans with furnishings, elevations and two sections, preferably at a scale of 1:200
- g) 3D visualisation of the interior and exterior (optional)**
- h) Photo documentation of the existing condition of the interior and exterior areas**
- i) Draft budget**

All documents must be uploaded in the national languages using the predefined folder structure *Annex-VII_Technical-documentation.zip* file published as part of this Call.

ANNEX VIII – Test of undertaking in difficulty (HU/SK)

Private entrepreneurs with double-entry bookkeeping and limited liability companies must submit the Test of undertaking in difficulty on a predefined template published as part of this Call. The template must be completed, signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation, scanned and uploaded in the relevant folder.

ANNEX IX – Financial reports or tax declaration (HU/SK)

Private entrepreneurs and economic companies must submit tax declaration or a financial report on the last two full (365 days) closed fiscal year. The document must be uploaded into the relevant folder in national languages.

Submission procedure

Application forms must be filled in in English and submitted online via the application module of the Interreg+ monitoring system. Applicants can access the online application module via the following link:

<https://husk.interregplus.eu/21-27>

Applications must be submitted under the Measure, which must be selected by applicants as the first step in completing the application form. Applicants must select according to the table below:

| Measure |
|---|
| Action 1.1.2 - Short supply chains |
| Action 2.1.1 - Social innovations for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups |
| Action 2.2.1 - Inclusive and quality education |
| Action 2.3.1 - Family and community-based health care services |
| Action 2.3.2 - Cross-border development of healthcare institutions |

For more information on eligible expenditures, please consult the User manual to the Interreg+ Application Module published on the programme's webpage.

All applications must be submitted until Monday, 15 December 2025, 15:00.

Selection procedure

The assessment procedure is divided into several stages according to the complexity of the tasks and the competency of different experts:

Admissibility check

The admissibility check confirms whether applications have been submitted on time and in the prescribed form and whether all the required annexes have been attached to the application. If an application does not meet the formal criteria, Lead applicant is requested by email to complete the missing documents. Lead Applicants have 10 calendar days to complete the missing document. The completion procedure is repeated twice. If the application is not complete after the second completion round, the application will be rejected.

Eligibility check

The eligibility check confirms that each applicant is eligible under the relevant call for proposals and that all the activities described in the application form will be carried out in the programme area. The eligibility check also confirms that the partners will cooperate in development and implementation as well as in staffing or financing, or both. Finally, the evaluation confirms whether the predefined declaration of honour on the exclusion criteria has been signed by the statutory representative of the applying organisation.

Quality assessment

The quality of projects will be evaluated against the criteria listed in the quality assessment grids published as part of the Call for proposals. These criteria include various questions aimed at covering all aspects of the projects. The evaluators will assess the fulfilment of each criterion on the basis of quantitative scores and textual justifications. For each criterion, scores between 0 and 5 can be assigned based on the comments of the evaluators. The criteria can be weighted according to their importance for the overall score. The total score can be between 0 and 100. The assessment is divided into three parts:

- a) strategic assessment (30 points),
- b) territorial assessment (15 points),
- c) sectoral assessment (55 points).

The final score is the sum of the average scores from each part of the quality assessment. Two thresholds for the minimum score are applied in the quality assessment. Firstly, if the submitted application does not reach the 60% of the maximum score in the strategic and territorial assessment, the application will not be forwarded to the sectoral assessment. Secondly, if the submitted application does not reach 65% of the maximum score in the quality assessment, the project will be rejected without consideration. Based on the results of the quality assessment and considering the programme allocation the Joint Secretariat prepares a ranking list of projects grouped into the following categories:

- a) projects proposed for approval,
- b) projects proposed for approval with condition,
- c) projects proposed to be put on the reserve list,
- d) project proposed to be rejected due to insufficient funds,

- e) projects proposed to be rejected due to not reaching the minimum threshold of scores.

State aid check

The objective of the state aid check is to evaluate the conformity of the application with the relevant State aid rules.

For more information on quality assessment criteria, please consult the **Assessment grids** and the **Methodology for selection of operations** published as part of this call.

Monitoring Committee decision

Based on the results of the quality assessment and the thresholds reached by the project proposals, the following decisions can be taken by the monitoring committee in accordance with its Rules of Procedure:

- a) projects approved,
- b) projects approved with conditions,
- c) projects put on the reserve list,
- d) projects rejected due to insufficient funds,
- e) projects rejected due to not reaching the minimum threshold of scores,

After the decision of the Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority informs the Lead Applicants of the outcome of the quality assessment and the decision of the Monitoring Committee.

Complaint procedure

A complaint can be filed against the decision as part of a fair and transparent procedure. Complaint can be filed against the funding decision regarding the project selection applied to the Lead Partner whose

- a) project application was not selected for programme financing during the project assessment or the selection process, or whose
- b) project application was approved for programme co-financing under conditions set by the Monitoring Committee if the disagreement on the conditions cannot be resolved during the contracting process between the Managing Authority and Lead Partner.

The complaint shall be written in English and can be lodged only against the following criteria:

- a) based on the selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee the outcomes of the eligibility or quality assessment of the project application do not correspond to the information provided by the Lead Partner during the project assessment and selection process; and/or
- b) the project assessment and selection process failed to comply with specific procedures laid down in the Call for proposals, Applicant's manual or any other guiding document that materially affected or could have materially affected the decision.

