



ENI CBC MEDITERRANEAN SEA BASIN PROGRAMME 2014-2020

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Call for strategic projects

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Audit authority
CCP	Control Contact Points
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
DMCS	Description of the Management and Control Systems
IRs	ENI CBC Implementing Rules (Regulation (EC) No 897/2014)
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
EUMC	European Union Mediterranean Countries
JOP	Joint Operational Programme
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JPC	Joint Programming Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MED	Mediterranean
MCS	Management and Control Systems
MPC	Mediterranean Partner Countries
MIS	Management and Information System
MSMEs	Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PD	ENI CBC Programming Document
PSC	Project Selection Committee
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis
TA	Technical Assistance

INTRODUCTION

This document is an integral part of the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme “Application pack” developed by the Managing Authority and is composed of the:

- **Call for proposals, underlining the Thematic Objectives, Priorities and the available budget**
- **Guidelines for Grant Applicants, meant for supporting Applicants in project design and development**
- **Application Form, including Budget for the project, Financial Plan, and Logical Framework and the following mandatory documents:**
 - a. Declaration by the Applicant
 - b. Partner Statement
 - c. Declaration by International Organisation
 - d. Associated partner declaration
 - e. Calculation of the administrative costs
 - f. Financial Capacity Form (to be filled in directly on the online application form)
 - g. State Aid Self-Assessment check grid
- **Model of Grant Contract**
- **Indicative model of Partnership Agreement**
- **Note on State Aid**
- **Note on eligible costs**
- **Specific national provisions, if any**
- **List of supporting documents (to be submitted upon request of the Managing Authority only for shortlisted Applicants) as pointed out in par. 5.4.2 of these Guidelines for Applicants**

These Guidelines have been drafted in conformity with the provisions of the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme and the applicable legislation, in particular, the ENI Regulation (EC) No 232/2014, ENI Common Implementing Rules (Regulation (EC) No 236/2014) and the ENI CBC Implementing Rules (Regulation (EC) No 897/2014).

In case of differences between these Guidelines for Applicants and the text of the Call for Proposals, the information contained in the latter shall prevail.

1. THE ENI CBC MEDITERRANEAN SEA BASIN PROGRAMME

1.1 Background information on the ENI and CBC

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a key part of the European Union's foreign policy. It aims at developing a special relationship between the EU and its partner countries, based on democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and socio-economic cohesion. In particular, it supports increased level of political association and more effective economic integration.

It was launched in 2004, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged European Union (EU) and its neighbours. To this purpose, the EU has been working closely with its Mediterranean partners to design tailor made programmes, which take into account each country's specific needs in consistency with the new ENP. Since there have been radical changes in the Mediterranean countries over the past 12 years, a thorough review of the ENP, completed in 2015, highlighted the increased need for ownership; that cooperation should be enhanced on a tighter, more relevant focus; and that greater flexibility is expected to enable the EU and its partners to respond to ever changing needs and circumstances.

Under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) 2007-2013, nearly € 12 billion was allocated in grants. For the period 2014-2020, a new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) succeeds the ENPI. With a budget of € 15.4 billion, ENI will provide the bulk of funding to the 16 partner countries covered by the ENP.

Within the general ENP policy context and ENI, cross-border cooperation (CBC) has an essential and unique role to play, fostering mutual understanding on common challenges, jointly addressing medium term needs, and supporting institutional capacity building. Based on the experience of their predecessors, the ENPI CBC Programmes, the ENI CBC Programmes draw on funding from both external and internal headings of the EU budget. Adopted in October 2014, the Programming Document provides the strategic framework for all ENI cross-border cooperation for the period 2014–2020. It also defines the types of Programmes and lists the individual CBC Programmes that the EU will finance, including their geographic eligibility and financial allocation.

Within the general context set by the Programming Document, the partners of the ENI Mediterranean Sea Basin CBC Programme 2014-2020 prepared the Joint Operating Programme (JOP), reflecting the specific needs and requirements of the cooperation area.

