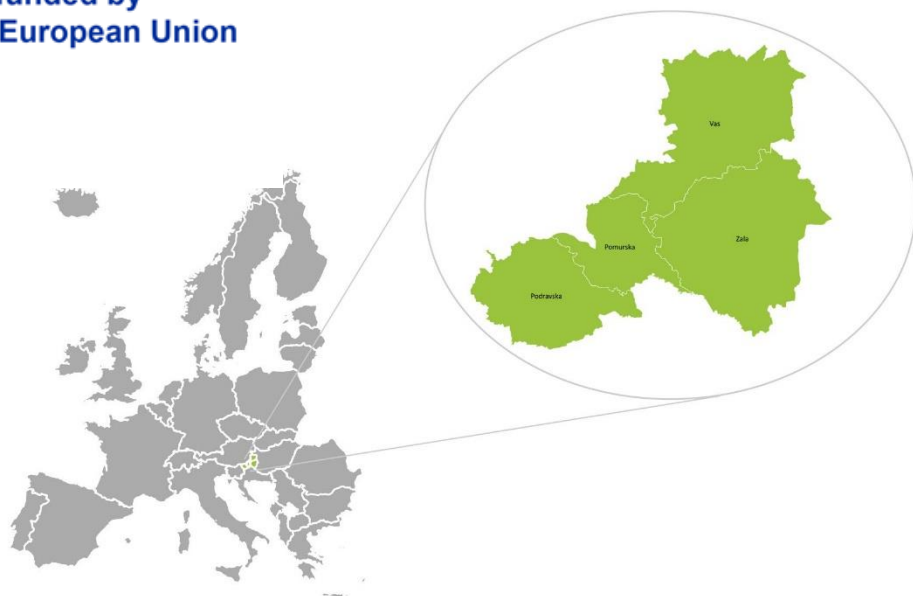
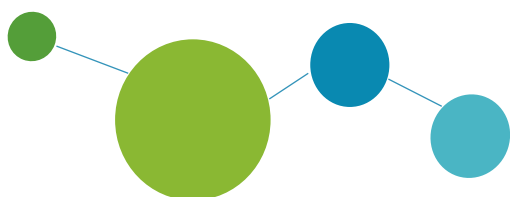




DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Interreg Programme Slovenia-Hungary
for the programme period 2021-2027



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Aleš Mrkela
under Authority Nr. 1001-57/2014/101
dated 11. 8. 2023
Head of the Managing Authority

1 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the process of project assessment and selection in the context of the Interreg Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2021-2027 (IP SI-HU). Its purpose is to help the involved actors to prepare for and implement the tasks related to this process. The document contains a detailed description of the procedures as well as the roles and responsibilities of the involved actors.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

The assessment and selection procedure in the frame of the IP SI-HU is based on the Open Call for Proposals for standard projects that was on 3 March 2023 published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia and together with the Application Pack also published on the programme website www.si-hu.eu and the Open Call for Proposals for small-scale projects that was on 26 May 2023 published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia and together with the Application Pack also published on the programme website www.si-hu.eu. It will be carried out for projects received in the frame of each deadline for the submission of project proposals. The procedure described in this document is accordingly relevant also for other assessment and selection processes within the IP SI-HU (e.g. Open call for small-scale projects).

2.1 KEY PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

The project assessment and selection procedure will be carried out according to the following general principles:

Transparency. The conditions for the administrative compliance and eligibility as well as the selection criteria are approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC) and published in the Application Pack of the Open Call for Proposals. In addition, informative events are organised by the Joint Secretariat (JS) to inform potential applicants about the conditions and processes of cooperation in the programme. All necessary information is available on the programme website. A proper audit trail is to be kept to permit verification of application of the selection criteria established by the MC for the IP SI-HU.

Equal treatment. All received applications shall be dealt with in compliance with the procedure agreed for in the frame of the cross-border programme. Eligible and administratively compliant project applications will be compared and ranked only among the project applications within the same priority in the frame of the respective assessment period.

Objectivity. Separation of responsibilities between the information activities and the assessment is ensured through the appointment of the contact persons for the Open Call for Proposals and the nomination of the assessors. Furthermore, each assessor has to be free of any conflict of interest. The quality of the content of the applications will be assessed by two JS members.

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE KEY TASKS IN THE ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION OF THE RECEIVED APPLICATIONS

The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for the overall **organisation of the assessment** and will be supported by the JS. The MA nominates the Committee for the administrative and eligibility check and the quality assessment.

The administrative compliance and eligibility check of the received applications and the quality assessment of the applications shall be **done by the nominated JS assessors and organised/led by the Head of the assessment committee (Head of the JS)**. Upon necessity a legal expert or another independent expert might be consulted by the Committee members in the course of the administrative compliance and eligibility check or the quality assessment.

