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Euro-MED



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Making
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Green Transition
happen



Open Call for Proposals Euro-MED05

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The 5th call for proposals is targeted to thematic Strategic territorial projects focused on the Smarter and Greener Mediterranean Programme priorities and the related specific objectives:

Programme priorities and the related specific objectives:

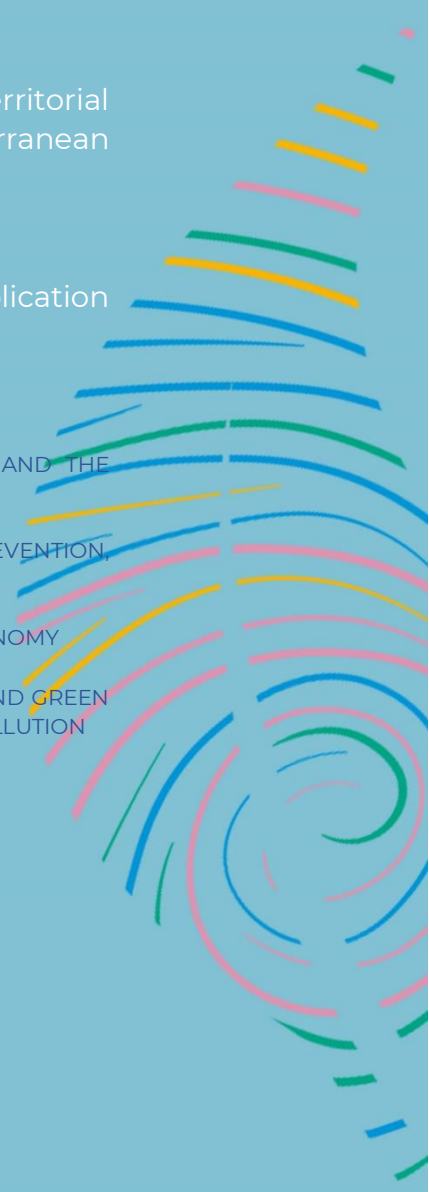
Call open under 2 steps: A Pre-application step and a full application step

1.1 DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CAPACITIES AND THE UPTAKE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

2.4 PROMOTING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK PREVENTION, RESILIENCE, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ECO-SYSTEM-BASED APPROACHES

2.6 PROMOTING THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR AND RESOURCE EFFICIENT ECONOMY

2.7 ENHANCING PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURE, BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING IN URBAN AREAS AND REDUCING ALL FORMS OF POLLUTION



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Introduction

The ambition of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme (hereafter “The Programme”), whose cooperation area covers 69 regions in 14 countries¹, is to support the **transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society**, in line with the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, and the Territorial Agenda 2030.

In order to reach this goal and ensure concrete and manageable solutions, the Programme identified 4 **missions**²:

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

Each mission operates as a **portfolio of actions** working on complementary thematic issues to enhance the full potential of their results.

To contribute and to be part of a mission is mandatory for projects.

The actions under those missions are addressed within the Priorities, related Specific Objectives and types of projects supported by the Programme.

The Smarter and Greener Mediterranean priorities, implemented via **Thematic projects**, encompass the issues tackled by the Programme’s missions.

The Better Mediterranean Governance priority, implemented via **Governance projects**, is the backbone for strengthening and amplifying the results of the Thematic projects in cooperation and coordination with other Programmes, initiatives, and strategies in the area.



Thematic Strategic Territorial projects are the only category targeted by this call³ They conduct studies, test solutions and transfer results addressing strategic topics of a specific type of territory. Therefore, this category of projects embeds all 3 phases of a project admitted by the Programme: study-test-transfer.

Each Thematic Strategic Territorial project **shall contribute to one of the priorities and specific objectives** (SO) selected by the Programme:

1. Smarter Mediterranean:
 - 1.1 “Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies”,

¹ For information on the Programme cooperation area, please see: [Where we work - Programme Interreg Euro-MED \(interreg-euro-med.eu\)](https://interreg-euro-med.eu)

² For information on the Programme approach and missions, please see: [What we do - Programme Interreg Euro-MED \(interreg-euro-med.eu\)](https://interreg-euro-med.eu)

³ For information on the Programme different types and categories of projects, please see: [What we do - Programme Interreg Euro-MED \(interreg-euro-med.eu\)](https://interreg-euro-med.eu)

2. Greener Mediterranean:

- 2.6 “Promoting the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy”,
- 2.4 “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches”,
- 2.7 “Enhancing protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure including in urban areas and reducing all forms of pollution”,

To resume, each Thematic Strategic Territorial project **shall contribute to one of the 4 missions and one of the specific objectives** (aligned to one of the priorities) of the Programme:



Illustration of the structure of the programmes and types of projects: Priorities, Specific Objectives and Missions.

Thematic strategic territorial projects will be supported by one Governance Thematic community project and one Governance Institutional Dialogue project per each mission. Governance projects are already on-going.

For your information, Thematic Community projects (not targeted by this call) facilitate the exchanges and the development of synergies between projects. They develop technical knowledge embedding the results of the projects and support the effective transfer of their results to other territories or stakeholders.

Institutional Dialogue projects (not targeted by this call) support the effective cooperation of all stakeholders concerned by the Programme missions to improve the governance at transnational level within and beyond the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area. They optimize the conditions for the transfer and the mainstreaming of the projects results into practices and public policies.

A close cooperation between Thematic strategic territorial project and governance projects is essential to achieve the project objectives. More information is provided in the section “Cooperation with Governance projects”, below.

Improving governance is closely linked to the process of capitalisation of project results. This requires addressing all actors of the territories concerned, including those not directly involved in the Programme.

Therefore, the design of different types of projects is based on the overall strategy of the Programme, called "[Results Amplification Strategy](#)" (RAS), developed to amplify results of Thematic projects and have a more sustainable impact on the territories through better coordination and, where possible, integration of (inter)sectoral practices and policies.

It is essential to take into account the Programme RAS before and during the design of the proposal to fully understand the challenges related to the implementation of the thematic Strategic Territorial projects, which are the targeted category of projects for this call for proposals.

What is the type of project targeted under this Call?

This call targets exclusively Thematic Strategic Territorial projects.