1.2 Key documents

Both for preparation and implementation of the projects, Applicants are invited to consult the following documents available on the Programme website: www.enicbcmed.eu

- ENI Regulation (EC) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument
- ENI CBC Implementing Rules (Regulation (EC) No 897/2014) of 18 August 2014 laying down specific provisions for the implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes financed under Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument
- ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme and its annexes adopted on 17/12/2015 - Decision No. C(2015) 9133 and related annexes;

- Strategic Environmental Assessment for the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme.¹

Please note that the legal provisions must be observed by the Applicant and their Partners during both project development and implementation phases.

1.3 Objectives and Priorities

The General Objective of the ENI CBC MED 2014-2020 is to foster fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social and territorial development, which may advance cross-border integration and valorise the participating countries' territories and values. Based on the Medium-Term Needs analysis of the cooperation area, the countries participating in the Programme have identified the following general objectives:

A - Promote economic and social development; B - Address common challenges in the environment

These objectives are articulated into 4 Thematic Objectives:

A.1 - Business and SME development

A.2 - Support to education, research, technological development and innovation

A.3 - Promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty

B.4 - Environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation

The following table shows the 4 Thematic Objectives and the 11 Priorities:

Thematic Objectives	Priorities
A.1 Business and SMEs development	A.1.1: Support innovative start-up and recently established enterprises, with a particular focus on young and women entrepreneurs and facilitate the protection of their Intellectual Property Rights and commercialisation where applicable
	A.1.2: Strengthen and support euro-Mediterranean networks, clusters, consortia and value-chains in traditional sectors (agro-food, tourism, textile/clothing, etc.) and non-traditional sectors (innovative ideas solutions for urban development, eco-housing, sustainable water-related and other clean technologies, renewable energy, creative industries, etc.)
	A.1.3: Encourage sustainable tourism initiatives and actions aimed at diversifying into new segments and niches
A.2 Support to education, research, technological development and innovation	A.2.1: Support technological transfer and commercialisation of research results, strengthening the linkages between research, industry and other private sector actors
	A.2.2: Support SMEs in accessing research and innovation, also through clustering
A.3 Promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty	A.3.1: Provide young people, especially those belonging to the NEETS, and women, with marketable skills
	A.3.2: Support social and solidarity economic actors, also in terms of improving capacities and cooperation with public administrations for services provision
B.4 Environmental protection, climate change	B.4.1: Support sustainable initiatives targeting innovative and technological solutions to increase water efficiency and encourage use of non-conventional water supply

¹ Available at http://www.enpicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/strategic_environmental_assessment.zip

adaptation and mitigation	B.4.2: Reduce municipal waste generation, promote source-separated collection and its optimal exploitation, in particular its organic component
	B.4.3: Renewable energy and energy efficiency - Support cost-effective and innovative energy rehabilitations relevant to building types and climatic zones, with a focus on public buildings
	B.4.4: Integrated Coastal Zone Management - Incorporate the Ecosystem-Based management approach to ICZM into local development planning, through the improvement of intra-territorial coordination among different stakeholders

1.4 Programme budget

The overall EU contribution of the Programme for the 2014-2020 period is **€ 209.057.812** out of which **€ 188.152.030,80** for project financing. The Programme finances provides EU contribution for maximum 90% of the total eligible budget costs of the projects, while a co-financing of minimum 10% must be provided at project level. The Programme does not foresee any pre-allocation of funds by territory or country. Therefore, projects will be selected solely based on the selection and award criteria.