Based on the submitted Application form (and its annexes), the JS assesses every project and produces a recommendation (including also the proposal for conditions) to the MC. As an overall approach it is stated, that only projects within one priority will be compared among themselves. This means that for each priority a different ranking list will be generated. Each project will be **assessed by at least two JS members and when relevant in cooperation with the Member State representatives**¹. The purpose of the assessment 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.** For each Project partner, of the approved projects, the opinion on State aid (whether the activities in the submitted project application are state aid/de minimis relevant) is provided by the JS before signing the ERDF Subsidy Contract.

The JS shall prepare a **list of projects** containing the result of the assessment process and the amount of the requested Community co-financing (contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, ERDF) by project and provide it to the MC members in advance to the respective MC meeting.

The **MC shall issue a decision concerning the ERDF co-financing** of projects. Project proposals may be approved, approved under condition, rejected, or put on the reserve list.

The Lead Partners of the submitted, checked and assessed applications can see the status of the project applications in the Joint electronic monitoring system (Jems).

On the basis of the decision of the MC, the **Lead Partners shall be informed on individual decision** on the approval, rejection or being put on the reserve list of the project. The decision of the MC shall represent the basis for concluding the ERDF Subsidy Contract between the MA and the Lead Partner.

The **ERDF Subsidy Contract** resulting from the procedure described shall represent the basis for the implementation of the project.

The members of the Committee for the assessment of the project applications must sign the **Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality (see Annex 1)**. Any individual participating in the assessment process who has a potential conflict of interests due to a link with any applicant must declare it and immediately withdraw from the assessment and selection of this application. In case an attempt is made to influence any individual participating in the assessment, the MA shall be immediately informed. No information about the content of the examination and assessment of proposals can be disclosed to the public or the applicants before the decision of the MC on the co-financing of the project(s) has been taken. In case that an applicant, after receiving the assessment results, requests to view the assessment documentation, only the documentation concerning his/her own project may be disclosed.

¹ Member state representatives are meant National Authorities, Controllers and relevant field ministries.

2.3 CHECK AND ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

The project applications have to be submitted by the Lead partner through Jems. Applications submitted until the given deadline that is published on the programme website, will be registered for the respective deadline. Applications submitted after a certain deadline can be registered for the following deadline for the submission of project proposals.

The assessment of received applications consists of several steps following a standardised procedure safeguarding the principles of equal treatment and transparency. Each application that is formally accepted as administratively compliant and eligible (i.e. submitted in time with all requested documents and in accordance with the requirements set in the Open Call and the Application Pack) shall be further assessed for its quality. Applications which are administratively incompliant or ineligible shall not be assessed for the quality of content.

If in the course of the whole assessment procedure the need for a specific decision considering the assessment arises, the assessment committee might prepare minutes to tackle such topics.

The quality assessment criteria measure the relevance and the feasibility of the project. It helps to establish a common understanding for the decision-making.



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Quality assessment criteria are divided into two categories:

- **Strategic assessment criteria** - The main aim is to determine the extent of the project's contribution to the achievement of programme objectives (including contribution to programme indicators), by addressing joint or common needs of the target group.
- **Operational assessment criteria** - The main aim is to assess the viability and the feasibility of the proposed project, as well as its value for money in terms of resources used versus results delivered.

The assessment criteria are divided into questions and guiding principles for assessment covering **four main thematic groups**, namely **project relevance, partnership relevance, work plan and budget**.

2.3.1 Administrative and eligibility check

In line with the e-cohesion requirements, **applications** under the IP SI-HU 2021-2027 **can be submitted only via the programme's electronic monitoring system Jems**. Jems applies certain pre-submission verifications that prevent applicants from submitting applications with obvious formal errors. In addition to pre-submission checks targeted at technical details (such as mandatory fields must not remain empty) formal/administrative criteria by the programme are also checked – where this is technically possible – via pre-submission verifications or are included in requirements such as submission by the set deadline.

Other administrative and eligibility criteria are subject to human check by the programme's Joint Secretariat following the submission of the application for funding.