Thematic Strategic Territorial projects should respond to the needs and joint challenges of a specific type of territory addressing identified strategic topics. Thus, they primarily produce a territorial impact, based on involving all relevant stakeholders to trigger tailor-made solutions or strategies in line with the territory and the topic chosen. Those should be adapted for the targeted type of territory and be able to influence national, regional or local policies by studying (developing), testing and transferring jointly developed solutions or strategies.

For this purpose, thematic Strategic Territorial projects shall combine: conducting studies, testing solutions and transferring results. Therefore, 3 corresponding and interlinked Work packages shall be foreseen in the Application Form.

Indicative types of activities for the Study Work Package:

- o Analysing and establishing the state of the art in the field of intervention (including the capitalisation of outputs/results from relevant past projects implemented in the Programme area), produce complementary data and references in the involved territories
- o Designing common approaches for developing new common solutions, strategies, action plans.

Indicative types of activities for the Test Work Package:

- o Developing and testing common solutions, strategies or action plans through pilot activities
- o Assessing and monitoring results from pilot activities
- o Elaborating plans for transferability of results

Indicative types of activities for the Transfer Work Package:

- o Developing stakeholder mapping to define target roles and objectives
- o Supporting the adoption of tested solutions, strategies or action plans in the involved territories
- o Supporting the transfer of tested solutions, strategies or action plans in other territories with similar characteristics in the Programme area

Hence, thematic Strategic Territorial projects should:

- o Generate a direct impact on policies by developing new area-tailored strategical solutions or strategies.
- o Integrate partners with direct competence in the field tackled to:
 - 1, Build and implement solutions or strategies at the local level

2, Transfer those solutions or strategies to other organisms, stakeholders, networks operating in territories with the same characteristics within the Programme area and/or beyond (the whole Mediterranean basin for instance)

Territorial focus and topics targeted by the 5th call

The subsequent territorial and thematic focuses have been identified for the 5th call:

Types of territories⁴:

- Islands
- Rural areas
- Mountain areas

These territories, relevant and important for the whole Programme area, have been less covered by the 2nd Call for proposals (for thematic projects) and require dedicated solutions for specific challenges they are facing.

Topics:

- Waste prevention and reduction
- Water scarcity

These topics are of priority for the Programme area and need adapted solutions for the targeted areas. They are addressed in a complementary way through the scope of all Programme missions.

Both topics are targeted for the three types of territories.

Which are the Programme objectives targeted with these Terms of reference?

These Terms of reference (hereinafter ToR) concern projects under the Cohesion Policy Objective PO1 “A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity” and PO2 “A greener, low-carbon Europe transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe” summarised for the Programme under the priorities “Smarter Mediterranean” and “Greener Mediterranean”.

Each project selected for this call must:

- contribute to tackle one of the topics identified for this call **Water scarcity or Waste reduction and prevention**. *The particular relevance of the project for the chosen topic will be assessed during the pre-application phase (1st step),*
- address one type of territory targeted by this call: **Islands** or **Rural** or **Mountain areas** **(it is also possible to combine rural and mountain areas)**. *The particular*

⁴ For selection of target territories see section “What are the targeted areas”

relevance of the project for the chosen type of territory will be assessed during the pre-application phase (1st step)

- contribute to one of the **Programme missions** and one of the **related specific objectives** (SO)

In the context of the 5th Call for proposals, all 4 Programme missions are eligible. One mission can concern one or several specific objectives.

To sum up, each project shall select one Mission and one related Specific objective to which it will contribute to and shall target one type of territory and one topic, coherently linking the three types of Work Packages (study, test, transfer).

THE MISSION “STRENGTHENING AN INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY”

This mission aims to tackle the need of innovative solutions to support the implementation of sustainable practices fostering a resilient economy and society, based on a systemic approach.

Projects in this mission should allow, through transnational cooperation, the development of solutions and strategies based on all type of innovation in the sector of the Green and Blue economy. Innovation is intended as the use of new ideas, products or methods where they are not used before and can take different forms (organisational, process or product innovation, social or eco-innovation).

The mission tackles the issue of water scarcity from the angle of innovation in order to improve efficient management of resources, sobriety⁵ and efficiency of uses.

Regarding waste prevention and reduction the aim is to support innovation working on reducing waste production and improving management and valorisation of waste.

Specific objectives targeted under the mission Innovative Sustainable Economy are:

SO 1.1 Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies,

Indicative example for a thematic Strategic Territorial project: Integrated technologies to combat water scarcity on islands.

SO 2.6 Promoting the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy

⁵ Sobriety refers to the reduction of water demand / needs. It refers to a reasonable / rational consumption of water in order to meet a specific need.

It does not necessarily imply a technology but rather an approach to decrease the water demand.

Moreover, The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - UN) defines in its 6th assessment report (WG III, Summary for policy makers) *sufficiency policies* as a “**set of measures and daily practices that make it possible to avoid a demand for energy, materials, land and water while delivering human well-being for all within planetary boundaries**”.

The concept of sobriety put forward in the ToR correspond to this definition.

Indicative example for a thematic Strategic Territorial project: Waste prevention through circular economy in rural agricultural production.

THE MISSION “PROTECTING, RESTORING AND VALORISING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE”

The mission **Natural Heritage** aims at contributing to meet the environmental objectives planned by EU and included in the EU Green Deal but also developed in the EU Communication on Sustainable Blue Economy and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Barcelona Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). To do so, it seeks to promote an environmentally healthier and economically more viable model for society by means of adaptation to/ mitigation of climate change impacts and protection, restoration, valorisation of nature.

The Mission therefore strongly contributes to the main objective of the Programme supporting a more climate-neutral and resilient society on several fields:

- “Bringing nature back to our life” by fighting against the loss of biodiversity and boosting actions of adaption to/ mitigation of climate change impacts.
- The harmonisation of tools and practices tackled to monitor and manage natural disasters and risks induced by human activities.
- The adoption of a common approach for the prevention of climate change effects.

Furthermore, the improvement of effective governance frameworks able to ensure the sustainability in the management of natural resources but also sustainable financing mechanisms will be key for the achievement of main Mission's objectives.

By this call water scarcity can be addressed via its impact on natural resources or ecosystems of the identified territories and the design and adaptation of approaches for resilience, while waste can be tackled by the prevention and reduction of all related pressures on the natural heritage.

Specific objectives targeted under the mission Natural heritage are:

SO 2.4 “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches”

Indicative example for a Strategic Territorial project: Prioritization of water uses in a context of water scarcity and potential conflicting uses: domestic, agricultural, industrial, hydropower, winter-tourism

SO 2.7 “Enhancing protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure including in urban areas and reducing all forms of pollution”

Indicative examples for a Strategic Territorial project: Preventing illegal landfills in Mediterranean rural areas; Protecting groundwater in Mediterranean island aquifers.

