



Interreg 
Austria-Hungary 2014-2020
European Union – European Regional Development Fund

Selection Criteria

*for applications submitted to the
INTERREG V-A Austria-Hungary Programme*

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Project selection in the programme INTERREG V-A Austria-Hungary

Project selection is based on two sets of criteria:

1. administrative and eligibility criteria,
2. quality assessment criteria.

Administrative and eligibility criteria have to be fulfilled by every project proposal; they are “knock-out” criteria. They do not measure the quality of the project or its content. Only if all administrative and eligibility criteria are fulfilled a project will proceed to the MC for decision.

Quality assessment criteria measure the relevance and feasibility of the project. This is reflected in two types of assessment criteria. Strategic assessment criteria are meant to determine the extent of the project’s contribution to the achievement of the programme objectives. A strong focus is given to the result orientation of a project with the demand for visible outputs and concrete results. Operational assessment criteria review the viability and feasibility of the proposed project, as well as its value for money in terms of resources used versus results delivered.

1. Administrative and eligibility assessment

Private persons, political parties and individual entrepreneurs are not eligible for funding (either as lead partners or as project partners).

All questions in the list of administrative and eligibility criteria must be answered with yes/no. Those project applications that fully comply with the administrative and eligibility criteria will be subject to quality assessment.

Table 1: Administrative and eligibility criteria

Nr	Criteria	Description	Yes or No
A	Administrative criteria		
A.1	Delivered to the right location by the set deadline.	<i>Continuous submission. Applications submitted via eMS to the Joint Secretariat at latest by noon, 70 days before the MC meeting will be evaluated and -if eligible- proposed to the MC for decision.</i>	
A.2	The application package is submitted in the required format and in the required number of copies.	<i>Electronic application form submitted via eMS. Paper version of the application form is not required, but may be sent by the applicant.</i>	
A.3	All annexes are submitted.	<p><i>Obligatory annexes must be signed by the authorised signatory, scanned and attached to the electronic AF and be submitted by the deadline. One paper copy of each has to be submitted -if the project is approved- until contracting. Obligatory annexes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Lead Partner declaration, including a passage about the accuracy of data,</i> <i>2. partnership agreement¹,</i> <i>3. VAT statement of lead partner and partners (in Austria, if not entitled for VAT refund, incl. confirmation of the "Finanzamt", or if not available, a confirmation of a tax advisor),</i> <i>4. declaration about national contribution (if relevant: declaration about own resources)²,</i> <i>5. de-minimis declaration³,</i> <i>6. list of all other national- or EU funded projects (submitted and/or approved) that are implemented by the project partners (in case of large organisations on the level of the unit acting as a beneficiary, if relevant) during the project implementation period (incl. information whether staff costs are included),</i> <i>7. if staff flat rate is applied, declaration of the relevant institution about the number of employees covered by social insurance.</i> 	

¹ Until the template of the partnership agreement is made available (most likely in the first submission round) a partnership declaration must be attached to the application.

² If the financial commitment of a municipality, or (in Hungary) of a micro-regional association is bound to a municipality resolution or to a similar document by national legislation, this must be also attached.

³ In exceptional cases, if a partner has not submitted the de-minimis declaration, the project can be considered as formally compliant under the condition that the partner concerned must not receive de-minimis support for the submitted project.

		<p><i>For infrastructure projects:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. <i>proof of property⁴/rights of use,</i> 9. <i>if relevant revenue calculation,</i> 10. <i>plans that enable a proper cost calculation,</i> 11. <i>in case of large infrastructure division of costs (if applicable) between programmes/projects,</i> 12. <i>for rail and road projects (TO7) confirmation of the impact and TEN-T relevance by independent experts according to the specific criteria.</i> <p><i>Optional annexes (if relevant)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. <i>annual report,</i> 14. <i>registry/foundation documents.</i> 	
A.4	The application package is compiled in the required language(s).	<p><i>The following documents must be bilingual (German and Hungarian):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>application form,</i> 2. <i>lead partner declaration,</i> 3. <i>partnership agreement.</i> <p><i>Other documents must be submitted in the native language of the partner concerned. Feasibility studies must have an executive summary in English.</i></p>	
A.5	Application form is correctly filled in.	<i>All fields that are not correctly filled in, have to be corrected in the course of the clarification round (“Nachreichung /hiánypótlás”).</i>	
A.6	Administrative and formal data in the application package is consistent.	<i>Information presented in all application package documents (application form and annexes) is consistent.</i>	
B	Eligibility criteria		
B.1	The project fulfils minimum requirements for partnership.	<i>At least one Austrian and one Hungarian partner are involved.</i>	
B.2	The Lead partner is an eligible organisation.	<p><i>The lead partner is:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>national, regional and local public body (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) EGTC Regulation), public equivalent body, non-profit organisation or other institution which on project level acts in public interest,</i> 2. <i>private institution, including private companies, having legal personality.</i> 	

⁴ In exceptional cases documents which refer to the procedure of acquisition of the ownership.

