

Interreg
Mediterranean



PROGRAMME MANUAL

QUALITY EXPECTATIONS AND CRITERIA

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

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Synergies between modular and horizontal projects, links with Axis 4

The experience of the 2007/13 programming period has shown that even the best individual projects cannot provide sufficient impact to prompt "great evolutions" if they cannot rely on processes enabling permanent and structured thematic/cross-sector synergies at the Programme level.

In fact, often the projects themselves have requested the Interreg MED Programme authorities to strengthen their capacity to create, stimulate and stabilize stronger structured synergies. As a consequence, from 2010, the Programme evolved towards strategic, capitalization and thematically targeted calls that eased and tested an early process of clustering and capitalized project results.

This development facilitated the exploration and exploitation of synergies and complementarities therefore it enabled a sounder understanding of the achievements and gaps at transnational level per thematic priority.

The results of this exercise provided important elements for the construction of the new 2014/20 Interreg MED Programme architecture. The new architecture foresees 3 different types of interconnected projects: modular, horizontal and a top down governance project.

Modular projects seek to develop results with an impact at a more limited level while the horizontal project will cluster and capitalize these results at the transnational level, through the development of thematic communities.

The origin of the concept of Horizontal Projects lies in the observed lack of overall coordination and overview by theme. Hence, the objective is to provide summaries and synergies interesting to project developers but also political decision makers– eventually even the citizens in general. The Horizontal projects are thus foreseen to provide answers to the difficulties mentioned above, to contribute directly to improve the visibility of the results of all projects towards national and European institutions, to provide knowledge and to be used within new contexts and territories.

The interaction between modular and horizontal projects to create thematic communities and networks as key suppliers of "messages" from the Interreg Programme in the Mediterranean, is the main challenge that the Programme shares with its projects. This challenge is linked with the governance approach of the Programme priority axis 4 (Enhancing Mediterranean governance).

Indeed the Programme also promotes a reinforced capacity of national and regional authorities of the Participating States to actively contribute to the governance processes in the Mediterranean on strategic sectors with an evidence based approach. This will be achieved through an axis 4 top-down project involving the Programme national and regional authorities. This new dimension of cooperation will involve more the Participating States and will be less related to the field level players /stakeholders but should instead provide a clear added value for the transferability of the results of projects throughout the Interreg MED area, in line with national and European priorities. In this framework the modular and horizontal projects will feed the axis 4 top-down project with the results they will develop in the course of their implementation.

Based on Programme requirements such as the Cooperation Programme, the Programme Manual, the thematic Terms of Reference, information and guidance provided by Programme authorities, it should be clear to all beneficiaries that the commitment provided in their application form to implement the project co-financed by MED, needs to be respected.

This is true primarily for "multimodular and horizontal" projects which will be subject to milestone assessments but also for single module projects. Relevant contribution to Programme indicators will need to be ensured by all project participants!

Failure to meet targets foreseen for performance framework could indeed have consequences in terms of ERDF /IPA funding. Thus, any deviation of the application form shall be justified to the SC Interreg MED and validated before its implementation, as stated in the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement.

Beyond all technical issues, the improvement of the quality level of the projects and hence of the Programme is an asset to all actors contributing to Interreg MED.

Basic principles

We need to answer together the challenges that concern territories at the local and regional level but equally on the level of the whole area of our Programme: **transnationality** remains the priority criterion and should be well understood and concretized in project goals and actions. Wherever possible, priority should be given to common solutions to achieve real results with crosscutting partnerships.

These results should be adapted to other contexts in the Programme area, hence there is a strong need for **transferability**. The latter must not be understood only as a direct transferability within the territories concerned by the partnership (which is one of the objectives of implementation of certain modules) but also towards other areas, in the widest possible way.

The results are to be built according to this requirement, which can sometimes mean adapting the format with which the deliverables are produced to the reference context (internal or external), albeit keeping the same content.