THE MISSION “PROMOTING GREEN LIVING AREAS”

The mission aims at minimising the impact of living areas in the Euro-MED area and the global climate system, thus contributing to their path to become carbon neutral.

In that context, the Programme intends to contribute to greener policies and strategies and to the adaptation of the regulatory framework. The mission seeks a holistic and transdisciplinary approach promoting stakeholders, citizens and communities' engagement, to act as transformative power creating socio-ecological local alliances.

The mission addresses the water scarcity issue through the scope of quality and quantity: promoting sobriety, availability and protection.

The mission addresses the waste reduction and prevention issue through the scope of quantity and hazardousness: promoting local and eco-design, repair, reuse, and waste reduction policies.

Specific objective targeted under the mission Green Living Areas is:

SO 2.4 “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches”

Indicative example of a thematic Strategic Territorial project: tackling leaks in water distribution networks.

THE MISSION “ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM”

The main objective of this mission is to reinforce and promote sustainability in the tourism sector, through ensuring the protection and valorisation of the natural and cultural resources of the area and overcoming the heavy impacts of climate change and mass tourism on Mediterranean destinations, in the coastal areas but also inland. The final goal is to support a permanent and sustainable change in tourism practices.

To achieve this, the mission addresses the development of **sustainable tourism** as a transversal issue by:

- fostering smart tourism by promoting innovation technologies and enhancing research,
- supporting climate change adaptation in tourism destinations,
- fostering the implementation of circular economy in the tourism sector,
- promoting the preservation of natural resources and the reduction of pollution, considering sustainable eco-system services as touristic assets to protect and promote.

In this call, projects should either:

1) tackle the issue of water scarcity caused by tourist pressure on islands or rural and/or mountainous areas, or

2) tackle the management and reduction of waste generated by tourists and tourist businesses in these same areas (islands, rural areas, mountains).

Specific objectives targeted under the mission Sustainable Tourism are:

SO 1.1 Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies,

Indicative example for a thematic Strategic Territorial project: Smart management of waste produced by tourism facilities.

SO 2.4 “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches”

Indicative example for a thematic Strategic Territorial project: Reuse of wastewater through natural filtration in touristic areas.

SO 2.6 Promoting the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy

Indicative example for a thematic Strategic Territorial project: Inclusion of sobriety in tourism business models for better waste prevention

SO 2.7 “Enhancing protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure including in urban areas and reducing all forms of pollution”

Indicative example for a thematic Strategic Territorial project: Improvement of natural water storage areas in touristic destinations to support biodiversity, fight pollution, and ensure drinking water to inhabitants and tourists.

For all 4 missions and where appropriate, when addressing these issues, **synergies with smart specialisation strategies (S3)** covering the Interreg Euro-MED cooperation area are encouraged.

COMPLEMENTARITIES

Projects should integrate in the design of their proposal, complementarities with other initiatives, strategies and programmes priorities focusing on similar challenges, among others:

- UfM and more specifically the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, along with the “2030 Greener Med” Agenda supporting its implementation and the Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy
- UNEP-MAP
- EUSAIR macro-regional strategy
- EUSALP macro-regional strategy
- WestMED Initiative (sea-basin strategy)
- BLUEMED Initiative
- Other European Programmes covering all shores of the Mediterranean (ADRION, NextMED, Horizon Europe, LIFE, PRIMA, EMFAF...),
- Regional programmes financed by ERDF, EARD, EAFRD,

- Multi-Programme Coordination mechanism on Sustainable Tourism⁶

Moreover, projects should contribute to relevant strategies/directives, depending on the project focus, among others:

- EU Green Deal
- Territorial Agenda 2030
- EU strategy for Sustainable Tourism (P9 TA(2021)0109)
- Circular Economy action plan
- Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste
- A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy
- Waste Framework Directive – Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives
- Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe (COM(2011) 571)
- Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
- EU's growth strategy for a sustainable future
- New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change
- European Climate Law (achieving climate neutrality by 2050)
- European Climate Pact (citizen-oriented actions towards green living areas, transport, buildings and skills)
- The New European Bauhaus
- New EU Forest Strategy
- EU SME Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- The sustainable blue economy communication (May 2021)
- The EU Report on the long-term vision for rural areas

⁶ The main objective of the **pilot multi-programme coordination mechanism** is to enhance synergies among Mediterranean programmes for developing Interreg reinforced policy recommendations as well as joint monitoring and evaluation actions based on tested/transferred good practices and innovative solutions in the Mediterranean area, thus increasing the overall impact and sustainability of the invested resources in the territories.

While respecting the governance and operational prerogatives of each programme, the proposal encourages a reinforced coordination between the Interreg Mediterranean programmes integrating the multi-programme mechanism and their Managing Authorities/Joint Secretariats, in order to foster the complementarities of various convergent projects, able to ensure a more effective contribution to a single shared strategic priority.

Participating Programmes: Italy-France Maritime; Euro-MED; Next MED; Interreg Greece-Cyprus; Italy-Croatia; Italy-Malta; Italy-Tunisia.

Currently observer Programmes: Interreg IPA Adria, Interreg Italy-Slovenia, IPA South Adriatic

What are the expected outputs and results?

The projects selected under each mission must develop a set of activities to tackle the identified common challenges and lead to the expected change in the identified key sectors. Activities shall be designed to produce the outputs and reach the results listed below. Possible types of activities are described in the [Programme Manual](#). (Section “Design the project activities” and Annex “Deliverables list”).

Depending on the Specific Objective, selected projects are particularly expected to produce solutions and strategies or action plans.

Solutions are methodologies, tools, technologies, services, partnership/cooperation agreements and should be developed through the involvement from at least 2 partners from the Programme cooperation area, tested in real conditions and easily transferable.

In the context of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the participation of all partners in the development of the solution is encouraged, depending on the nature of the activities implemented.

A **strategy** is a course of actions designed to achieve a long-term goal in a specific domain.

