

Frequently asked questions

Can the applicant be a non-governmental association with the headquarters established in another county/district from Romania/Serbia than the ones listed in the Applicant's Guide if the activities and the budget will be implemented/spent in at least 80% within these counties/districts?

In order to be eligible every applicant must fulfil the eligibility criteria listed under section 2.2.1 Eligibility of applicants from the Applicant's Guide for the first call for proposals of the Romania - Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross Border Cooperation Programme.

According to the updated Applicant's Guide in order to be eligible for this call for proposals and NGO must be registered and functioning in the eligible area of the Programme.

Regarding the eligibility of the costs occurred outside of the eligible area, according to Annex F of the Applicant's guide, art. 13, "The managing authority may accept that all or part of an operation is implemented outside the programme area, provided that all the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) the operation is for the benefit of the programme area;
- (b) the total amount allocated under the cross-border cooperation programme to operations located outside the programme area does not exceed 20 % of the support from the Union at programme and project level;
- (c) the obligations of the managing and audit authorities in relation to management, control and audit concerning the operation are fulfilled by the cross-border cooperation programme authorities."

Are there any specific requirements regarding the partners (eg. One project partner must be public institution)?

According to the Applicant's Guide the minimum number of partners in one project is 2 (one from Romania and one from Serbia) and the maximum number of partners is 5. The partnership must reflect the joint interests of the partners and the project activities specificity and are not related to the type of institutions involved in the partnership.



The construction of touristic infrastructure (e.g. a bed and breakfast resort) on the land already owned in a certain legal form (private/public ownership, concession, etc.) is eligible?

For the eligibility of costs we kindly ask you to consult Annex F "List of eligible expenditure" of the Applicant's Guide. According to art. 12 e) iii) the following costs are eligible: "Costs related to extending, modernizing and rehabilitation of the buildings, object of the basic investment"

Furthermore, the example given by you, bed and breakfast resort, is not eligible under the Romania - Republic of Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross Border Cooperation Programme. The example given by you is subject to the state aid provisions and in this regard we kindly ask you to consult Section 1.6 of the Applicant's Guide, State Aid.

The co-financing percentage of the partners will be budgeted different, 2% for the Romanian partners and 15% for the Serbian partners resulting a different average co-financing depending on the number of partners from each country?

According to the Applicant's Guide, within one single project, the IPA financing for each partner from Republic of Serbia and Romania is 85% of the eligible budget for each partner. For Republic of Serbia, the remaining 15% must be covered by the partner; for Romania, the remaining 15% can be covered by the national public funds and the partner.

Romanian state budget shall provide an additional 13% to the Romanian public bodies and NGO representing national co-financing. For Serbian partners the amount representing own private contribution shall cover 15% of the eligible expenditure to the project.

What is better? That the Lead Beneficiary is Serbian or Romanian?

According to Cap. 2.3.1, Lead Beneficiary and partnership rules, of the Applicant's Guide, the Lead Beneficiary „bears the overall responsibility and liability for the entire project implementation and management". There are no specific provisions regarding the designation of the Lead Beneficiary mentioned in the Applicant's Guide, however when appointing the Lead Beneficiary you should keep in mind the level of expertise of the project partners, the specificity of the project activities and the distribution of the tasks between the project partners.



Is there any restriction regarding number of projects per applicant?

There are no restrictions regarding the number of projects in which one applicant can participate, however when deciding the number of projects to be submitted you should consider your financial capacity.

How do we prove that we can provide own financial contribution?

According to the Applicant's Guide, Cap. 2.3.3. How to fill in the Application Form and its Annexes, one of the attachments to be submitted together with the Application form is the Declaration of Commitment (Annex A.5) issued by each project partner, in original, stating that the applicant shall:

- „provide its own private contribution to the eligible expenditure and ensure temporary availability of funds until they are reimbursed by the programme (amounts that will be spent by the partners in advance of reimbursement);
- cover all non-eligible expenditures corresponding to its activities incurred during project implementation;
- ensure that the representatives in the project management team are available throughout the entire implementation period.”