Jems step: admin and eligibility check

The Head/deputy of the assessment committee determines on the basis of an **excel table containing the project applications** received (**see Annex 3**) one member of the JS for each project application who shall perform the check according to **the checklist for the administrative compliance and eligibility (see Annex 4)** of the respective project. In the admin and eligibility check the assigned JS member opens the respective project, clicks on "Assessment & Decision" in the menu, selects from the drop down menu the relevant checklist template (Administrative and Eligibility checklist) and clicks on "+ instantiate new assessment". The checklist for the administrative and eligibility check will appear and the assessor fills in the checklist for the administrative compliance and eligibility according to the following criteria:

Table 1: Administrative criteria for standar projects²

Nº.	Administrative criteria	Description	YES or NO	Supplements possible
A.1	The application is submitted by the set deadline.	<i>Ongoing submission.</i> <i>In general, applications are submitted via Jems to the Joint Secretariat at the latest by noon of the set deadline. Applications submitted by the set deadline shall be assessed and, if eligible, proposed to the MC for decision. The deadline for submission of projects is published on the programme webpage, and the upcoming Jems submission deadline is configured accordingly.</i> <i>The applications submitted after the set deadline shall not be rejected but will remain in Jems waiting for the next assessment round (considered to be submitted within the next deadline).</i>	Yes or No Automatically checked by Jems	No
A.2	The project fulfils requirements for partnership.	<i>The following requirements have to be fulfilled:</i> <i>One of the partners shall be Lead Partner.</i> <i>The Lead Partner is located in the programme area. In justified cases outside the programme area provided that it has legally defined competences or field of functions for certain parts of the programme area.</i> <i>The Lead Partner can be EGTC (sole partner if it is located in the programme area)</i>	Yes or No	No
A.3	Obligatory annexes are attached to the application form.	<i>Obligatory annexes must be signed, scanned and attached to the electronic AF and be submitted by the deadline.</i> <i>Obligatory annexes to be attached to all project applications:</i> <i>Project statement (signed by the Lead Partner on behalf of all partners)</i> <i>Project Partner statement (signed by each Project Partner and Lead Partner separately)</i> <i>Partnership agreement (signed by Lead Partner and all Project Partners)</i>	Yes or No	Yes

² For small-scale projects the selection criteria (for admin and quality check) published in the last valid version of the Application pack is relevant.

Table 2: Eligibility criteria

Nº.	Eligibility criteria	Description	Yes or No	Supplements possible
B.1	The data of the Lead/Project Partner is identifiable	1. The name and the address of the Lead/Project Partner is identifiable. 2. The lead/Project Partner is identifiable according to the VAT or other registration number.	Yes or No	Yes
B.2	The project fulfils minimum requirements for content.	<i>The following content-related requirements have to be fulfilled.</i> 1. The project is assigned to a programme priority and a specific objective 2. The project work plan includes at least one work package with a linked project specific objective and a communication objective 3. The project work plan includes at least one output with a positive target value, linked to one of the programme output indicators 4. Outputs are delivered at latest during the end period when activities within the respective work package end 5. The project work plan shall include at least one result with a positive target value, linked to one of the programme result indicators	Yes or No	Yes
B.3	Minimum partnership requirements are respected.	1. At least one Slovene and one Hungarian partner is involved, or an EGTC registered in the participating country consisting of members from both Member States. 2. The Lead/Project Partner is not a natural person or political party.	Yes or No	No
B.4	Minimum and maximum budget requirements are respected, including the percentage of co-financing.	1. ERDF does not exceed 80% of the partner's total budget. 2. Min. 20% of partner total budget is secured by national contribution(s) in the form of own resources (public or private) of the partner and/or as third party financial contribution (public or private). 3. The project respects the minimum and maximum amounts set in the call.	Yes or No	No
B.5	Minimum requirements for cooperation are fulfilled.	At least three (3) cooperation criteria should be selected, "Joint development", "Joint financing" and "Joint implementation" are mandatory.	Yes or No	No

Jems step: Admin and Eligibility Check – request for supplements

If according to the administrative check there are discrepancies or if certain documents are missing, the Lead Partner will be asked to provide supplements. The assigned JS member prepares the **request for supplements (see Annex 5)**, sends it to the contact person of the Lead partner via e-mail. The Lead

partner replies to the e-mail by sending the relevant documents/explanations. The JS member uploads the relevant documentation under “Assessment Annexes” in the section “Assessment and decision”.

The supplements may refer to compliance with the criteria A3, B1 and B2. Lead Partner will be able to supplement the project application within seven (7) calendar days after a request for supplementation is send.

If the project, after receipt of the supplements or passed seven (7) calendar days, still does not fulfil the administrative and eligibility criteria, the project will be rejected in Jems. The applicants can submit the revised application again by one of the next deadlines.

Only if all administrative and eligibility criteria are fulfilled, a project will undergo a quality assessment and be submitted to the Monitoring Committee (MC) for decision. All administrative and eligibility criteria should be answered with **YES** or **NA** (not applicable), that is fulfilled by every project proposal by the end of the administrative and eligibility check. They do not measure the quality of the project or its content. If only one field is answered with **NO**, the project will be rejected.