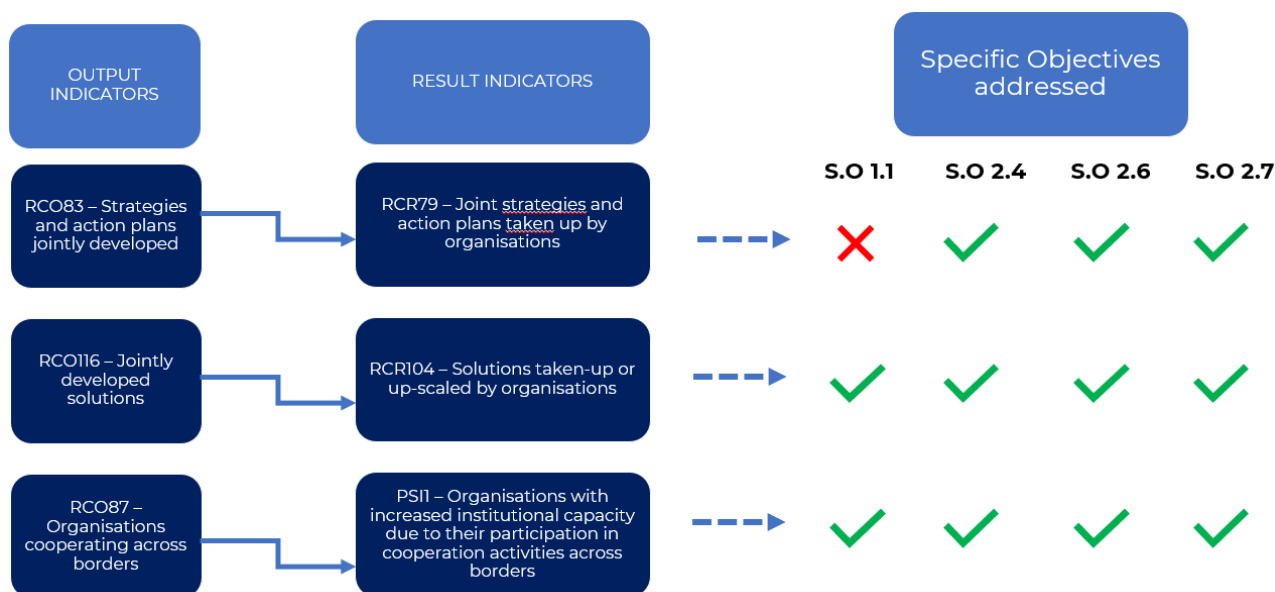
An **action plan** is the translation of jointly developed strategies into actions. Targeted strategies should contribute to the main Mediterranean or EU policies/directives of the topic tackled and be easily transferable.

All activities developing outputs and providing results in target areas must be carried out from a transnational perspective. In other words, the final output should be transnational in scope, not exclusively local.

Other achievements could be carried out as long as they are coherent with the corresponding SO and the requirements of the ToR.

Programme indicators

By developing such solutions, strategies and action plans, projects will contribute to the Programme indicators, depending on the S.O. they are applying to. Please consult the [Programme Manual](#) (Section Building my project / Designing project activities + Annex Methodology and Indicators template) for defining the project contribution to the Programme indicators:



- **Output indicator “Organisations cooperating across borders” (RCO87):**

The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in the supported project. An organisation is the legal entity acting as partner or associate partner in the project.

- **Result indicator “Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders” (PSI1):**

This indicator measures the number of organisations (defined in RCO87), that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. It refers in particular to organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions, strategies and action plans.

- **Output indicator “Jointly developed solutions” (RCO116)**

This indicator counts the solution newly developed by the project partnership or the solution already developed that are adapted to the Programme context and geographic area by the partnership.

- **Result indicator “Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations” (RCR104)**

This indicator measures the number of solutions (defined in RCO116) (other than legal or administrative), developed by the supported project and taken-up or upscaled by a given organisation. The uptake or upscale (effective or at initial stage) should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project is not necessarily a direct participant in the project.

- **Output indicator “Strategies and action plans jointly developed” (RCO83)**

This indicator counts the strategies, and action plans developed jointly at regional or local level.

- **Result Indicator “Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations” (RCR79)**

This indicator measures the strategies/action plans (defined in **RCO83**) effectively taken up or being at the initial stage of uptake, by the supported project. The uptake should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. The organisation adopting the strategies/action plans developed by the project may be or not a direct participant in the project.

What are the targeted areas and target groups?

The interventions planned by the projects must cover specific kind of territories of the Programme (targeted areas) and point at specific groups of beneficiaries (target groups), in order to maximise their impact in the frame of the objectives pursued by the corresponding mission.

Targeted areas

The territorial scope of projects submitted under the 5th call is referring to:

- Islands:

For this call islands are defined according to the definition by the Eurostat glossary⁷:

- a minimum surface of 1 km²;
- a minimum distance between the island and the mainland of 1 km;
- a resident population of more than 50 inhabitants;
- no fixed link (for example, a bridge, a tunnel, or a dyke) between the island(s) and the mainland.

If the above mentioned criteria are met, the islands can fall under the scope of this Call, (even if they are not defined as “Island region” in Eurostat).

- Rural or mountain areas

According to their approach, projects can either target rural or mountain specificities, or both.

Even if for large areas of the Mediterranean rural and mountain typologies overlap, the scope of the projects can be very different and the methodology for the identification of territories is not the same.

For the identification of rural areas and mountain areas in the sense of this call, it is proposed to rely on the Eurostat methodology:

⁷ Glossary: Island region - Statistics Explained (europa.eu)

Rural areas are defined by “Rural grid cells : grid cells of 1 km² outside of urban centres and urban clusters”, that are deployed at different geocode standards.

For the purposes of this call the *local administrative units geocode (LAU)* is considered most appropriate, as it offers the possibility of geo-localisation of target areas via the *Degree of Urbanisation (DEGUBRA)*⁸ methodology.

For the identification of target territories under this Call the territories to be considered without further justification are listed in:

1. The relevant map of the Eurostat atlas⁹ and the file EU-27-LAU-2023-NUTS-2023.xlsx¹⁰
2. For Bosnia and Herzegovina no Eurostat-data is available. Here you may refer to Annex IV of this ToR and consider all municipalities with a density below 100 inhabitants/km² as “rural”
3. For Montenegro no Eurostat-data is available. All municipalities can be considered except Budva, Herceg Novi, Podgorica, Tivat, Zeta (above 100inhabitants/ km2).

For all other territories not listed above, that your project would like to target as “rural”, please provide a justification of the characteristics of the proposed territory in section C.3 of the pre-application form.

