

**Interreg**  
*Mediterranean*



## PROGRAMME MANUAL

# LEAD PARTNER ROLE

Programme cofinancé par le Fonds Européen  
de Développement Régional (FEDER)

Programme cofinanced by the European Regional  
Development Fund (ERDF)

## LEAD PARTNER OBLIGATIONS

The **“Lead Partner principle”** applies to the Interreg MED Programme, in compliance with Article 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. This means that each partnership appoints one organisation to act as Lead Partner, which takes full responsibility for the implementation of the entire project.

According to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/EU, the Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law. The Lead Partner must be physically based in the EU part of the Interreg MED Programme area.

Private institutions, international organisations acting under international law and IPA partners cannot act as Lead Partners.

After approval of a project by the MED Programme Steering Committee, the **Lead Partner signs a Subsidy Contract** with the Programme Managing Authority (Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FRANCE).

During the implementation phase, the Lead Partner is responsible for the coordination of the partnership and of the project in line with **sound financial and project management principle**<sup>1</sup>. For further information, please refer to the following **factsheets: “Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance”, “Support for project implementation”, “Methodological tools for preparation and implementation”, “Sound project budget”**.

In addition, the Lead Partner should maintain a **functional and permanent communication flow** among the partnership and ensure an **efficient exchange of information** that enables the successful delivery of the project outputs.

The Lead Partner is also responsible for **communication with the Programme bodies**, namely the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat.

The responsibilities of the Lead Partner are defined in the Subsidy Contract.

In parallel the **Partnership Agreement** formalizes the organization of the partnership and defines the responsibilities of each partner for the implementation of the project in accordance with the consolidated application form.

The Partnership Agreement is concluded **between the Lead Partner and all partners involved in the project**. It **clearly states the so called “Lead Partner Principle”** for the operational management and coordination of the project.

During the project proposal preparation, the Lead Partner (institution) is responsible for coordinating and driving the partnership from the project idea until the finalisation of the project proposal. It formally submits the Application Form and is thus responsible for related contents and commitments.

**Once the project approved** by the Programme Steering Committee, the Lead Partner is responsible, in line with the Lead Partner principle, for **ensuring sound management and**

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<sup>1</sup> The principle of sound financial management is defined in chapter 7 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This regulation states that the budget shall be spent “in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the institution for the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price. The principle of efficiency is concerned with the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved. The principle of effectiveness is concerned with attaining the specific objectives set and achieving the intended results.”

**successful implementation of the entire project.** Therefore, the Lead Partner should be an institution **experienced in the management of projects financed by EU funds.**

The Lead Partner should, at least, have the following profile:

- Experienced in the **management of EU funded projects**
- Prepared to take a **leading and driving role** within the partnership
- Having **sufficient capacity** (institutional, financial and human resources) to prepare the project application and to manage the implementation of the project
- Having the **thematic knowledge** and expertise relevant for the project
- Being **committed** throughout the project proposal application process as well as during the implementation phase

## CONTRACTING PROCEDURE

The contracting procedures the Lead Partner is responsible for concern the **Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement.**

To do list:

- Get in touch with the project officer for the pre-verifications of the contracts
- Two examples of both documents, the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement, must be signed in original
- Both examples of the Subsidy Contract and one of the Partnership Agreement must be submitted to the JS by regular post
- After signature by the Managing Authority of both examples of the Subsidy Contract, one version will be kept by the MA/JS and the other one will be sent to the Lead Partner

The Lead Partner must keep an original of the Subsidy Contract and of the Partnership Agreement as part of the audit trail of the project. A copy is made available to all project partners.

The models of Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement is available on the Interreg MED Programme website and in Annex of the Programme Manual, and will be signed **only after the approval** of the proposals.

For further information, please refer to factsheet **“Contracting procedures”**.

## COORDINATION AND SOUND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

To manage the project efficiently, the Lead Partner must elaborate an **efficient and reliable management and coordination system.** The coordination concerns the implementation of the various components of the project, including its **administrative and financial management.** The Lead Partner is also responsible for drafting the **progress and final reports**, as well as the submission to MED joint secretariat of the **payment claims** each six months.

The Lead Partner must appoint a **project coordinator** responsible for the abovementioned tasks. The project coordinator must ensure the **thematic coordination** of the project activities and components. The coordinator should be able to act as a **driving force of the project and to mobilise the partnership** in order to achieve the objectives laid down in the application. To complement project coordination tasks, it is highly recommended to identify a coordinator who can also count on **experience in management of transnational projects.**

The Lead Partner must also appoint a **financial manager** responsible for the management of the project budget, including budget modifications, payment claims and verification of correct ERDF/IPA quota transfer to the partners.

The financial manager should:

- **Closely and regularly monitor** the financial performance of the project partners
- Work in close contact with the project coordinator and the partners in order to enable **efficient overall financial management** of the project
- Ensure that the project **does not incur in de-commitment risk**. For further information, please refer to factsheet “**De-commitment**”
- Be familiar with **accounts management**, as well as with handling international transactions
- Be aware of the **EU and national legislation** regarding **financial management and controls, public procurement and, where appropriate, State aid**

In order to ensure efficient communication with the programme authorities, the coordinator must speak fluently French and/or English. It is as well advisable that the financial manager speaks one of these languages.

**Within three months from the project start**, the Lead Partner must send to the Joint Secretariat the **minutes of the first Steering Committee** of the approved project attesting the beginning of the activities and detailing the structures of management that ensure the good performance of the project, as well as the contact person of each partner, following the requirements set by the Programme.

For further information, please refer to factsheet “**Project start-up**” and “**Support for project implementation**”.

## REPORTING

The Lead partner is responsible of the **timely submission** of the duly filled in Progress reports to the JS.

Each progress report must be submitted to the JS **within 3 months following the end of the 6 month implementation period**, in line with the **schedule indicated in article 5.1** - Payment claims and progress reports - of the Subsidy Contract.

Specifically the Lead Partner must:

- Collect information regarding activities implemented and deliverables produced by partners
- Verify that partners are certifying their expenditures on time (incl. their own expenditures)
- Validate the expenditures of the partners on SYNERGIE CTE
- Collect First Level Control Certificates of the partners (with national validations if relevant)
- Fill in the project progress report through SYNERGIE CTE
- Fill in the Payment claim through SYNERGIE CTE
- Submit the progress report and the payment claim to the JS
- Upload all deliverables on the project website via the Web Platform

Project Progress reports (PR) is filled in by the LP on the basis of information available on aforementioned single partner reports.

The PR is the responsibility of the LP and should not be a “partner per partner” approach. Indeed, the LP should report the completed activities and the deliverables produced during the concerned period **through summary approach, reporting the situation of the project progress as a whole.**

For further information, please refer to factsheet “**Reporting procedure**”.