Furthermore, during the pre-contracting phase, all potential beneficiaries will provide the decisions of the empowered bodies (county council, board of directors etc.) regarding the availability of own resources, temporary availability of funds for their activities until reimbursement.

What is the date since preparation costs are eligible? For the preparation phase, is it necessary costs to be paid, or just occurred?

The preparation costs are eligible if they were incurred between 1.01.2014 and the submission of the Application Form, for Romanian beneficiaries and between 26.09.2014 and the submission of the Application Form for Serbian beneficiaries.

What could be 15% of co-financing? Could be in-kind contribution?

Only “eligible costs” can be taken into account for financial support. The budget is therefore both a cost estimate and a maximum ceiling for “eligible costs”. Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs. The eligibility of expenditure applies to both public and own private contribution, so it is not possible to consider an ineligible expenditure as own private contribution. In-kind contribution is not eligible.



What is State Aid?

State aid refers to financial support that can distort competition and intra-community market trade. In order to meet the requirements of the European Commission and in order to allow a smooth implementation of the Programme and its approved projects, in the framework of Interreg - IPA CBC Romania - Serbia, State Aid is not permitted.

For state aid to take place the recipient of project funding must be an undertaking. The term "undertaking" is in this context used in a wide sense as any entity which has an activity of an economic nature and which offers goods and services on the market, regardless the legal form and the way of financing of this entity. Therefore, not only private companies are subject to state aid rules but also public authorities if they carry out an economic activity on the market.

The next step in establishing state aid is to use the set of four criteria that all have to be fulfilled cumulatively in order to be state aid. Two of those (the existence of state resources and selectivity) always apply for Interreg - IPA CBC Romania - Serbia programme projects. Thus state aid exists if the remaining these conditions are also met:

Economic advantage: The project support is an economic advantage that the undertaking would not have received in the normal course of business.

Effect on competition and trade: This criterion is already fulfilled if an aid has potential effect on competition and trade between Member States. It is sufficient if it can be shown that the beneficiary is involved in an economic activity and that it operates in a market in which there is trade between Member States.

What date should be starting date of the project?

When filling in the application form and its annexes you must provide an estimated date for the start and end of the implementation. The date must have the following format: dayday.monthmonth.yearyearyear (dd.mm.yyyy). In order to estimate as realistic as possible the start date of your project you should consider the deadline for submission of applications and the duration of the evaluation and the process of selection of projects (described in sections 2.3.5, 2.4 and 2.5 of the Applicants Guide), approx. 4 months.



In description of organization's experience, could be presented experience of external experts, engaged as project team members? (Not as a CV of project manager, but in case that he/she was involved in some project, could that project be presented as experience of the organization).

The expertise/experience of the applicants must be described under section B.1 of the Application Form. The expertise required from the project team members is demonstrated by the job descriptions/ CV of the project manager submitted together with the Application Form. Also in the 2nd Wp you can provide an description on how the qualifications required from the project team members will influence the implementation of the project activities.

Is it necessary project team members to be employees of beneficiary, or they could be external experts?

Expenditures on staff costs are eligible and consists of staff employed by the beneficiary in one of the following ways:

- (a) full time;
- (b) part-time with a fixed percentage of time worked per month;
- (c) part-time with a flexible number of hours worked per month; or
- (d) on an hourly basis.

Expenditure on external expertise and service costs shall be limited to the following services and expertise provided by a public or private law body or a natural person other than the beneficiaries of the operation:

- a) Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);
- b) Training;
- c) Translations;
- d) IT systems and website development, modifications and updates;
- e) Promotion, communication, publicity or information (including publications) linked to an operation or to the Interreg - IPA CBC Romania - Serbia Programme as such;
- f) Financial management;
- g) Services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);
- h) Participation in events (e.g. registration fees);
- i) Legal consultancy and notarial services, technical and financial expertise, other consultancy and accountancy services;
- j) Intellectual property rights;
- k) Verifications under Article 125(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 23(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013;
- l) The provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by Union or national law or in a programming document adopted by the Joint Monitoring Committee;



- m) Travel and accommodation for external experts, guests, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;
- n) Other specific expertise and services needed for operations.

