

# Formal criteria and PROJECT SELECTION

## Project selection

Two main sets of assessment criteria are defined which refer to decision on the project: the eligibility criteria and the selection criteria:

- Eligibility criteria have to be fulfilled by every project proposal - they are “kick-off” criteria. They do not measure the quality of the project or its content. Only if all eligibility criteria are fulfilled a project will be proceeded to the JMSC.
- Selection criteria assess the quality of the project proposal as well as the consistency with programme objectives, the maturity of the project and the relation budget/outputs and results. Selection criteria serve as the basis for project evaluation, their fulfilment cannot be answered by simple yes or no, and usually they are fulfilled to some extent, fully or not at all.

### Eligibility criteria

All questions to be answered with yes/no. If “no” is the answer to any of the eligibility criteria, the project will not be discussed in the JMSC. Generally not eligible for funding are (these criteria are valid for both lead partners and partners):

- private persons, political parties
- direct subsidies for privately owned single firms
- profit oriented actions (related to projects)

Check list for the applicant

**Table 1: Eligibility criteria**

<i>Eligibility criteria</i>	Yes	No
<b>Criteria for formal check</b>		
The application is submitted on the standard application form and complete.		
The application submitted in at least one hard copy <sup>1</sup> officially signed by the lead partner and in an electronic format including all attached documents.		
The application form is filled in bilingually <sup>2</sup>		
There is at least one Austrian and one Hungarian partner <sup>3</sup> and at least one of them should be located either in the eligible programme area or holding legal or administrative responsibilities in the programme area.		
Partnership statement is submitted in the provided format and signed by all partners, including the lead partner.		
Additional annexes that are required in one of the regions/countries are submitted.		
The budget is submitted in the provided format (in €).		
Requested ERDF share does not exceed 85%.		
Complete project financing (public or private funds) is ensured and documented <sup>4</sup> .		
The project is implemented between 01.01.2007 and 30.06.2015.		
The relevant national contribution (at least 15% of the eligible project costs) comes either from public funds or from own contributions of public bodies or public equivalent bodies		
Is there a cross-border cooperation in at least two of the four following fields joint project development joint project implementation joint staffing <sup>5</sup> joint financing <sup>6</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> The hard copy originally signed is the legally binding version.

<sup>2</sup> Legally binding is the language of the lead partner. The lead partner has to take responsibility for the quality of the translation.

<sup>3</sup> Except an EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) including Austrian and Hungarian partners.

<sup>4</sup> Documentation may include statement (given the approval of the JMSC) from the co-financing line ministry, region, bank, a declaration of the applicant organisation about the availability of own resources, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Paying staff costs on both sides of the border (external services are not included).

<sup>6</sup> Whether the proportion of financing on both sides of the border is considered as co-financing, is a matter of case by case decision.

In the formal check also the following criteria will be checked for eligibility.

<b>Eligibility of applicants, activities and costs</b>		
The main impact of the project is in the programme area <sup>8</sup> .		
The lead partner and project partners are public bodies, or public equivalent bodies <sup>9</sup> or non-profit organisations or other institutions <sup>10</sup> which on a project level act in public interest		
Project goals hit at least one of the intervention codes defined for the chosen activity field.		
Activities and costs of the project are in principle eligible under the programme.		

## Selection criteria

The selection criteria are focused on the following three dimensions. These dimensions are of different importance:

- Consistency with the programme objectives
- Project maturity
- Value for money

Based on the submitted application form (and its annexes), the JTS is producing an assessment sheet for every project, a non binding recommendation to the JMSC, with relevant information, notes on every criteria and a summary, (e.g. a proposal how the project could be improved). However, the purpose of this is only to make the JMSC work more efficient. The right and responsibility to decide about project approval lies only and exclusively at the JMSC, which decision may be different from the recommendation of the JTS. Projects will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

**Table 2: Quality assessment criteria**

<b>Selection criteria</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>Consistency with the programme objectives:</b>	
How far does the project contribute to the programme level objectives?	Concentrate on point 2
To what extent is the contribution of the project to the goals of the programme clear?	

<sup>7</sup> These questions must be subject of a deeper analysis of the project, parallel with the quality assessment. If necessary, the JTS may involve external expert into the assessment. If any of these criteria is answered with clear "NO", the project is not eligible, and therefore further assessment is not needed. However, in debatable situations, a case by case decision must be taken by the JMSC.

<sup>8</sup> Individual activities may be implemented beyond the eligible area, however only if it is proven that they serve the programme's objectives and have an impact in the eligible area.