Jems step: Finish admin and eligibility checklist

The assigned JS member concludes the admin and eligibility check by clicking on “Finish checklist”.

After finishing a checklist, the same JS member then confirms the administrative compliance and eligibility check by clicking on the button “Enter eligibility assessment” and selecting either “Project has passed eligibility assessment” or “Project has failed eligibility assessment”. The assessor also can provide an explanatory note and in the end click on “Submit eligibility assessment”.

Jems step: Eligibility Decision

The assigned JS member enters the final decision by clicking on “Enter eligibility decision”, adds the explanatory notes and the decision date (date of MC approval for ineligible projects and date of finished eligibility assessment for eligible projects) and clicks on the button “Submit eligibility decision”. The applicant will see the status change from Submitted to Eligible/Ineligible. The results of the administrative compliance and eligibility check for ineligible projects are sent to the MC for decision.

In case of projects which have failed the eligibility assessment, the assigned JS member justifies the reasons for the rejection in the checklist following the relevant assessment question. The reasons stated bilingually are then part of the **Letter of rejection (see Annex 6)**. The assigned JS member uploads the Letter of rejection in the “Assessment attachments” within the “Assessment & Decision section”.

Those applications that fully comply with the administrative and eligibility criteria will be subject to quality assessment. After the project application is confirmed as Eligible, the eligibility check cannot be edited anymore by any user.

Documents/forms used:

- List of received project applications and their assessors (excel table - data taken from the Jems)

- Jems Checklist for the administrative compliance and eligibility check
- Request for supplements
- Letter of rejection

2.3.2 Quality assessment

Based on the submitted Application form (and its annexes), the JS assesses every project and prepares a recommendation (including the proposal for conditions)³ for the MC. As an overall approach, only projects within one priority are compared among each other. This means that for each priority a separate ranking list is generated. Each project is **assessed by at least two JS members and when relevant in cooperation with Member State representatives**.⁴

The purpose of the assessment is to support the MC in its decision-making. **The right and responsibility to decide on project approval is the sole responsibility of the MC.**

The head/deputy of the assessment committee determines on the basis of the **excel table (data taken from Jems)** containing all project applications that passed the administrative compliance and eligibility check (**see Annex 7**) two JS assessors (four eyes principle) for each project application who shall perform the quality assessment of the respective project according to the **Quality assessment checklist (see Annex 8)**. Both JS assessors fill in a separate Quality assessment checklist and separately score the application in the Jems system. The JS assessor that assessed the administrative eligibility and compliance is the first assessor of the project application. Only the assigned JS assessors enter the assessment checklists. The two JS assessors prepare one joint **Summary appraisal grid (SAG) in English language (see Annex 10)** including the scores of the assessment, the justifications and conditions to be fulfilled prior signing the ERDF Contract. On the basis of the assessment and the set threshold, a ranking list as a proposal for the MC decision will be prepared by the JS.

Projects are assessed according to the criteria in the tables below.

Table 3: The quality assessment scale

Scores between 0 and 5 are allocated to each assessment criteria as follows:

Insufficient		0	The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
Poor		1	The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
Fair		2	The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
Good		3	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are identified.
Very good		4	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are identified.

³ Having this as a draft prepared before the MC meeting makes the decision-making process smoother and faster. However, this should not limit the MC for having the discussion on the projects. It is just an additional help. The MC still can modify, delete or add conditions.

⁴ Member state representatives are meant National Authorities, Controllers and relevant field ministries.

Excellent	5	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.
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Each thematic group is assessed with a score which is supported by written comments. The comments should reflect the strengths and weaknesses fairly and give reasons for the scores. The assessment of one criterion should NOT influence the assessment of another criterion. In particular, the same weakness/shortcoming should not be referred to under different criteria (no double penalisation). If the JS gives 0 points in any of the thematic groups, justification should be provided. Giving 0 points in one of the thematic groups is a strong signal to the MC, meaning that there are serious problems with the project.

The total number of points for a project application in the scope **of quality assessment shall be 20 (100%)**. Each project application has to score at least 3 points in each thematic group and has to achieve at least 60% (12 points) to be further considered. Projects not reaching at least 60 % (12 points) will be rejected. In case two or more project proposals will reach the same points, project with more points in the thematic group "Project relevance" will be placed higher on the ranking list. Projects having at least 60 % (reaching 12 points or more) shall be discussed at the MC meeting with the possibility of **being approved, approved under conditions, rejected or put on the reserve list**.

The applicants are asked to ensure appropriate quality of translation in order to avoid a lower scoring in the quality assessment due to insufficient, incomprehensible or not clear information in individual fields of the application. Eventual shortcomings might influence the final score.

