

Interreg Europe

To improve the implementation of regional development policies

Extract from the tender documentation

Link to the call and documents to download [HERE](#).

Portal for submission [HERE](#).

Deadlines:

Internal deadline – notification of interests (inform Mgr. Lipenská)	22. 5. 2023
Internal deadline for Apollo	29. 5. 2023
Call deadline	09. 06. 2023, 12pm (midday)

Proposal cannot be submitted without gaining the approval in **Apollo** first! Regarding Apollo, please contact **Mgr. Lipenská** (lipenska@fme.vutbr.cz; 2167).

Basic information of the call

Start of the project	approximately April 2024
Duration of the project	4 years + 3 months closure
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• max 80 % from ERDF + max 10% state funding• ex-post funding• recommended budget per project: 1,25 mil EUR – 2,5 mil EUR

1. Objectives, phases and activities

Programme objective

- **improving regional development policy instruments** including programmes under the Investment for jobs and growth goal by promoting the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches, and capacity building in relation to the identification, dissemination, and transfer of good practices among regional policy actors.
- **at least one of the policy instruments addressed in a project must be an Investment for jobs and growth goal programme**

A **policy instrument** is any policy, strategy, or law developed by public authorities and applied on the ground to improve a specific territorial situation. In principle, internal documents of organisations does not qualify as policy instruments.

The following elements of the chosen policy instrument should be ensured:

- Only one main policy instrument is addressed per participating 'region'.
- The scope of the different instruments is in line with the issue addressed by the project.
- The project addresses existing policy instruments whose time span covers at least the duration of the Interreg Europe projects. Policy instruments under preparation may be addressed only if sufficient details are available on its scope and nature (each policy instrument needs to be described in the application form) and if its policy responsible authority is already confirmed.

In order to monitor the performance of the projects it supports, the programme will use **indicators** (Output indicators /result indicators / impact indicators) mentioned on page 46-53 of Programme Manual

Scope



- beneficiaries can cooperate on **any topics of shared relevance in line with their regional needs, as long as this falls within the scope of cohesion policy (5 objectives - see below)**

As regards policy objectives 1 and 2, the programme welcomes applications dealing with innovative solutions to mitigate the effects of the energy crisis in the regions and accelerate their energy transition (e.g., policies supporting the development of research and innovation tools or the scaling up and diffusion of such tools).

Share of programme budget	Policy objectives	Specific objectives
80%	1. Smarter Europe 	All specific objectives: (i) Research and Innovation capacities, uptake of advanced technologies (ii) Digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities (iii) Sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments (iv) Skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition & entrepreneurship (v) Digital connectivity
	2. Greener Europe 	All specific objectives: (i) Energy efficiency and reduction of greenhouse emissions (ii) Renewable energy (iii) Smart energy systems, grids and storage (iv) Climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention, resilience (v) Access to water and sustainable water management (vi) Circular and resource efficient economy (vii) Protection and preservation of nature and biodiversity, green infrastructures, pollution reduction (viii) Sustainable urban mobility for zero carbon economy
	4. More social Europe 	The following selected specific objectives: (i) Effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour market, access to quality employment, social economy (v) Equal access to health care, health systems resilience, family-based and community-based care (vi) Culture and tourism for economic development, social inclusion and social innovation
20%	3. More connected Europe 	All specific objectives: (i) Climate resilient, intelligent, secure, sustainable and intermodal TEN-T (ii) Sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility
	4. More social Europe 	The following selected specific objectives: (ii) Accesses to education, training and lifelong learning, distance and on-line education and training (iii) Inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups (iv) Socio-economic integration of third country nationals, including migrants
	5. Europe closer to Citizens 	All specific objectives (i) Sustainable integrated territorial development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security (urban areas) (ii) Sustainable integrated territorial development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security (other than urban)

Innovative character

it is recommended to check 2014-2020 projects to ensure that the innovative character of their proposal is demonstrated. **Further information on the way to demonstrate the innovative character can be found in section 3.3.4 of the programme manual.**

- <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policy-solutions/good-practices>

The participation of organisations **not yet involved in the first call projects is encouraged**. In particular, organisations from regions not yet represented in these projects will be positively regarded. The list of NUTS 2 regions not yet represented in first call approved projects is available as Annex 02 of the Terms of Reference document (from Czechia eg. CZ06 Jihovýchod)

Phases of a project

A. Core phase – interregional learning

- 3 years
- exchange of experience among partners
- integration of the lessons
- **Action plan** - document specifying how the lessons learnt from the cooperation work in the core phase will be implemented in a region in order to improve the policy instrument addressed by this region. It provides information on the nature, costs, and timeframe of the action(s) to be implemented, the stakeholders involved, and the way the action(s) derive from the project. Only regions that do not achieve a policy improvement by the end of the core phase need to produce an action plan. More details on p30 of Programme Manual

B. Follow-up phase – monitoring the effects of the policy improvements

- 1 year
- It should be noted that Interreg Europe will support only the costs incurred for the monitoring; the costs related to the implementation itself of the actions cannot be covered by the project's budget but must be funded from relevant local, regional, or national sources.