1.5 Programme management structures

Programme management and coordination is entrusted to the following joint structures²:

- **Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)** is the decision-making body of the Programme. It will follow the implementation of the Programme and progress towards its priorities using the objectively verifiable indicators and related target values defined in the Programme, supported by the Managing Authority. It is composed by the representatives of the countries participating in the Programme and takes the final decision on the allocation of grants;
- **Projects Selection Committee (PSC)** in charge of evaluating project proposals. Formed at the occasion of the launch of each call for proposals, it is composed of 14 voting members, representing the 14 countries participating in the Programme;
- **Managing Authority (MA)** as executive body and contracting authority of the Programme, the Managing Authority is responsible for its management and implementation. The Managing Authority is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia and is located in Cagliari (Italy);
- **Audit Authority (AA)** supported by the **Group of Auditors (GoAs)** is the independent body in charge of carrying out audits on the programme annual accounts, the management and control systems and on projects;
- **National Contact Points (NCP)**: in each country, a NCP supports the MA in the information to potential beneficiaries, promotion of the Programme and monitoring of funded projects;
- **Control Contact Points (CCP)**: one in each participating country, in charge of validating the compliance with the criteria set by art. 32(2) of the IR 897/2014 for the project auditors. Moreover, the CCPs will support the MA during its checks on the eligibility of expenditure and for its on-the-spot visit to projects;
- **Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)**: it assists the Managing Authority in the day-to-day management of the Programme. Composed of international staff, it is located in Cagliari;
- **Two Branch Offices**, respectively located in Valencia (Spain) and Aqaba (Jordan) in order to ensure closer proximity with potential beneficiaries.

² See chapter 3 paragraph 3.2 of the JOP

2. FEATURES OF THE CALL FOR STRATEGIC PROJECTS

2.1 Selected Priorities and budget

Following the decision of the Joint Monitoring Committee, this call for strategic projects addresses the 7 thematic Priorities listed in the table below. **A proposal shall refer to one Priority only.** The total EU contribution available for this call is **€ 68.518.886,09** indicatively distributed amongst the 7 Priorities as follows:

Thematic Objectives	Priorities	Indicative EU contribution	Co-financing (at least 10% of the total funding)	Total
A.1 Business and SMEs development	A.1.1: Support innovative start-up and recently established enterprises	€ 6.798.008,68	€ 755.334,30	€ 7.553.342,98
	A.1.2: Strengthen and support euro-Mediterranean networks, clusters, consortia and value-chains in traditional sectors and non-traditional sectors	€ 6.798.008,68	€ 755.334,30	€ 7.553.342,98
A.2 Support to education, research, technological development and innovation	A.2.1: Support technological transfer and commercialisation of research results	€ 15.240.314,49	€ 1.693.368,28	€ 16.933.682,77
A.3 Promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty	A.3.1: Provide young people, especially those belonging to the NEETS, and women, with marketable skills	€ 12.192.251,59	€ 1.354.694,62	€ 13.546.946,21
B.4 Environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation	B.4.1: Water management - Support sustainable initiatives targeting innovative and technological solutions to increase water efficiency	€ 9.163.434,21	€ 1.018.159,36	€ 10.181.593,57
	B.4.2: Waste treatment and recycling - Reduce municipal waste generation, promote source-separated collection and its optimal exploitation	€ 9.163.434,21	€ 1.018.159,36	€ 10.181.593,57
	B.4.3: Renewable energy and energy efficiency - Support cost-effective and innovative energy rehabilitations relevant to building types and climatic zones, with a focus on public buildings	€ 9.163.434,21	€ 1.018.159,36	€ 10.181.593,57

2.2 Aim and focus of strategic projects

As outlined in the Joint Operational Programme (see page 133), strategic projects should “guarantee a **deeper focus** on emerging needs of the cooperation area and support an **extended impact** on the selected priorities and a clear contribution to **EU and national policies** in the region”.