The quality assessment is performed according the following **selection criteria**:

Table 4: Strategic assessment criteria/project relevance

Nº.	Assessment question	Sub-questions for assessment	Score	Section in Application Form
C1 Project relevance			0-1-2-3-4-5	
C1.1	How well is the need for the project justified?	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.2.1 and C.2.2
		What is the level of maturity⁵ of the project, and if applicable, does it build on previous experiences and use synergies with other initiatives.		C.2.7
		The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU /EU macroregional strategies/national/regional).		C.2.5

⁵ How ready is the project (at which stage of completion are the administrative procedures that allow project implementation (licenses, designs, permits, land acquisition, etc.)?

C1.2	To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives and indicators?	The project's overall objective clearly contributes to the achievement of the programme priority specific objective.		C.1
		The project's outputs clearly link to programme output indicators and contribution to programme targets.		C.4
		The project's contribution to programme result indicators is realistic and sufficient.		C.5
C1.3	To what extent will project outputs have an impact beyond the project's lifetime?	The project's 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.8.2
		The project's main outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability) – if not, it is justified.		C.8.3
C1.4	To what extent is the project intervention logic plausible?	The project specific objectives are specific, realistic and achievable.		C.4 Specific objectives in work packages
		Proposed project outputs are needed to achieve project specific objectives.		C.4 Output tables in work packages
		Project outputs and results that contribute to programme indicators are realistic (it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e., time, partners, budget – and they are realistic based on the quantification provided).		C.4, C.5, C.6, D
C1.5	What added value does the cooperation bring?	The importance of cooperation beyond borders for the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated.		C.2.3
		The results cannot/only to some extent be achieved without cooperation.		C.2.3
		There is a clear benefit from cooperating for the project partners/target groups/project area/programme area.		C.2.3

Maximum score is 5 points (C1.1 – C1.5)

Table 5: Strategic assessment criteria/partnership relevance

Nº.	Assessment question	Sub-questions for assessment	Scores	Section in Application Form
C 2 Partnership relevance			0-1-2-3-4-5	

C2.1	To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?	The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified.		C.3 and B.1.6
		- With respect to the project's objectives, the project partnership: - is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory - consists of partners that complement each other.		C.3 and C.7
		Partner organisations have demonstrated experiences and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.).		B.1.6
		All partners play a defined role in the partnership and the territory benefits from this cooperation.		C.3
		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.4 Activities in work packages

Maximum score is 5 points (C2.1)

Table 6: Operational assessment criteria/work plan

Nº.	Assessment question	Sub-questions for assessment	Scores	Section in Application Form
C 3 Workplan			0-1-2-3-4-5	
C3.1	To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?	Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to planned outputs and results.		C.4 and C.5
		The time plan is realistic.		C.6
		Activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time sequence.		C.6
		The importance of investments and their cross-border/transnational/EU macroregional strategies relevance is demonstrated to reach project objectives (if applicable).		C.4 Investments
C3.2	To what extent are communication activities appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?	Communication objectives are relevant and are expected to contribute to project specific objectives.		C.4 Objectives in work packages
		Communication activities (and deliverables) are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders.		C.4 Activities and deliverables in work packages

Maximum score is 5 points (C3.1 – C3.2)

Table 7: Operational assessment criteria/budget

Nº.	Assessment question	Sub-questions for assessment	Scores	Section in Application Form
C4 Budget			0-1-2-3-4-5	
C4.1	To what extent is the project budget used in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness?	<i>The principle of economy relates to minimising the costs of resources. The resources used by the project partnership for its activities should be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality, and at the best price.</i> - <i>The budget allocated to staff and external expertise is in line with the project content and the costs are realistic.</i> - <i>Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation.</i>		D.2 and B – partner budget
		<i>The principle of efficiency relates to getting the most from available resources (value for money). It pertains to the relationship between resources employed and outputs delivered in terms of quantity, quality and timing.</i> - <i>The need for engaging external expertise is justified and the costs seem realistic.</i> - <i>Financial allocation per cost category is in line with the work plan.</i> - <i>If applicable, the distribution of the budget per period is in line with the work plan.</i>		D.2 and B – partner budget D.3
		<i>The principle of effectiveness concerns meeting the objectives and achieving the intended results.</i> - <i>The available information in the budget is transparent and sufficient. On that basis, the project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan, project outputs and project's contribution to programme indicators.</i>		D.2 and B – partner budget
		<i>Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned for investments and equipment purchases (if applicable), and their costs are realistic.</i>		D.2 and B – partner budget

Maximum score is 5 points (C4.1)

Besides the strategic and operational criteria also **specific criteria** defined within the Strategic Environmental Assessment and **horizontal principles** are assessed. For such criteria no scores are given because neither the projects nor the criteria in the different specific objectives are comparable.