The complaint should be lodged in writing to the Joint Secretariat within 14 calendar days after the Lead Partner had been officially notified about the results of the project selection process or conditions set by the Monitoring Committee. The complaint should include:

- a) name and address of the Lead Partner
- b) reference number of the application which is a subject of the complaint
- c) clearly indicated reasons for the complaint, including listing of all elements of the assessment which are being complaint and/or failures
- d) signature of the legal representative of the Lead Partner
- e) any supporting documents.

For more information about the complaint procedure, please consult the **Methodology for selection of operations** published as part of this call.

Contracting procedure

The Subsidy contract setting out the conditions for the entire project is concluded between the Managing Authority and the Lead Partner. As a result, the Lead Partner is legally responsible for the delivery of the whole project. General tasks of the Lead Partner are specified in the Subsidy contract template published as part of the present Call. Before the contract is concluded, the JS initiates a technical meeting between all partners to clarify the project form. In particular, the aim of this meeting is to:

- apply the contractual conditions defined by the Monitoring Committee if relevant
- define the project start date and its duration
- clarify the project activities, in particular their description, duration and outcomes
- clarify the relevance, price and description of the different budget lines, and
- clarify the target value and description of the selected indicators.

For more information on the terms and conditions of the contract, please consult the template for the **Subsidy Contract** the **Partnership Agreement** published as part of this call.

Mandatory documents for contracting

For each project, the subsidy contract for the EU contribution can be signed if the following documents are submitted by all project partners within the deadline stated in notifying letter:

Proof of eligibility

- **Foundation document**
Each partner must submit a copy of the organisation's founding document according to its nature (e.g. founding letter, memorandum, articles of association, partnership agreement, etc.).
- **Certificate**
Each partner must provide an authentic certificate of the organisation issued by the registering authority (e.g. ministry, court, tax office, etc.) not older than 30 days.
- **Declarations on SME qualification**
Each SME Partner must submit an SME qualification statement on template provided by the JS. The declaration template must be downloaded, completed, printed and signed by the legal representative(s).
- **Confirmation of the Tax Authority**
Each SME Partner registered in Slovakia must submit confirmation of the Tax Authority about no public debt or record in their database of organizations having no public debt.
- **Confirmation of the social insurance company**
Each SME Partner registered in Slovakia must submit confirmation of the social insurance company about no due payment or record in their database of organizations having no due payment.

- **Confirmation of the health insurance company**

Each SME Partner registered in Slovakia must submit confirmation of the health insurance companies about no due payment or record in their database of organizations having no due payment.

Proof of property ownership rights

Any partner making investments in infrastructure must provide one of the following documents for all parcels:

- **Property deed**

If the Partner is the owner of the property, applicants must submit the property deed, which is not older than 90 days at the time of submission.

- **Long term permission to use or operate**

In case the Partner does not own the property, the Partner shall submit

- permission to use or operate the property for an indefinite period or for at least 10 years after the planned end date of the project,
- declaration of consent of the current owner to the planned investment and
- property deed not older than 90 days at the time of submission.

- **Documents for the purchase**

If the Partners are willing to purchase the property under the project, they must submit the following documents:

- letter of intent to sell or preliminary purchase agreement for the property,
- property deed not older than 90 days at the time of filing, and
- independent appraisal report not older than 90 days at the time of filing.

Permission to build or renovate

- **Notification**

If the investment requires only a notification to the competent authority, the Partner must submit the notification and the official declaration of the competent authority.

- **Building permission**

If the investment requires a building permit issued by the competent building authority, the Partner must provide the copy of the official building permit.

Depending on the type of the project part, the Managing Authority or the Joint Secretariat may request further documents during the contracting procedure. The MA may terminate the contracting procedure and withdraw from the subsidy contract if the partner is not able to submit the required documents in due time.

Data protection and processing policy

The controller (hereafter: Data controller) of the data provided in the application is the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat. The Data controller processes personal data in accordance with the principles of good faith, fairness and transparency and subject to applicable law and the provisions of this Policy. The Data controller processes personal data only on the basis of the Data Protection and Data Processing Policy and for a specific purpose and does not go beyond that purpose.

If the Data controller intends to use personal data for a purpose other than the original purpose, the Data controller shall inform the data subject of that purpose and use and obtain the data subject's prior and explicit consent (unless there is another legal basis established by the GDPR), and the Data controller shall give the data subject the opportunity to defy the use of the personal data.

The Data controller does not control the personal data provided, the person who provided the personal data is responsible for its appropriateness. The Data controller does not disclose any Personal Data unless the Data controller is entitled and obliged to transfer or forward Personal Data available to the Data controller and duly stored by the Data controller to the competent authority, where the transfer and forwarding of Personal Data is stipulated by a law or a legally binding official order. The Data controller shall not be liable for any such transmission or its consequences.

The Data controller shall ensure the security of personal data, take all technical and organisational measures and establish procedural rules to ensure the protection of personal data collected, stored and processed and to prevent accidental loss, destruction, unauthorised access, use, unauthorised alteration and unauthorised disclosure.

The Data Protection Policy of the relevant programme bodies can be found on the Programme website.