Activities

Core phase activities

- **exchange of experience** typical activities:
 - joint thematic surveys / studies / analysis
 - interregional study visits
 - interregional thematic seminars / workshops
 - interregional peer-reviews
 - interregional staff exchanges
 - meetings with the stakeholder group (compulsory)
 - joint pilot actions
 - participation in the Policy Learning Platform activities
 - preparation of action plans (compulsory only for regions where no policy improvement is achieved by the end of the core phase)

- **pilot actions** (if relevant) - testing a new approach to public intervention; learning by doing; request for approval can be made at application stage or after the midterm review; max of one pilot action per region per project; **more details on p32-35 of Programme Manual**

Follow-up phase activities

- **Monitoring results** - checking the territorial effects of the improvements, report on any new policy improvements deriving from their exchange of experience, monitoring implementation (if not achieved in the core phase)
- **Exchange of experience on policy improvements (if relevant)**
- **Pilot actions (if relevant)** – if approved in midterm, can continue to be implemented in the firsts semester of the follow-up phase

Both phases

- **Communication activities**
 - Typical examples: ensuring the project's online presence (eg. website, social media); organising dissemination events; dissemination project leaflets, brochures, or newsletters
 - In the follow-up phase, projects are also **required to organise a final public dissemination event** bringing together executives and policymakers from the regions involved and from other relevant institutions
 - for more details see p124 of Programme Manual
- **Management and coordination** - administrative, legal, and financial activities
 - Typical examples: Drawing up and signing a project partnership agreement; Preparing, submitting, and following-up progress reports; Organising project steering group meetings; Financial management and control, including contracting external expertise in line with applicable procurement rules, monitoring, reporting, and controlling expenditure incurred and paid.
 - A steering group must be constituted to monitor the project
 - Other coordination bodies (e.g., task forces, advisory groups) may be established to coordinate the day-to-day running of the project
 - The lead partner needs to set up an efficient and reliable management and coordination system (appointed or sub-contracted) – a project coordinator, a financial manager, a communication manager
- **Activities at programme level**
 - Project managers responsible for coordination, financial management, and communication will be invited to participate in a range of events and activities, which are organised regularly at programme level and are designed to help projects to be as efficient as possible in implementing their projects.
 - Approved projects will also be regularly invited to contribute to a certain number of events and activities organised at programme level

2. Partnership and Eligibility

Eligible area

- whole European Union (27 Member states) + Norway and Switzerland

Eligible partners (more p56 of Programme Manual)

- Public authorities (generally understood to be national, regional, or local authorities)
- Public law bodies (bodies governed by public law)
- Private non-profit bodies

Private non-profit bodies cannot take on the role of lead partner.

Policy responsible authorities

- **core target group**
- national, regional, local public authorities and other relevant bodies responsible for elaborating and/or implementing regional development policies (eg. a city)
- **must be involved** - as a partner or “associated policy authority” (stakeholder) - **the involvement of the policy responsible authority as partner is compulsory for at least 50% of the policy instruments addressed in a project application**

Types of participation

- **Partner (regular x advisory x lead partner)** – eligible for funding; advisory partner is not the same as external expert, recommended max 1 advisory partner; The lead partner can be from an EU Member State or Norway. Private non-profit bodies and partners from Switzerland cannot assume the role of lead partner.
- **associated policy authority** - the participation of the authorities responsible for the policy instruments addressed by a project is **mandatory** (can be involved directly as a partner or as associated policy authority, but still must be included in the partnership section of the application
 - does not receive funding
- **stakeholder** – a stakeholder group must be created for each of the policy instruments addressed by the project; they do not receive funding, but the partners can fund their travel and accommodation from the project; **associated policy authority** is automatically a member of a stakeholder group

Balanced partnership

- proportionate involvement of the partners
- mix of regions with different levels of development (based on GDP); No more than one region involved per country

- geographical coverage and relevance – **at least for areas must be involved** (see below) and at least two must be EU Member States:

Geographical areas	Countries covered
North	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden
East	Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
South	Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain
West	Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland

- based on previous experience, a partnership of between **5 to 8 regions** should be most successful; therefore a **minimum is 5 partners, maximum 16**

3. FUNDING

Funding rate

- up to 80% from ERDF + up to 10% from state budget; for BUT total 90%**
- around 130 mil EUR is allocated for the 2nd call from ERDF budget

Co-financing rate	Eligible project partner according to legal status and location
80% ERDF	Public bodies and bodies governed by public law from all 27 EU member states
70% ERDF	Private non-profit bodies from all 27 EU member states
Up to 50% Norwegian funding	Public bodies, bodies governed by public law and private non-profit bodies from Norway
Swiss funding	Partners from Switzerland are invited to contact the Swiss Interreg national point of contact to receive information on Swiss funding opportunities