Project Partners of projects with specific project activities that involve Natura 2000 territories and include activities mentioned in SEA report of the programme, require appropriate SEA assessment. In such cases, SEA assessment of the proposed project has to be done before project submission.

Activities proposed within the project shall be implemented in accordance to project SEA assessment and should include mitigation measures and implementation of monitoring. Project Partners are asked to monitor those activities during the whole project implementation in order to be able to report on it to MAJS for the purposes of the programme monitoring. **This specific criterion needs to be fulfilled otherwise the project will be rejected.**

For IP SI-HU, it is crucial that **horizontal principles** are integrated in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project activities. During the whole life cycle of the projects, partners are requested to consider actions cross-cutting project activities, taking into account the horizontal principles of the EU⁶. More precisely, actions should be planned, implemented and reported considering the horizontal principles of **equal opportunity, non-discrimination, gender equality and environmental sustainability**. The Project Partners shall indicate the contribution of the project to horizontal principles as positive, neutral or negative and provide a short justification. A negative assessment of one of the horizontal principles will lead to project rejection.

Table 8: specific guiding principle and horizontal principles for the programme

Reference	Nr.	Guiding and horizontal principles	
Projects with activities in Natura 2000 territories	C5	Does the project involve activities in Natura 2000 territories and include activities mentioned in SEA report of the Interreg VI-A Slovenia-Hungary programme? If yes, did the project do the SEA assessment before project submission?	YES or NO⁷
Horizontal principle	C6	The project makes a positive contribution to programme horizontal principle equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.	POSITIVE or NEUTRAL or NEGATIVE
Horizontal principle	C7	The project makes a positive contribution to programme horizontal principle equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective.	POSITIVE or NEUTRAL or NEGATIVE
Horizontal principle	C8	The project makes a positive contribution to programme horizontal principle sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the "Do No Significant Harm" principle.	POSITIVE or NEUTRAL or NEGATIVE

Jems step: Quality assessment

The assigned JS assessor may enter and edit the check as many times as he/she wants by choosing the relevant project application in Jems. He/she opens the application and starts the assessment by clicking «Assessment & Decision» and selecting from the drop down menu the relevant checklist template (the »Quality checklist«) and clicks on the button »+instantiate new assessment«. For assessing the project applications, the assessor has to give to each quality check criterion the adequate score (see in the four tables above) under Value and enter a justification (covering all sub-question within the main thematic groups).

⁶ Horizontal Principles as per Article 9 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021

⁷ This specific criterion needs to be fulfilled otherwise the project will be rejected.

The second assessor can assess the same project at the same time as the first assessor. Both assessors conclude the assessment with clicking on the button »Finish checklist«.

The first assessor selects from the drop-down menu the »Consolidated Quality checklist«, where both assessors try to make a consensus on the scores and justifications as well as together define »Conditions«.

For each Project partner, of the approved projects, the opinion on State aid (whether the activities in the submitted project application are state aid/de minimis relevant) is provided by the JS member by filling in the "State aid opinion" (**see Annex 9**).

Jems step: Finish consolidation quality checklist

The first assessor clicks on "Finish checklist" and continues the work with clicking on "Enter quality assessment", where he/she can choose either "Project is recommended for funding", "Project is recommended with conditions" or "Project is not recommended for funding", writes some explanatory notes (including the conditions or reasons for not reaching the threshold/weaknesses) and clicks on "Submit quality assessment".

On the basis of the finalised assessment a separate ranking list will be **created (see Annex 11)** for each of the three priority axes, ranking from the project applications with the highest scores to the project applications with the lowest scores together with the recommendation categories.

Category in Jems	Score (points)
Recommended or recommended under conditions for funding	11 points or more
Not recommended for funding	10 points or less