Mountain areas are identified by Eurostat based on digital elevation model (DEM), a 3-D approximation of the surface of a terrain produced from elevation data and a grid based on population data¹¹. All three mountain typologies can be considered.

- where more than 50 % of the surface is covered by topographic mountain areas;
- in which more than 50 % of the regional population lives in topographic mountain areas;
- where more than 50 % of the surface is covered by topographic mountain areas and where more than 50 % of the regional population lives in these mountain areas.

For the purposes of this call and given the Eurostat typology, the NUTS3 level is considered most appropriate.

For the identification of target territories under this Call the territories to be considered without further justification are listed in:

⁸https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Applying_the_degree_of_urbanisation_manual

⁹ Eurostat - Statistical Atlas (europa.eu)

¹⁰ EU-27-LAU-2023-NUTS-2023.xlsx Please use the file partially validated in 2023. The reference information can be found in column H DEGUBRA; For verification, please select the targeted municipalities within the folders of the concerned countries. All local authorities of category “3” can be considered as rural areas without further territorial justification.

¹¹ Territorial typologies manual - mountain regions - Statistics Explained (europa.eu)

1. The relevant map of the Eurostat atlas¹² 2. For Bosnia and Herzegovina no Eurostat-data is available, but the whole country can be considered as mountain area.

For all other territories not listed above, that your project would like to target as “mountain territories”, please provide a justification of the characteristics of the proposed territory in section C.3 of the pre-application form.

Target groups

The core target groups of the Programme consist of national, regional and local public authorities engaged in policymaking, working together with other relevant bodies responsible for the definition and implementation of policies.

Target groups are:

- Public authorities having direct competency in the administrative or operational management of the selected topic
- Sectoral agencies
- Infrastructure and public service providers
- Interest groups including NGOs
- Higher education and research organisations
- Education/training centres and schools
- Enterprises, including SMEs
- General public

Coordination with Governance projects

Each project shall participate actively in the thematic community of the mission it belongs to, and benefit from the experience and support of the governance projects. Those activities will be co-financed through the project budget.

This implies active participation in group activities and investment in the activities of the governance projects to maximise the impact of project results. The details of these activities are developed by the governance projects that will lead their implementation, but from the outset, thematic projects must adhere to this approach of cooperation between projects for the Programme strategy to work. In the project proposal, this dimension must be integrated, and a part of the budget must remain flexible to allow at

¹² [Eurostat - Statistical Atlas \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu)

least the **participation in meetings** (indicatively 2 per year) and the necessary **preparation** (providing data, participating in collective workshops, etc).

Moreover, the Programme supports the implementation of the Euro-MED Academy in coordination with Governance projects which serve as a training platform to support the dissemination and transfer of knowledge and results. In this framework, all thematic projects are expected to participate in the **joint elaboration of pedagogical material** and have to produce at least **a short (1 minute) video presentation** to be published. The creation of this video will be framed by the Academy steering committee composed of representatives of the JS and the governance projects in order to ensure a common harmonised approach.

For more details on activities to be foreseen, please refer to the Programme Manual, “Designing the project activities” and specially the “**Mandatory activities to be integrated in each proposal**” and “Drawing up my budget” sections.

What should the projects build on?

The capitalisation of experiences and results is a common thread in the Programme and the core of its strategy to amplify results. Project proposals for this call shall build upon previous results, in particular when the necessity to implement a thematic strategic territorial project is identified.

Project proposals should take into account at least the Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020 experience and draw on the implementation and work of previously implemented projects.

To this end, we invite you to consult the library of the Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020 where you will find the main deliverables of all the projects: Interreg MED (interreg-med.eu)

Capitalisation of knowledge and experience should not stop at the Interreg MED Programme. For this reason, it is important to consider in the drafting of your proposal also results from implemented projects of other relevant programmes or initiatives.

You can consult all information regarding EU funded programmes and results in the following links: <https://interreg.eu/> and <https://keep.eu> for Interreg projects and Projects & Results (europa.eu) for directly managed by the European Commission Programmes.

As a non-exhaustive list, and after consultation with different Programmes, results from past projects, on which applicants could capitalise on, or complementarities with ongoing projects, that could be seek during project implementation, from the following Programmes could be also relevant for this Call:

PRIMA: <https://prima-med.org/what-we-do/years/>

LIFE: [LIFE 3.0 - LIFE Project Public Page \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Best projects and LIFE Awards - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

Results from projects under the “Nature and biodiversity”, “Circular economy and quality of life” subprogrammes of the Environmental Field and the “Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation” subprogramme of the Climate Action Field are particularly relevant for this Call.

Examples from Interreg Transnational Programmes:

Interreg Alpine Space: all past and ongoing projects are mountain relevant.

Interreg South-West: (past projects)

Water scarcity

AQUIFER: main output <https://platform.aquifer-sudoe.eu/>

TWIST: main output : <https://twistmarketplace.eu/>

AGUAMOD : main output : <http://www.aguamod-sudoe.eu/handbook/>

Interreg Central Europe: (on-going projects)

Waste reduction and prevention

Rebuilt : waste reduction and prevention in the construction sector

Circotronic: waste reduction in the electronic manufacturing sector

CIREVALC: Waste prevention through circular regional value chains in the food, packaging, and catering sector

Circular WEEEP: Waste management of electrical and electronic equipment

Smart Circuit: Introducing circular economy practices to reduce waste from manufacturing sector

Tebice : Biorefineries for repurposing biomass (waste) from agriculture

Water scarcity

Maurice: Water management in urban areas to prevent water scarcity

IPA ADRION: (on-going projects)

Waste reduction and prevention:

CIRCLEWASTE Scaling up eWASTE circular economy in Adrion region

BLUECIRCLE Boosting Circular Economy Solutions for Marine Litter Collection and Recycling in the Adriatic-Ionian Regions

Water scarcity:

AQUA Enhancing Water Management for Climate Change Resilience in the Adriatic-Ionian area

PRIMES Preventing drought Risks by Making resilient communitiES in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

Examples from Interreg Cross-border Programmes:

Italy-France Marittimo: (on-going projects)

Water scarcity (S.O.2.4.):

PROTERINA4Future strategic project on drought and flood risks

ADAPTWISE on drought and flood risks

Waste reduction and prevention (S.O. 2.6):

CIRCULA waste reduction and prevention in the construction sector

PLASTRON plastic waste reduction and prevention in marine environment

FEASIBLE on agro-forestry plant waste

MARLAINE on wool use

P.Ri.S.Ma. MED2 on fisheries and acquaculture waste

Italy-Croatia: (on-going projects)

Waste reduction and prevention

AWASTER – on minimisation of waste generation through the improvement of consumers' Behaviours.