<sup>9</sup> Public equivalent body means any legal body governed by public or private law:

– established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, *not having an industrial or commercial character*, and having legal personality, and

financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, or subject to management supervision by those bodies, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, *more than half of whose members are appointed by the State*, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law

<sup>10</sup> Eg. cluster organisations, business support centres, universities, research and development centres

Quality of the cross-border cooperation in at least two of the four following fields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- joint project development<sup>11</sup></li> <li>- joint project implementation<sup>12</sup></li> <li>- joint staffing<sup>13</sup></li> <li>- joint financing<sup>14</sup></li> </ul>	
To what extent is the project in line with the relevant sectoral policy objectives, national and regional strategies?	Question to be answered by regional partners
To what extent does the project create an added value, or uses an innovative approach? <sup>15</sup>	
Is the project compliant with the horizontal principles of gender equality and environmental protection? <sup>16</sup> To what extent (neutral/promoting/focused on)?	Argumentation is important
<b>Project maturity:</b>	
To what extent are the activities, outcomes, project specific and overall objectives clearly defined? Does the project include milestones with appropriate indicators? <sup>17</sup>	
To what extent does the project have a sound justification, and realistic outcomes?	
To what extent is the project sustainable in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financial<sup>18</sup> and</li> <li>- institutional terms<sup>19</sup>?</li> </ul>	
To what extent are economic and organisational capacity, as well as necessary technical skills foreseen for the project management? <sup>20</sup>	Question to be answered by regional partners
Are the right partners involved?	Question to be answered by regional partners
To what extent is a feed-back methodology built into the implementation of the project? <sup>21</sup>	
<b>Value for money:</b>	
To what extent does the project serve a real demand, and how far was the target group involved in the project preparation? <sup>22</sup>	

<sup>11</sup> All partners should contribute to the development of the project

■ Partners define how the project will operate. Joint development of objectives and outcomes, budget, timing and responsibilities for work packages and tasks to achieve the objectives

■ Identifying knowledge and experience, that each partner brings to the project and what each partner expects to get from the project

<sup>12</sup> The Lead Partner bears the overall responsibility for the project, but all partners take responsibilities for different parts of the implementation

■ Each project partner responsible for a work package ensures that planned activities are carried out, interim targets are met and unexpected challenges to implementation are dealt with

<sup>13</sup> Paying staff costs on both sides of the border (external services are not included).

<sup>14</sup> Whether the proportion of financing on both sides of the border is considered as co-financing, is a matter of case by case decision.

<sup>15</sup> It should be urged that projects create novelties, at least in the sense of new developments for the border region.

<sup>16</sup> Contradiction with the horizontal principles is not allowed. Specifically gender oriented projects should be financed in Priority 1 under the activity field "social integration and equal opportunities". The projects have to be evaluated also according to their environmental sustainability.

<sup>17</sup> Under this criterion it should be evaluated, whether the project is logical and transparent. Project descriptions in which it is unclear what will be done and for what purposes are undesirable. For projects longer than 6 months, milestones in a frequency depending on the character of the project will be required. Intermediate reports and financial reports must be submitted according to milestones. Accounting is necessary at least once a year in September

<sup>18</sup> Financial sustainability means whether the national financing (own contribution) can be secured during the funding period, and whether project is viable after the EU financing is ended.

<sup>19</sup> Institutional sustainability means that the operation of the project should be secured in technical terms (e.g. running of an investment owned by a municipality), and that the ownership of the project results will be secured also after the funding period.

<sup>20</sup> The partner network should either have own personnel for the operation of the project, or rely on other expertise. Their competence should be evaluated based on their experiences (organisational and personal).

<sup>21</sup> The interest of stakeholders (partners, target group, etc.) should be watched.

Is the foreseen budget economic? <sup>23</sup>	
In case of income generating infrastructure projects is the Obj.3 financing really justified, does it have to be decreased or refused at all? <sup>24</sup>	
<b>Summary</b> The project should be approved The project should be approved under the following conditions The project should not be approved	

---

<sup>22</sup> It should be avoided that projects produce results without real benefits for the target group. The relation of the LP and the partners to the final beneficiaries (target group) should be evaluated. It should be also assessed, whether a sound communication and information strategy for dissemination –“capitalisation strategy”– has been established.

<sup>23</sup> As efficiency in monetary terms cannot be measured in case of many expected projects, this question should rather focus on whether the planned expenses are really needed for the project implementation?

<sup>24</sup> The currently used calculation method for infrastructure generating projects can be fully applied to answer this question. The suitability of this approach should be checked at the 2nd level control for the sake of long term legal safety.