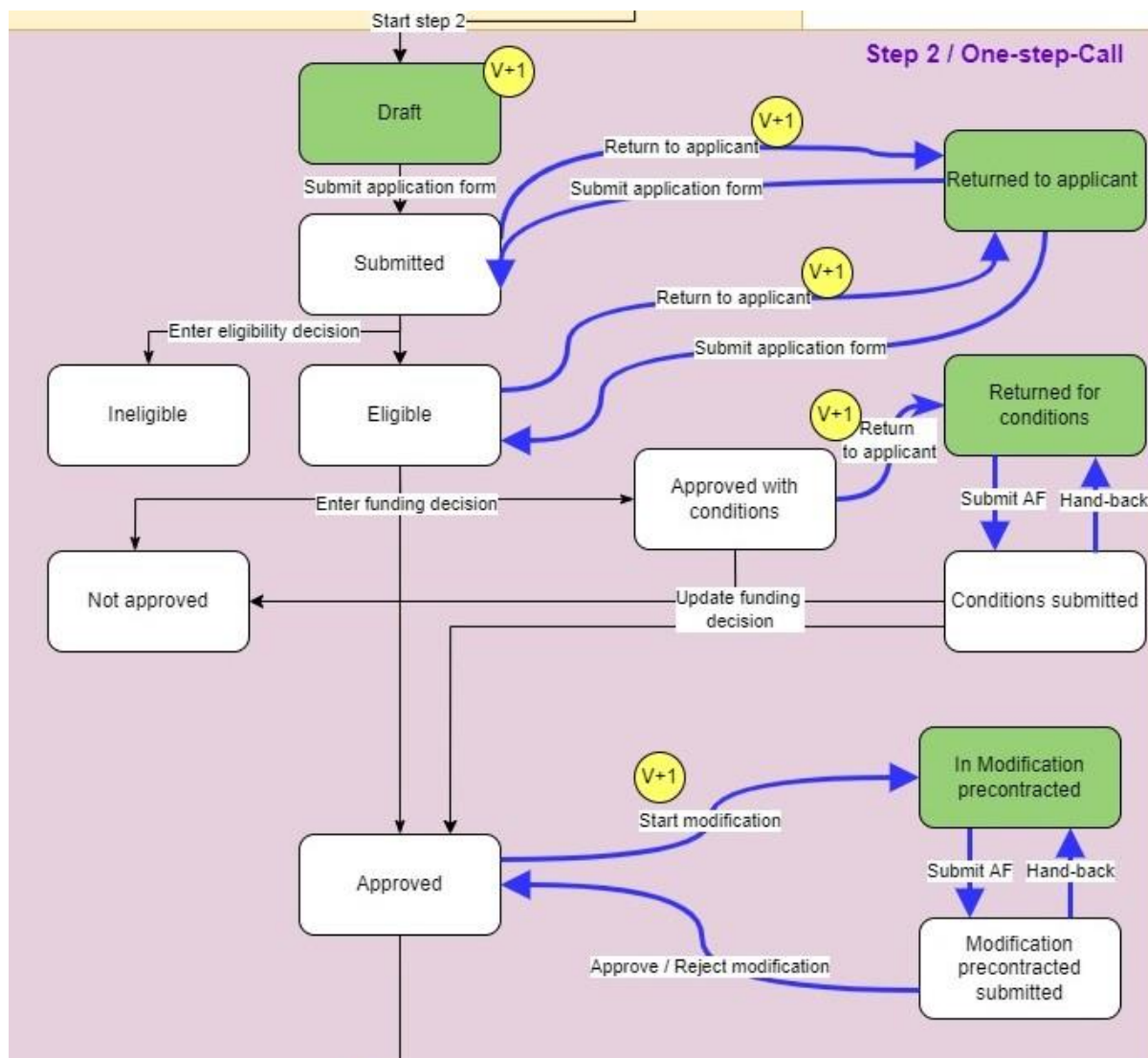
Jems step: Creation of the Summary Appraisal Grid

After the quality assessment of a project application, the assessors prepare the Summary Appraisal Grid (SAG). The scanned version of SAG is part of the materials for the respective MC meeting and is uploaded as a pdf file under »Assessment attachments« in the »Assessment & Decision« section.

These ranking lists together with the SAGs are sent to the MC members as materials for the MC meeting.

Documents/forms used:

- Checklist for the quality assessment (checklist in the Jems)
- Opinion on State-aid relevance (checklist in the Jems)
- Summary Appraisal Grid (SAG)
- Ranking list



Source: <https://jems.interact-eu.net/manual/>

3 SELECTION AND CONTRACTING OF PROJECTS

3.1 SELECTION OF PROJECTS WITHIN THE OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

At the MC meeting, the project applications that reach a threshold of at least 11 points are discussed. The project applications that reached a score of 10 points or less are recommended for rejection. The members of the MC take a final decision on the project application according to the recommendation category given:

Category in the Jems	score (points)	Funding decision of the MC
Recommended / Recommended with conditions	11 points or more	Approved ⁸ Approved with conditions Not approved "Reserve list"
Not recommended	10 points or less	Rejected

Jems step: Funding Decision

After the project application is given the respective recommendation category in Jems (Approved for funding, Approved for funding with conditions, Not approved for funding). The project application can be, if needed, reverted back to the applicant, in order for him/her to be able to fulfil the MC conditions.