FishNoWaste on fishing-generated marine litter

WASTEREDUCE on waste management in protected and Natura 2000 areas

Italy-Slovenia: (on-going projects)

Water scarcity

IRRIGAVIT Rational irrigation and soil management in cross-border viticulture

Waste reduction and prevention

RECREATE Improving the circular economy model for collection and processing of fibre-reinforced composites, containing waste

WASTE DESIGN 2.0 Developing joint solutions and testing innovative technologies in the field of waste management and reuse to promote circular economy

Interreg Greece-Cyprus: (past projects)

Water scarcity

Επιροή Monitoring system for water supply networks and support of the identification and recovery of loads

Smart Water Intelligent Water Distribution Networks to Reduce Losses

Technical Data sheet

Financial allocation and project duration

The indicative financial allocation for this call for proposals is around 35 million euros in total (28M€ of Interreg funds + 7M€ of national co-financing).

An estimated number of 8-10 projects are expected to be selected within this call.

- Total budget per project should not exceed 4 000 000 EUR
- Project duration: maximum 45 months

Expected partnership structure for this call

- **As a minimum, the project partnership must be composed of partners based in five (5) different countries within the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area** (eligibility criteria B.1).
- **The Lead Partner (LP) is a public body, or a body governed by public law** (as defined in Directive 2014/24/EU) (eligibility criteria B.2).
- Partners must justify they **have direct ability to intervene** on targeted territories.

For thematic Strategic Territorial projects, it is highly recommended to include institutional partners, operational partners and networks, with direct competence on the field tackled and on policy implementation, since the partnership shall be able to implement activities related to all three phases (study, test, transfer) and should not exceed 10-12 project partners, following their project management experience (LP in particular).

NB: Institutions wishing to participate in the project without contributing financially are considered as "associated partners" (AP) for which no limit of participation is set; these are not considered in the respect of the minimum partnership composition¹³.

No specific restriction applies regarding partnership composition or participation in past and ongoing calls. Still, the participation to several projects within the same call is not encouraged as it might endanger the quality of the implementation.

Partners participating in other ongoing project(s) are specifically verified and validated by the National Authorities to ensure their administrative and financial capacity to implement (an) additional project(s).

¹³ Cf Programme Manual: definition of "associated partner"

Key project dates

Starting date of the activities: 01/09/2025

Ending date of all activities: 31/05/2029

Please consider that **activities related to the implementation and to the closure** (i.e preparation and presentation of the final certification by the PPs and project final report and payment claim by the LPs) must be **completed by the end date of the project**.

Timeline of the Call (NB: application in 2-steps)

The indicative timetable for the Euro-MED05 call for thematic Strategic Territorial projects is as follows:

Key steps	Dates
Transnational information event for the opening of the call	11/06/2024 in Malta <u>(only on site)</u>
Pre-application step: PRE-APPLICATION	
Opening of the Pre-Application step (project rationale / territory and topic tackled / partnership rationale)	18/06/2024 at 13.00 Brussels time
Closure of the Pre-Application step Submission of mandatory annexes	26/09/2024 at 13.00 Brussels time
National information campaign by the Programme's National Authorities	Following national calendars
Assessment of Pre-Application	October – November 2024
Pre-Selection by the Monitoring Committee	First week of December 2024
Full application step: FULL APPLICATION <u>(open only to selected pre applications)</u>	
Opening of the Full Application step (Full Application Form)	07/01/2025 at 13.00 Brussels time
Closure of the Full Application step	28/02/2025 at 13.00 Brussels time
Submission of mandatory annexes	14/03/2025
Information event and Interviews with pre-selected applicants (online)	December 2024/January 2025

Assessment of Full Application	Between March and May 2025
Selection by the Monitoring Committee	June 2025
Pre-contracting and contracting procedures	July-September 2025
Starting date of the projects	01/09/2025

Please note that the details of this schedule are subject to change **following the number of proposals submitted** and should be considered as indicative.

Submission of proposals, evaluation and selection procedure

This section describes the procedure for submitting proposals, the assessment and selection processes in the framework of the **Euro-MED05 Call – THEMATIC STRATEGIC TERRITORIAL PROJECTS**. In addition to the present specifications, the [Programme Manual](#), as well as all the documents relevant for preparing the application (courtesy version of the pre-application and application forms, templates of partners' expression of interest and partners' declarations and Jems¹⁴ Guidelines) are available on the Programme website on the dedicated page of the call.

Submission of proposals

The Lead Partner is responsible for the application process on behalf of the whole project partnership and will have to create a profile on the Jems platform to access the online form.

It is important to be sure that **the email address used** for the account creation is **easily accessible** by the applicant as it will be automatically taken over by the system for the reception of any subsequent notification, confirmation, etc.

The application procedure for this call consists of **three consecutive deadlines**:

- ➡ **Submission of the ✓ Pre-Application Form**, Euro-MED05 Call – THEMATIC STRATEGIC TERRITORIAL PROJECTS, written in English or French: to be validated on "Jems" before 26/09/2024, at 13.00 (Brussels time). (eligibility criterion A.1) and upload of **mandatory annexes** for the pre-application step (Partners (including the LP) Expressions of Interest).
- ➡ **Submission of the ✓ Full Application Form**, Euro-MED05 Call – THEMATIC STRATEGIC TERRITORIAL PROJECTS, written in English or French: to be

¹⁴ "Jems" is the Interreg Euro-MED on-line mandatory monitoring tool

validated on “Jems” before 28/02/2025, at 13.00 (Brussels time). (eligibility criterion A.1)

➡ **Submission of mandatory annexes:** to be uploaded on Jems before 14/03/2025 at 13.00 (Brussels time) (Partners (including Lead Partner) Declarations).

BOTH templates of Pre-Application Form and Full Application Form **must be created and completed in Jems system.**

BOTH courtesy versions of the Pre and Full Application forms provided by the Programme are guidance documents made available to applicants **for information only** and contain indications on the information expected in the different sections of the forms.

Mandatory annexes, documents to be provided

The following standard annexes must be **signed and uploaded in PDF format** into the system by the respective dates provided above (Brussels time):

✓ For the pre-application step:

- For each partner participating (including the LP) in the project: a copy of the Expression of Interest **downloadable on the Programme website (Call dedicated page)**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure.