The coordination and harmonization skills, and the share of tasks and roles between modular and horizontal projects will be crucial to the success of these aspects. Only a solid understanding between the horizontal project (on the respective specific objective) and the modular project community referring to it, will respond adequately to provide synthesis, communication, consolidation, capitalization and transfer for the application of achieved results in all territories of the Mediterranean.

Naturally, we cannot produce satisfactory results if all **technical and institutional capacity** is not deployed within the partnership including external support, which explains that a self-assessment process or external evaluation is required in the project implementation to fill any gaps.

Furthermore, it is essential that following project objectives and expected results, the partnership can cover all categories of beneficiaries who represent the selected target groups. This will depend primarily on project accumulated skills. Beneficiaries should not be identified too generically. A target group should involve any potential player directly concerned by the

results of the project who is committed to the evolution of the relevant sector by his own profession, specialization or political responsibility.

All of the above has naturally a chronological sense resulting to **deadlines**. Compliance with these deadlines is also paramount to ensure maximum efficiency for your activities and results, of course combined with all the other criteria listed above.

It is therefore very important that the partnership is able to get organized and kicks off as quickly as possible once the result of the selection is known. This means concretely that the managerial and administrative part (coordination, contracts, human resources, public procurements, contacts with first-level control body...) should be rapidly transformed into the flow of information needed within each partner organization, and correspondingly assigned responsibilities.

A final quality criterion for a successful implementation, closely related to maintaining deadlines, is the respect of the financial commitment, the **budget**. Too often, cash flow difficulties that jeopardize the active participation of partners are discovered late, and too often they affect a key activity for the success of the project.

Please, keep in mind that the Interreg MED Programme will not make any advance payments of the ERDF co-financing!

Any participating structure should properly measure the risk that this entails with respect to its obligations towards the Interreg MED Programme but also in regard to its own functioning.

Finally, an important cash flow is required in order to avoid the **reimbursement of your ERDF co-financing becoming a condition of survival of the structure**, preventing the progress of the project in which you participate.

All these criteria have a more operational nature, directly related to a successful implementation of your project. Nevertheless, the horizontal principles, transversal to all your actions and activities: sustainable development; equality and access for all, should also be taken into account. The Programme has issued relevant guidance in the Manual to help the projects secure the respect of the listed principles all throughout the project lifetime.

Though the main quality criteria for the implementation of a project are considered within the implementation framework of each individual project, the types of synergies that are expected between modular projects and horizontal projects are of the same nature. Subsequently, also the synergies between thematic projects and the Axis 4 projects and how these synergies should increase the quality of the Programme results should be kept as a priority.

Accurate solutions for real needs

The project idea must address a common need among the involved territories with concrete actions that will enable sustainable joint solutions.

This main objective (usually one for a project), set in the long-term, must clearly contribute to the chosen programme specific objective¹.

The specific objectives of the project (not more than three) ought to be as **precise** as possible and relevant for the programme and the involved regions. They should be ambitious although still being realistic to be reached within the timeframe of the project. These objectives will be clearly defined in the Application Form, and their achievement within the project duration will need to be demonstrated.

The **transnational cooperation** means added value to address the need identified in the involved territories. It should clearly activate synergies going even beyond the project partnership: just compiling up local and/or regional actions is therefore not sufficient for a project to be successful.

The project must be **innovative**. It should be built under the perspective of capitalising any relevant experiences and results (from activities financed by Interreg MED or other programmes) in order to go farther and improve existing/create new solutions. This point of departure has to be fully identified, as well as the strategy for its use in the development of the project proposal.

Sustainability of a project is another key element. A transnational cooperation project has a “start-up” function: It is thought to be the first step of further developments (e.g. a larger investment) and improvements (e.g. an improved policy). The uptake of results, the deployment at a larger scale and/or the mainstreaming is a crucial success factor to be already considered during project development. **Communication** also plays an important role in achieving sustainability.

Last but not least, it is worth considering whether other **EU programmes**, beyond MED, could better fit your project idea.

¹ For more information please refer to section on MED Programme strategic framework.