		<p><i>The lead partner must be located</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>in the programme area,</i> 2. <i>or if duly justified, outside the programme area provided that it has legally defined competences or field of functions for certain parts of the eligible area (“assimilated partner”, considered to be inside the eligible area, e.g. ministry).</i> 	
B.3	All project partners are eligible organisations.	<p><i>The partners are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>national, regional and local public bodies (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) EGTC Regulation), public equivalent bodies, non-profit organisations or other institutions which on project level act in public interest,</i> 2. <i>private institutions, including private companies, having legal personality.</i> <p><i>Partners must be located</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>in the programme area,</i> 2. <i>or in justified cases outside the programme area, provided that they have legally defined competences or field of functions for certain parts of the eligible area (“assimilated partners”, considered to be inside the eligible area, e.g. ministries),</i> 3. <i>in only exceptional and duly justified cases outside the programme area (acc. to Art. 20 (2) of ETC Regulation).</i> 	
B.4	Time limits are respected.	<i>Project implementation falls between 1.1.2015 – 31.12.2022.</i>	
B.5	Project is assigned to programme priority and its specific objective.	<i>Thematically, project fits into the programme and one priority axis.</i>	
B.6	There is no evidence of double funding of activities.	<i>See declaration included in the lead partner and partner declarations.</i>	
B.7	Minimum and maximum budget requirements are respected including percentage of co-financing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>ERDF does not exceed 85%.</i> 2. <i>Min. 15% national contribution is secured</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>by declaration about third party contribution</i> b. <i>and/or by own resource declaration, if relevant by local council’s resolution about own resources..</i> 3. <i>Minimum project budget = 25.000 EUR total costs.</i> 4. <i>No maximum limit.</i> 	

2. Quality assessment

Based on the submitted application form (and its annexes), the JS assesses every project and produces a non binding recommendation to the MC. The evaluation includes scores as well as written comments to each criteria and a summary (including strengths, weaknesses and open questions with regard to the project). The purpose of the evaluation is to support the MC in its decision making. The right and responsibility to decide about project approval is the sole responsibility of the MC, whose decision may be different from the recommendation of the JS. Projects will be evaluated according to the criteria in the table below.

Scores are allocated to each evaluation criteria between 0-3:

- 0=insufficient
- 1=low
- 2=sufficient
- 3=excellent

The regional coordinators (RC) in exceptional cases external experts or relevant line ministries that are not members in the MC – contribute to some criteria (marked in bold) with written comments. The JS consolidates these comments and, if needed, adds comments of its own and summarises the evaluation of these criteria by giving scores.

If the JS gives 0 points in any of the quality assessment criteria, they must give a justification and input for improvement. Giving 0 points in the quality assessment shall be a strong signal to the MC, meaning that there are serious problems with the project. The MC is expected to discuss these criteria, and approval may only be possible, if a sufficient answer can be given to the problem (either in the MC, in the form of a condition or in a resubmitted application).

Low scores received at the strategic and/or operational assessment criteria signal the poor quality of the application. As the strategic relevance of project applications and a clear added-value of the cross-border approach are at the core of the Interreg V-A Austria – Hungary Programme, the importance of strategic criteria is mirrored accordingly by the setting of thresholds. Consequently, if the project scores

- 26 points or less in the strategic assessment criteria
- or 23 points or less in the operational assessment criteria,

it will be put on a risk list. In such a case the decision of the MC has to be “rejection” or “postponing”.

The special criteria and principles that have been defined for the specific objectives are assessed separately in a written evaluation. For those criteria no scores will be given because neither the projects nor the criteria in the different specific objectives are comparable.

Table 2: Strategic assessment criteria

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	Scores 0-1-2-3	Comments	Sections in AF
Project's context (relevance and strategy) <i>How well is a need for the project justified?</i>	The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area - there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained).			C.1.1
	The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional).			C.3.1
	The project makes use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices.			C.3.2 C.3.3
	The project makes a positive contribution to the programme horizontal principles: equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development.			C.4
Cooperation character <i>What added value does the cooperation bring?</i>	The importance of the cross-border approach to the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated: - the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation and/or the cooperation has a significant added value for the partners,			B.1 C.1.3
	- there is a clear benefit from cooperating for: · the project partners, · for target groups, · for the project/programme area.			