✓ For the full application step:

- For each partner participating (including the LP) in the project: a copy of the partner declaration (or LP) **generated from the Jems system**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure.
- For each of the associated partners (if applicable): a copy of the associated partner declaration, **generated from the Jems system**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure.

For any partner declaring an investment in the AF: a Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles for Investment, **generated from the Jems system**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure in charge of the implementation of the so-called investment(s)

The absence of any document or an error in its contents will be presented to the Programme Monitoring Committee and may be included as a condition for the signature of the Subsidy contract (on the basis of Annex II below: List of pre-contractual criteria).

Points of attention concerning the validity of a document

The content of the templates provided by the Programme and, where applicable, generated via Jems cannot be modified or amended in any way. All templates

requiring a signature must be dated and signed (handwritten or electronic signature) to be considered valid.

The electronic signature is considered valid for the Programme as far as it is recognised at national level; in case of doubt as to the format, it is recommended to **contact your National Authority** (or the one of the partners concerned) to ensure the validity of your documents before submitting them to the Programme.

In case of delegation of signature and for any document concerned, a proof of delegation must be uploaded with the signed document for it to be considered valid.

The (signed) documents are uploaded in PDF version on Jems, **the original paper version** must be kept by the partners in the project file.

Assessment of project proposals

- **Administrative and eligibility criteria** (valid for BOTH application steps: ✓ Pre-Application and ✓ Full Application)

The administrative and eligibility check is carried out to verify whether an application meets the minimum criteria established by the Programme for the projects of the Call.

The list of administrative and eligibility criteria to be met is given below in **Annex I** of this document.

All Proposals not fulfilling one of these conditions will be considered ineligible and will not be further processed. Lead partners will be informed of the outcome of this first check.

- **Quality assessment criteria**

The list of project assessment criteria is available below in **Annex III** of this document.

✓ Pre-Application step:

The score for each assessment question will be calculated on a scale from 1 to 5 points. The evaluation grid is composed of 2 questions (Project relevance & partnership) with a single weighting.

The Lead Partners will be informed of the outcome of this assessment phase.

Successful applicants at this stage will be invited for an exchange with the JS and will have access to the full application step.

Based on the recommendations given by the JS, pre-Application elements might be improved between the pre-application step and the full application step, provided that a reasonable justification is provided.

✓ Full Application step:

The score for each assessment question will be calculated on a scale from 1 to 5 points. The evaluation grid is composed of 7 questions with a variable weighting depending on programme expectations.

The Lead Partners will be informed of the outcome of this assessment phase.

- **Pre-contractual criteria:**

If **two months**¹⁵ after the selection of the project, the issues highlighted during the pre-contracting phase and conditions are not fulfilled, the Monitoring Committee may decide to cancel the project or to withdraw the partner concerned (**Annex II**).

¹⁵ The date to be taken into account for the calculation of the two months is the one of the email sent by **the Joint Secretariat email** notifying the Monitoring Committee decision.

ANNEX I: List of administrative and eligibility criteria

Valid for BOTH application steps : ✓ Pre-Application and ✓ Full Application

N°	Criteria
A	Administrative check
A.1	The application form was submitted via the online monitoring tool of the Interreg Euro - MED Programme, Jems, respecting the deadline defined in the Terms of Reference
B	Eligibility Check
B.1	The project meets the minimum criteria relating to the composition of the partnership: 5 partners representing 5 different countries within the Interreg Euro - MED Programme cooperation area
B.2	The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of Directive 2014/24/EU)
B.3	The proposal is in line with the category of project open for this Call and the duration and budget allocated for this category
B.4	The Specific Objective selected corresponds with the Mission selected

ANNEX II: List of pre-contractual criteria

Valid for the selected applications (✓ Full Application Form)

N°	Criteria
C	Pre-contracting check
C.1	The Application Form has been consolidated considering minor technical issues and/or to integrate the adjustments deriving from the assessment phase or from the Programme Monitoring Committee recommendations/conditions.
C.2	Compulsory annexes of each partner and associated partners are duly signed and available in the Interreg Euro-MED on-line monitoring tool Jems (including, if relevant, De Minimis Declaration and Ad hoc Declaration for International Organisations under international law). When applicable, project partners have used the template provided by the Programme without modifying their content/format
C.3	In case of partner outside the Interreg Euro-MED cooperation area, a confirmation of the eligibility and of the legal status of the partner has been received by the competent national authority. The responsible authority of the respective EU Member State has provided a written communication to the MA/JS confirming aforementioned information and, in accordance with Art 22 of the ETC Regulation, its formal acceptance to reimburse any amounts unduly paid for each one of those partners, in accordance with Article 52(2) of ETC regulation.
C.4	The administrative information has been consolidated in the Application Form (partner identity, address, contact details, legal and financial information, bank account)
C.5	The budget has been consolidated in the Application Form and, if relevant, compulsory ad-hoc documents have been updated consequently and provided to the JS (correct use of flat rate, correct origin of co-financing source, justification for travel and accommodation costs declared as real cost, forecast per semester, distribution of preparation costs, state aid self-assessment).

ANNEX III: List of qualitative assessment criteria

The quality assessment will be conducted in a single phase for each step, each one being eliminatory.

Projects will be selected by the Programme Monitoring Committee, taking into consideration their score (in descending order), positions of each national delegation and budget availability for the call.

The score per assessment question will be calculated on a scale of 5 points, with some sections having a different weight considering their importance in this call:

✓ Pre-Application step :

1. Relevance with Euro-MED context x1 (max of 5 points)
2. Partnership relevance x1 (max of 5 points)

The final maximum score reachable by a proposal is of 10 points equivalent to a 100%.

The threshold for projects to be recommended to the Programme Monitoring Committee is of **7** out of 10 (70%).

Following the assessment, all pre-applications are ranked according to their final overall score. A final decision on pre-application selection or rejection is taken by the Monitoring Committee. Based on their overall score and final ranking, all proposals reaching the threshold of 7 points will be selected. Only selected pre-applications will be invited to submit a full application.

✓ Full Application step :

1. Relevance with Euro-MED context x1,5
2. Cooperation character x1
3. Intervention logic x1
4. Partnership relevance x2
5. Horizontal Principles x1
6. Work Plan x2,5
7. Budget x1.