- national contribution in CR (see table below or see Ministry document, p9-10 [HERE](#))

EFRR

Typ příjemce	EU podíl	Národní podíl		Celkem
		max. státní rozpočet	min. příjemce/partner	
OSS a PO OSS	80%	20%	0%	100%
školy a školská zařízení	80%	10%	10%	100%
veřejné VŠ a výzkumné organizace	80%	10%	10%	100%
veřejně prospěšná činnost	80%	10%	10%	100%
obce a jejich PO	80%	5%	15%	100%
kraje a jejich PO	80%	5%	15%	100%

Ex post funding

- projects are reimbursed after each progress report (6-month periods, last period 9 months)
- exchange rate is applicable in the month the partner report is submitted (monthly rates published [HERE](#))

de minimis

- only **pilot actions** can fall under “state aid”
- Partners planning a pilot action will need to fill in a short self-assessment section in the application form. This will help the Joint Secretariat carry out their own “state aid” assessment and determine whether the pilot’s activities are subject to “state aid” or not.

4. Budget

Recommended total budget

- Based on the experience of previous programmes, it is recommended that the project’s total ERDF budget ranges from a **minimum of 1 mil EUR up to a maximum of 2 mil EUR**.
- **indicative total budget from all sources should be therefore between 1,25 mil EUR – 2,5 mil EUR**

COST CATEGORIES (see Manual, p68):

Cost category	Recommendations/ rules
Staff	Usually, the largest share of the total budget Applies to the staff employed by the project partners
Office and administrative	Calculated as a flat rate of 15% of the staff costs Is calculated automatically in the application form
Travel and accommodation	Flat rate of 15% of staff costs (real costs only if justified)
External expertise and services	Less than 50% of the total budget (recommended) Applies to services and expertise provided by an organisation other than the project partners (including travel costs for staff of the associated policy authorities and stakeholders).
Equipment	Office equipment (usually not exceeding EUR 7,000 per project - recommended) and other equipment (where pilot actions are planned, if justified)
Infrastructure and works	Only in the case of pilot actions , and if justified by the nature of this action
Preparation costs	fixed in the form of a lump sum of EUR 17,500 ; This amount is automatically included in the lead partner’s budget at the application stage

ELIGIBILITY – with flat rate calculations the controller only checks that items are not paid for in a different category

Staff costs

- must be calculated for each employee
- salary + employment taxes + social and health security and social contributions

Office and administrative (flat rate of 15% of each partner's staff costs)

- office rent, insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff are located and to office equipment, utilities, office supplies, accounting, archives, maintenance, cleaning, repairs, security, IT systems, communication (telephone, internet...), bank charges (only related to the project), charges for transnational financial transactions

Travel and accommodation (Flat rate of 15% of staff costs; real costs only if justified, eg. the partner comes from a remote region)

- travel costs of staff employed in a project (incl. travel and car insurance, tolls, parking fees, car mileage), cost of meals, accommodation, visa costs, daily allowances

External expertise and services

- studies and surveys, training, translations, updates to IT systems and websites, promotion of the project or a programme, financial management, services for organization of events and meetings (incl. eg. catering), participations in events (fees), legal consultancy, IP rights, cost of expenditure control, travel and accommodation for external experts, other; **for more details see on p103-104 of Programme Manual**

Equipment

- office equipment, IT hardware and software, furniture and fittings, laboratory eq., machines and instruments, tools and devices, vehicles, other

Infrastructure and works – only for pilot actions

- land, building permits, labour etc., for more details see p 106-107 of Programme Manual

Other eligibility rules

- VAT is eligible for projects the total cost of which is below 5 mil EUR (incl. VAT)
- joint activities are reported and paid by only the contracting partner
- exchange rate is applicable in the month the partner report is submitted (monthly rates published [HERE](#))
- any commercial use of the results would be in contradiction to general mission of the programme
- activities outside the programme area – eg. conferences - an approval by the joint secretariat is necessary. Such activities should preferably already be planned and justified in the application form

NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES (Manual, p23)

- Gifts
- Fines
- Financial penalties
- Expenditure on legal disputes and litigation
- Costs related to foreign exchange rate fluctuations
- Interest on debt.
- Interreg Europe does not allow **contributions in kind**, i.e., provision of works, goods, services

5. Submission and Attachments

Language

- Project proposals must be submitted **in English language**

Online electronic system

- **Application form and Declarations** (signed pdf versions from all partners including the lead and associated authorities, electronic signature is possible) must be submitted electronically in the online *Portal*: <https://portal.interregeurope.eu/login>

6. Evaluation

- 1. Eligibility assessment**
- 2. Quality assessment**
 - Criterion 1 – Relevance of proposal
 - Criterion 2 – Quality of the expected results
 - Criterion 3 – Quality of partnership
 - Criterion 4 – Coherence of the proposal and quality of approach
 - Criterion 5 – Budget

7. other

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