The assigned JS member prepares the **Decision letter (see Annex 12)**, reverts the application to the applicant by clicking on "Return to applicant", uploads the decision letter in the section "Application annexes" and sends the information on the project status change in Jems ("Returned for conditions") to the contact person of the Lead Partner via e-mail.

➤ **In case the funding decision of the MC is approved for funding, the following applies:**

Before the contracting procedure, the JS invites the Lead Partner to a **face-to-face meeting** to clarify the MC conditions and open issues. The JS fills in the check-list for JS face-to-face interviews (**see Annex 13**) including the conclusions and fulfilment of MC conditions. The face-to-face check list is uploaded by the JS member under "Assessment attachments" in the section "Assessment & Decision".

In the next step the applicant **resubmits the application**. After the JS check, and in case of fulfilment of the set conditions, the JS member clicks on "Update funding decision" and chooses either "Project is approved for funding" or "Project is not approved for funding". In addition, also the explanatory note and date of the decision need to be entered and clicks on "Finalise funding decision". The Jems status of the application changes to "Approved".

➤ **In case the funding decision of the MC is rejected, the following applies:**

A rejected project application is determined as not being suitable for implementation in the frame of the Programme. The applicant receives a letter of rejection. The project has the status "Not approved".

⁸ For projects approved by the MC which need minor changes Jems status »Approved under Conditions« may be chosen. In this case corrections of the project application are possible.

➤ **In case the funding decision of the MC is reserved, the following applies:**

The project applications that are put on the reserve list are in principle welcomed by the MC, but cannot be approved due to a temporary lack of the programme funds. The approval of the application depends on the availability of funds. Projects on the reserve list are put on hold and are not assessed by the JS again. They are ranked by the MC within the priorities of the programme. Upon availability of funds, the MA contracts them. Depending on the amount of available funds and in order to make best use of the programme budget, the MA may contract projects with smaller budget first. The applicant receives the decision via the Jems. The project has the status Reserved and moves to Postponed Applications under the Archive section in the left-hand menu of the Jems.

3.2 CONTRACTING

A project can only be set to Contracted if the project is in status Approved. This means that, for example, on-going modifications first have to be closed before a project can be set to contracted.

The section Contracting is located in the side navigation on the same level as Application Form.

The Contracting section is aimed to be used by JS, **the action to set a project to contracted can only be done once and cannot be reverted**. When a project is set to contracted, the sections and fields remain editable.

The JS member enters the “Contracting” section with clicking on “Contract monitoring”. First, the JS member adds the start date of the project. The project end date is automatically proposed based on the project duration. If project duration is changed through a project modification, the end date shall automatically be adjusted. The JS member also has to fill in the “Specific project typology” and “Dimensions and Codes”. Once everything is filled in, he/she continues with clicking on “Contracts and agreements” where the date of the signed “Partnership Agreement” has to be entered and the signed “Subsidy contract” and all Annexes to the Subsidy contract will be uploaded by the JS member under “Contracting & supporting documents – Contracts”. This section is also visible for the Lead Partner.

The process continues with the “Project managers” section, where the Lead Partner enters the information about the project manager, finance manager and communication manager of the project. Once all mentioned sections are filled in, the JS member clicks on “Set project to contracted”. The JS member will be now able to insert also the “Partner details” where he/she has to fill in the information of the “Ultimate Beneficial Owner(s)”, the Bank details of LP/PP and the Location of documents. He/She will also be able to upload the supporting documentation.

Documents/forms used:

- Minutes of the MC meeting
- List of approved projects
- List of rejected projects
- List of postponed projects
- Reserve list (list of projects that have been put on a reserve list)
- Decision letters (approval, rejection, postponement, being put on a reserve list – **(see Annex 12)**)

Do to the fact, that Jems is developed on an Agile approach, there could be some new developments and this document would need to be adapted. For more information on how to navigate in the Jems system the following link is available <https://jems.interact-eu.net/manual/>

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Declaration on Impartiality and Confidentiality

Annex 2: Appointment of the Committee for the assessment of project applications in the frame of the Open Call

Annex 3: List of received project applications and their assessors (excel table)

Annex 4: Administrative compliance and eligibility checklist

Annex 5: Request for supplements

Annex 6: Letter of rejection (after the administrative compliance and eligibility check)

Annex 7: List of projects that passed the administrative compliance and eligibility check

Annex 8: Quality assessment checklist

Annex 9: JS opinion on the state-aid relevance

Annex 10: Summary Appraisal Grid (SAG)

Annex 11: Ranking list

Annex 12: Decision letters

Annex 13: Face-to-face checklist