

Alpine Space Programme

Terms of Reference

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1st CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS



Introduction

The Alpine Space programme 2014-2020 is an EU transnational cooperation programme to support sustainable regional development in the Alpine region. Contributing to the EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, it provides stakeholders with a framework to develop, test, implement and coordinate new solutions. More information on the programme can be found under: www.alpine-space.eu.

Depending on the availability of funds one regular call for project proposals shall be launched per year. These calls for project proposals are based on the programme strategy as defined in the cooperation programme as well as in so-called Terms of Reference developed for specific calls. Thus, in the present paper the expectations of the programme and the general requirements for applications are described to enable the applicants to better target their proposals.

Application and assessment procedure

Before the opening of each call the programme publishes in advance Terms of Reference on the programme website. Interested project developers are invited to study this document carefully and contact the Alpine Space contact points (ACPs) or the joint secretariat (JS) for clarifications or informal feedbacks on their project ideas. The JS provides support mainly in relation to the overall coherence of the project proposals to the cooperation programme and the technical aspects of application documents. The ACPs provide more specific information on content and consistency of the proposal to the selected thematic objective, allocation of costs to correct budget lines and partner search as well as general advice on the preparation of project proposals.

Projects will normally be selected in a two-step application procedure following a call for project proposals. In a first step applicants are requested to submit a short project description, called expression of interest (EoI). This information will be assessed by the JS with support of the ACP. The programme committee (PC) composed by the Partner States of the programme will pre-select the EoI and invite the best scored projects to further elaborate their proposal and to submit a detailed application form (AF) in a second step. If appropriate, applicants will be given

recommendations by the PC on how to further elaborate the project proposal to shape it to the expectations of the programme.

The AF, together with a signed partnership agreement will be assessed by the JS with support of the ACP. The PC will finally select the projects that shall be co-financed and decide on the allocation of ERDF, considering the assessment results of the JS.

The JS will assess the EoI and the AF against the programme assessment criteria. Applicants shall specifically pay attention to the programme's eligibility criteria. Details on the application procedure, and the assessment criteria and the eligibility criteria are provided in factsheets and guidance that can be found on the programme website¹.

Project budget

The programme does not set specific budget restrictions for the projects. However, the programme expects applicants to pay attention to the consistency of the project budget with the envisaged activities and outputs. As a general recommendation, applicants may orientate themselves on the average ERDF allocation to projects funded by the programme in the period 2007-2013 which amounted to 2 million Euros.

Project duration

The duration of projects must not exceed 36 months. This limit applies for the implementation phase of the project. It does not comprise the project preparation phase and closure.

The start date for the implementation of all projects is the date of project approval by the PC. This is currently foreseen for beginning of December 2015. The exact date will be made available during step 2 of the application process.

¹ These will be made available by the first week of February 2015

Project partnership

The minimum number of participants which a project shall have is four, coming from at least three different Partner States. The size of partnership shall not exceed a total of 15 project participants, including the lead partner and non-EU partners. However, projects shall consider that it is not the number of partners that makes a project good but the appropriateness and relevance of the partners and the quality of the partnership.

Further expectations of the programme

The programme expects projects to understand the underpinning assumptions and the rationale of the Alpine Space programme as set out in the following.

Unlike other objectives of European Cohesion Policy, the transnational INTERREG-programmes especially deal with policy development issues. Projects need to identify their position in the existing policy framework, which is set on different levels by various stakeholders in the Partner States:

- the EU policy framework with the Europe 2020 strategy and sectoral policies;
- the European Territorial Agenda
- the macro-regional level with strategies like EUSALP and Danube Strategy, as well as treaties like the Alpine Convention;
- furthermore national, regional and local policy frameworks should be considered.

The Alpine Space programme supports projects that are dedicated to one of the three stages of the policy cycle: strategic policy development, explorative and piloting activities and policy implementation².

Project applicants shall find and explain their position in the policy cycle and clearly define what results will be delivered and how they contribute to improvements in the policy making process:

- Strategic policy development: such projects concentrate on more general analytical and research activities and should involve i.a. policy owners. Results expected from this type of projects relate to policy analysis, agenda setting and strategy development.