How many copies is necessary to be submitted for applying?

The application form will be submitted in one original version and one copy uploaded on an electronic support – CD or DVD in both editable and non-editable versions.

What is Green Public Procurement?

The potential for green public procurement was first highlighted in the European Union in 2003 in the Commission Communication on [integrated product policy](#). In 2004, Directives [2004/17/EC](#) and [2004/18/EC](#), which constitute the European framework for the procurement of public contracts, clarified how purchasers can integrate an environmental dimension into the tendering process. The Commission handbook "Buying green!", adopted in August 2004, aims to further clarify how these new rules can be used to conclude green public contracts.

Green public procurement: a process whereby contracting authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

If through a project we will purchase an mobile laboratory for the monitoring of the air quality is it necessary to carry out activities in this area of intervention?

For all operations it is compulsory that the applicant has among its attributions, according with its statute or according to the national legislation, the implementation of the proposed activities or that the applicant has a partnership agreement with the institutions able to implement such activities, according with its statute or according to the national legislation. Please observe that, for all activities (including procurement or investments) of the project, a justification should be provided on how they contribute to achieving the project's objectives and results.

Can we use an intermediary in case we do not have the expertise necessary for the implementation of the activities?

According to the Applicants Guide, in order to be eligible an applicant must be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action together with their partners and not acting only as an intermediary.



Is there a proportionality required regarding the number of partners on each side of the border involved in the implementation of the project?

All projects must have at least one partner on the other side of the border, which must fulfil the same eligibility criteria. The maximum number of partners in one operation is 5 (five). There are no other provisions regulating a minimum or maximum number of partners from each side of the border, however, the partnership should reflect the activities implemented through the project.

A new created NGO is eligible? If so what are the documents necessary for proving the financial capacity?

In order to be eligible an NGO must be registered and functioning in the eligible area. There are no requirements regarding a minimum number of years/months since the institution has been created. In order to prove the financial capacity the applicants must submit, as specified in the Applicant's Guide, during the eligibility check financial situation, latest balance sheet and budgetary execution account.

What are the documents that need to be submitted before the deadline for submission?

The documents that must be submitted together with the Application Form, before the deadline for submission are:

- Declaration of Submission
- Project budget: all the sheets of the Excel file should be filled in completely and correctly.
- Job descriptions of the project management team (the positions that have a role in the implementation of the project) should be attached; if the project partners intend to partially contract the project management to a sub-contractor, the Terms of Reference for selecting the project management sub-contractor should be annexed. CV of the Project Manager is mandatory.
- Legalized mandates of delegation from the legal representatives of partners (in case the application form and annexed declarations are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Beneficiary/partners) – original document and its English translation
- Declaration of Eligibility (Annex A.4), issued by each project partner, in original, stating that the applicant fulfils the criteria stipulated at II.2.i.
- Declaration of Commitment (Annex A.5), issued by each project partner, in original
- Partnership declarations from all project partners, in original, stating their willingness to participate in the project and to sign the Partnership Agreement after the project is approved
- State-aid self-assessment
- Schedule of reimbursement requests (one per project)



- Feasibility studies/ General (main) project design or Project Design Idea (Idejni projekat) for Serbian partners for the new investments or the specific documentation for the interventions to the already existing investments, according to national legislation requirements (for infrastructure projects only)
- For Romanian partners, according with the provisions of Government Decision 941/2013, regarding the Organization and functioning of the Technico – Economic Committee for the Informational Society, all projects comprising IT&C investments with a value higher than 2,500,000 RON must obtain, before submitting the Application Form or starting the procurement procedures, the permit from the Technico – Economic Committee for the Informational Society.
- Legal documents for border crossing points: For projects that include construction/ rehabilitation/ widening/ modernisation of the border crossing points, the applicants must submit the written agreement signed/ modified between the two countries, according with the applicable law, specifying the nature and statute of the border-crossing point

All annexes and supporting documents as well as the step when these documents must be submitted are listed under Chapter 2.3.3 „How to fill in the Application Form and its Annexes”.