The final maximum score reachable by a proposal is of 50 points equivalent to a 100%.

The threshold for projects to be recommended to the Programme Monitoring Committee is of **35** out of 50 (70%).

Following the assessment, all proposals are ranked according to their final overall score within one mission. A final decision on project approval or rejection is taken by the Monitoring Committee. Based on their overall score and final ranking, the proposals with the best score for each mission will be approved. In case the budget available for the Call is not sufficient to approve all projects above the threshold of 35 points, and if two applicants share the same lowest score, the Programme Monitoring Committee reserve the right to rank projects depending on the following weighted criteria: 1. Work Plan, 2. Partnership relevance, 3. Project Relevance.

As indicated in the table below, in the first column you can find the main assessment questions. Each main question is supported by specific sub-questions (guiding principles for the assessment) and corresponds to specific sections of the Application form, as mentioned in the assessment grid below.

Each main question score consists of a single score, taking into account all of the elements mentioned as sub-questions.

1. Strategic assessment criteria

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Guiding principles for the assessment □ To what extent does the project ... (Sub questions)	Sco re	Comm ent	Sections in AF	PRE Applic ation	FULL Applic ation
1.Project Relevance (with Euro-MED context and with call expectations) <i>How well is a need for the project justified?</i>	• The project addresses common territorial challenges of the Programme or joint asset of the Programme area – there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained)			C.2.1	✓	✓
	• The targeted territory and topic chosen are justified. The territory of intervention has been identified according to the criteria established within the ToR			C.2.2, C.3	✓	✓
	• The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional)			C.2.5		✓
	• The project actions will support the wider use and transfer of available knowledge and demonstrates new solutions that go beyond existing practices in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions			C.2.2	✓	✓
				C.2.6		✓
2.Cooperation character <i>What added value does the transnational cooperation bring?</i>	• The importance of the transnational approach for the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated					
	• The results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without transnational cooperation.			C.2.3		✓
				C.2.4		✓
	• There is a clear benefit from cooperating for the target groups / Programme area.					
	• Cooperation criteria are fulfilled (Please take note that the evaluator will pay special attention to the fulfilment of at least 3 of the following cooperation criteria: joint			C.7.5		✓

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Guiding principles for the assessment □ To what extent does the project ... (Sub questions)	Score	Comment	Sections in AF	PRE Application	FULL Application
	development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), and joint staffing or joint financing).					
3.Project Intervention Logic <i>To what extent is the project intervention logic relevant?</i>	• The project overall and specific objectives (including communication objectives) clearly contribute to the achievement of the Programme priority specific objective and is linked to the Results Amplification Strategy and the mission tackled. • The project outputs and results contribute to the Programme indicators – and are in line with the specific objectives and the requirements of the Priority.			C.1 C.4(only specific objectives description) A.5		✓ ✓ ✓
4.Partnership relevance <i>To what extent is the partnership</i>	• The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the challenge/joint asset for territorial development and the objectives specified for the mission tackled. • <u>Partners have direct competencies to manage and/or implement solutions on the targeted territory</u> • The project partnership: - is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory - consists of partners that complement each other - each partner plays a defined role			C.3 B.1	✓ ✓	✓ ✓

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Guiding principles for the assessment □ To what extent does the project ... (Sub questions)	Score	Comment	Sections in AF	PRE Application	FULL Application
<i>composition relevant for the proposed project?</i>	• Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.) – in particular, the Lead Partner demonstrates capacity/competence in coordinating the project action and the partnership.			B.1 C.7.1	✓	✓ ✓
	• Associated partners have a defined role and bring added value.			B.1	✓	✓
5. Horizontal principles <i>What is the project's impact on horizontal principles?</i>	• Ensure respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the implementation of the Funds. • Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation • Ensure equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective • Promote sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, accounting for UN SDG, the Paris Agreement and the "do no significant harm" principle			C.7.6		✓

2. Operational assessment criteria

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment □ To what extent does the project ...	Score	Comments	Sections in AF	PRE Application	FULL Application
6. Work plan <i>To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?</i>	- Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to planned outputs and results - Project outputs and results are realistic (it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget – and they are realistic based on the quantification provided) - Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.) - Time plan is realistic, and activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence. - Communication activities (and deliverables) are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders - Project outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted)-if not needs to be justified			C.4 C.5 C.6 C.7.2, C.7.3 D C.8.1, C.8.2 C.8.3		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
7. Budget <i>To what extent is the budget coherent, proportionate, realistic and valuable?</i>	Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation Total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement - are balanced and appropriate corresponding to the partners' responsibilities in the project.			D E.3		✓ ✓
8. Final overview	The project globally answers to the expectations and needs of the Programme. Is it coherent in the implementation of all its sections?		<u>(comment without score)</u>	Full AF		

ANNEXE IV: Bosnia and Herzegovina rural municipalities

in this report.

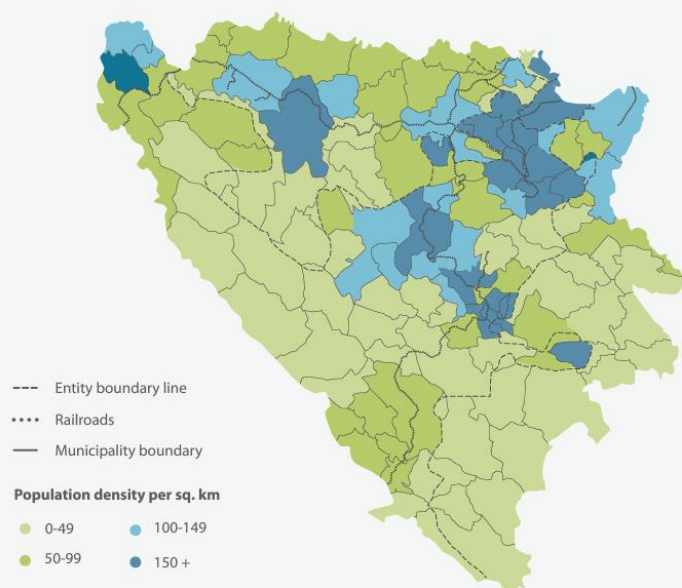


FIGURE 3.2

BiH rural municipalities (area approach)

Source: BiH state, entity and district statistical institutions, summarised on the "MyPlace" website: <http://www.mojemjesto.ba/en/statistika/population-density>

Source: UNDP