² A factsheet explaining in detail the policy cycle will be made available by the first week of February 2015

- Explorative and piloting activities: such projects are frequently rooted in a strategy with a focus on development of new tools or methodologies and their testing in order to find most appropriate means for strategy implementation. Thematic leadership, know-how and capacity are prerequisites for the partnership.
- Policy implementation: such projects have a clear focus on fully developed instruments for the concrete implementation of a policy. A specific and existing policy framework forms the background for the implementation. The results of cooperation should enable long-lasting institutionalised work flows.

The programme priorities, specific objectives and indicative actions have been set to steer the projects toward the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy within the scope of transnational co-operation. The programme cooperation area is therefore the background against which the project applicants have to set out their proposals. The programme expects the projects to consider the specific objectives of the priorities and to explain how they contribute to these objectives.

It must be clear that in the context of European Cohesion Policy project results must have a long-term perspective and should aim to strengthen the Alpine Space cooperation area in the chosen field of intervention.

The following check-list should help applicants to ensure the consistency of their proposal with the programme's expectations:

Transnational approach:

- ✓ Clearly demonstrate why and how the transnational approach adds value in tackling the defined topics.

Programme intervention logic:

- ✓ Provide a clear reference to the priorities and specific objectives of the programme (i.e. project objectives contribute to priority specific objectives of the programme, project outputs contribute to the output indicators of the programme, project results contribute to result

indicators of the programme (for the programme's intervention logic please consult the programme website).

Contribution to policy making:

- ✓ Build on the state of the art of the policy making process (existing strategies, methodologies, management practices, regulations, structures, legislation...) in their relevant thematic field.

Sustainability and added value of project outputs and results:

- ✓ Ensure that the project's outputs are specific, measurable, realistic, durable and transferable. The project's outputs and results should be clearly linked to the identified target group's needs and should bring an added value on existing structures or products.
- ✓ Make explicit the long term use of the project results and the expected impact on target areas (geographically and thematically) and target groups.
- ✓ Clearly identify the stakeholders for whom the tackled problem, the intended solutions and proposed project results are relevant and foresee a strategy for their involvement already in the project preparation phase.
- ✓ Consider the achievements of past projects (see <http://www.alpine-space.eu/en/projects/project-results-per-thematic-field/> and <http://www.territorialcooperation.eu/keep/>);

Project partnership:

- ✓ Demonstrate that the partnership includes key/competent actors able to address the defined project objectives and is balanced in terms of geographical coverage and between relevant sectors and administrative levels (e.g. sector-specific expertise, multi-level and multi-sectoral composition). The partnership should enable knowledge transfer and capitalisation of project results for relevant groups (business, practitioners, academia or administrations). The involvement of representatives of key target groups as partners is an asset.
- ✓ Involve relevant stakeholders already in the preparation of the project proposal to ensure shared project ownership and a project set up addressing demand in terms of needs and supply and in terms of planned activities and outputs for all involved actors. Those stakeholders could join the partnership as project partners or as observers.

Contribution to the programme's horizontal principles:

- ✓ Specify how the proposal respects the programme's horizontal principles: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and equality between men and women.

For further guidance which will help the project proposals to better meet the expectations of the programme, applicants should consult the factsheets on project application and assessment criteria, the cooperation programme and get in contact with their national ACP soon in the process of proposal development³.

Thematic fields covered by call 1

The first call for project proposals is open throughout priorities 1-3 of the programme with the aim to make best use of all project ideas developed so far. The applicants are invited to study the cooperation programme carefully and make use of information events organised in the Partner States or contact the [programme management bodies](#) in case of questions.

The first call for project proposals under priority 4 "Well-governed Alpine Space" will open separately in the second half of 2015.

Submission periods and decisions on projects

Call 1 submission for project proposals in priorities 1-3 will run from 25.2.2015 until 25.09.2015.

Step one: EoI shall be uploaded on the programme website between 25.2.2015 and 10.4.2015 2 pm. All submissions will be acknowledged with an automatic email confirmation. Applicants should reserve enough time for filling in the online EoI.

Step two: Project proposals selected by the PC will be invited to submit the AF together with the signed partnership agreement to the programme website from 15.6.2015 until 25.09.2015 2 pm. All submissions will be acknowledged with an automatic email confirmation. Applicants should reserve enough time for filling in the online AF.

³ The factsheets will be made available by the first week of February 2015.



The final decision on project selection in priorities 1-3 will be taken by the PC in a meeting foreseen early December 2015.

Further details on both steps of the application procedure (e.g. EoI template, AF template, factsheets on project implementation) will be made available on the programme's website by the the first week of February 2015.

Website: www.alpine-space.eu