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	Scores 0-1-2-3	Comments	Sections in AF
	The project demonstrates new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions.			C.1.2
	At least 3 cooperation criteria are fulfilled: joint development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), and joint staffing or joint financing. Partner level consultation with the relevant regional coordinators is considered to be an advantage.			C.1.4 and/or C.5, D
Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs <i>To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives?</i>	The project's results and main outputs clearly link to programme priority and its indicators. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project overall objective clearly links to a programme priority specific objective, - The project results clearly link to a programme result indicator, - The project specific objectives clearly link to the project overall objective, - The project main outputs clearly link to the project specific objectives, - The project main outputs clearly link to programme output indicators. 			C.2.1
	Results and main outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are specific / concretely defined, - are realistic (is it possible to achieve them with given resources -i.e. time, partners, budget- and they are realistic based on the quantification provided). 			C.2.1, C.5 D

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	Scores 0-1-2-3	Comments	Sections in AF
	Project main outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted) – if not, it is justified.			C.5
	Project main outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability) – if not, it is justified.			C.5
Partnership relevance	The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified.			B
<i>To what extent is the partnership 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.).			B, C.5
	All partners play a defined and active role in the partnership.			B, C.5
	Max score	45		

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment		Comments	Sections in AF
<p>Fulfilment of special criteria and principles that have been defined for the specific objectives</p> <p><i>To what extent is the project in line with the specific criteria and principles of the chosen thematic field?</i></p>	<p>3d:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The application is NEITHER focusing on purely academic research or basic research NOR on a mere exchange of knowledge. - Involvement of SMEs or SME networks is considered as an advantage (direct involvement of SMEs as project partners is not necessary). - The applicability of results and the impact of planned activities on SMEs are considered as advantage. - Projects that target territories with poor economic performance or scarce job opportunities are preferred. 	no scores		C
	<p>6c:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The application is NOT focused on touristic offers for single destinations in one Member State. - Supported heritage sights will be open to the public. - Natural and/or cultural heritage preservation projects must comply with local environmental protection requirements and ecosystem integrity. 	no scores		
	<p>6d:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management and protection plans demonstrate evidence for a practical application in sustainable development of the programme area. - Including activities targeting awareness raising is considered as an advantage. - Opportunities for initiatives and/or platforms and networks that provide for an exchange of good practice shall be explored. 	no scores		

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment		Comments	Sections in AF
	<p>6f:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions targeted to improve the management and protection of water bodies are not contradictory to the targets of the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission. 	no scores		
	<p>7b:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project improves a connection between a tertiary node and the TEN-T network. - The project concerns a connection which effectively crosses the border or which creates a new, direct border crossing. - By the project travel time will be shortened. - There is mutual (on both sides of the border) socio-economic and environmental benefit. - The project is in line with the road safety directive. - The newly constructed road will be open for transport for a minimum period of 5 years. 	no scores		
	<p>7c:</p> <p>- -</p>	no scores		
	<p>11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of partners new to the programme is considered as an advantage. 	no scores		

Table 3: Operational assessment criteria

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	Scores 0-1-2-3	Comments	Sections in AF
Management <i>To what extent are management structures and procedures in line with the project size, duration and needs?</i>	Management structures (e.g. project steering committee) are proportionate to the project size and needs and allow partners' involvement in decision-making.			C.5 WP 1
	Management procedures (such as reporting and evaluation procedures in the area of finance, project content, communication) are clear, transparent, efficient and effective.			C.5 WP 1
	Project management includes regular contact between project partners and ensures transfer of expertise across the partnership (internal communication within the partnership).			C.5 WP 1
	The (lead) partner demonstrates competency in managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects or can ensure adequate measures for management support.			B.1

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	Scores 0-1-2-3	Comments	Sections in AF
Communication <i>To what extent are communication activities appropriate and forceful to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?</i>	Communication activities and deliverables are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders.			C.5 WP 2
Work plan <i>To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?</i>	Proposed activities are relevant and lead to the planned main outputs and results.			C.5, C.7
	Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.).			C.5, C.7
	Time plan is realistic (contingency included).			C.5, C.7
	Activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence.			C.5, C.7
	The added value of investments and equipment purchases and their transnational relevance is demonstrated to reach			C.8

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	Scores 0-1-2-3	Comments	Sections in AF
	the project objectives (if applicable).			C.9
Budget	Project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan and the main outputs and results aimed for.			B.1, C.5, C.8, PART D, PART E
<i>To what extent does the project budget demonstrate value for money?</i>	Total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement (are balanced and realistic).			
<i>To what extent is the budget coherent and proportionate?</i>	The need for engaging external expertise is justified and the costs are realistic.			B.1, C.5, C.8, C.9, PART D, PART E
	The need for equipment purchases is justified and the costs are realistic.			
	The budget is clear and realistic.			
	Max score	45		