The partnership agreement is necessary only for public institutions?

Together with the Application Form, the applicants must submit the Partnership Declaration stating the partner’s willingness to participate in the project and to sign the Partnership Agreement after the project is approved. *All partners in a project must sign a partnership agreement before the signing of the subsidy contract with the MA that stipulates the rights and duties of the partners.* The model of the Partnership Agreement is attached to the Applicant’s Guide, Annex E.



Budget sheet 1 - Partner budget must be submitted for each project partner and consolidated for all project partners in the same format (as provided by sheet 1) or the consolidated project budget will be submitted only in the format provided by sheet 2 (budget overview)?

The Partner eligible budget sheet will be filled in for each project partner separately. The next 2 sheets (estimated eligible expenditures calendar and budget per Work Package) will also be filled in separately for each project partner. The last budget sheet (project budget overview) represents an overview of the total project budget and will be filled in as a total project budget containing the sum of expenditures of all project partners. Also please be aware that the Applicant's Guide and its Annexes have been modified through a Corrigendum. The updated version of the Applicant's Guide can be downloaded at the following link: http://www.romania-serbia.net/?page_id=815&lang=en_GB.

Staff costs must be fully budgeted in the WP management?

All direct staff costs must be budgeted under Staff costs budget line, only in the WP Management. Direct staff costs are those salaries paid for the staff involved in the main activities of the project (e.g. project manager, financial manager, technical staff such as engineer, laboratory staff, etc.).

Indirect staff costs must be budgeted under budget line Office and administration, as a global amount (additional breakdown is not allowed) and reimbursed as a flat rate of 5% from the direct eligible costs of the project. Office and administration expenditure is budgeted as a global (total) amount, not split between WPs. Indirect staff costs are those paid for the staff involved only in administrative tasks (e.g. driver, secretary, account of the beneficiary institution, cleaning personnel).

The Application Form and budget have no dedicated space for stamp or signature. Should they be stamped and/or sealed?

After completion, the application form and its annexes, containing the administrative and technical documents will be signed and stamped by the legal representative of the applicant, on the first page, in the right down corner. For the original documents which, according to the law, remain to the partners, the paper copy must be signed by the applicant on the first page and stamped on each page.



How do we fill in the “project code” field throughout the annexes of the Application form?

The field “Project code” of the annexes of the Application form as well as the fields “Project Number” and “Date of submission of the Application Form” of the Application Form will not be filled in by the applicants. They represent the codes automatically generated by the electronic management system of the Programme and will be filled in by the Joint Secretariat after the submission of the project proposals.

Is participation fee for project staff in seminars eligible cost?

According to Annex F to the Applicant’s Guide, under art. 10 „**External expertise and services costs**”, the costs for „participation in events (e.g. registration fees)” are listed as eligible.

The List of eligible expenditures says that staff costs shall be reimbursed based on the employment document and payslips. What procedure is applied to part-time staff?

Regardless of type of contract, as provisioned by art. 7, para. 3, „Direct staff costs will be reimbursed on a real cost basis (proven by the employment document and payslips)”, therefore, for the entire personnel employed for the implementation of the project (regardless of the type of employment contract or percentage of time used for the implementation of the project) the salaries will be reimbursed based on employment documents and payslips.

Is there a deadline by which applicants can contact JS and/or JS Antenna office?

The applicant may contact the JS and/or JS Antenna office, in order to receive more clarifications regarding the completion of the application form, until 15 working days before the deadline for submission (until 11 January 2016, included). The JS and/or antenna office will answer until 10 working days before the deadline for submission (until 18 January 2016, included)