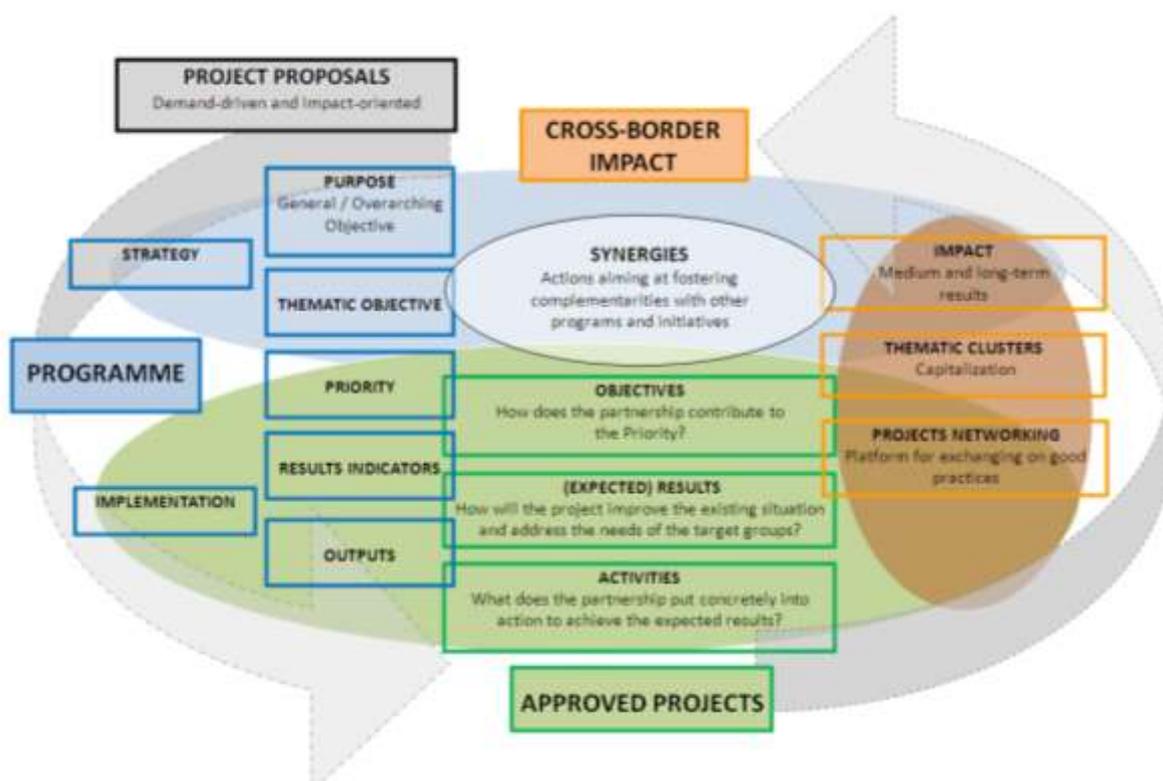
Whilst strategic projects should build **synergies with the main EU, national and regional policies** in the area, they should also contribute to the development of **new public policies and policy-relevant innovations**. Their effects should be **long-lasting and far-reaching, fostering significant change** through the achievement of **sustainable, tangible and replicable results** that last beyond the end of the Programme financial support, and the **transferability of good practices**. In terms of participation, strategic projects should bring together **key public and private actors** at all levels (national, regional and local) with extensive experience and competencies to foster impact, change and policy innovation. Even if the proposed actions should be tailored to address the specific needs of the concerned territories, the widest involvement of the relevant stakeholders/key actors and networking must be ensured.

Project proposals shall be prepared consistently with:

- chapter 2.4 of the Joint Operational Programme (JOP), which describes the specific objectives, expected results and relevant indicators to be addressed by projects for each Programme Priority.
- specific Terms of Reference of the call, which contains a description of the main challenges in relation to each selected Priority, as well as possible cooperation thematic sectors, list of potential applicants/partners and synergies with other projects/initiatives to be considered. Whilst the Terms of Reference (ToRs) are indicative and proposals shall be prepared in accordance with the specific objectives and indicators found in chapter 2.4 of the JOP, applicants should also take into account the contents of the ToRs when designing project proposals.
- indicative monitoring and evaluation plan (annex II of the JOP) which provides further information on the result and output indicators and their target values to be considered by project proposals.

All the above-mentioned documents are available on the Programme website (www.enicbmed.eu) under the section dedicated to the call for strategic projects.

2.3 Projects contribution to the Programme strategy



Both the Programme overall and individual projects funded aim to bring added value to the sustainable and inclusive development of the cooperation area, although acting on two different, parallel levels, macro and micro respectively. Projects must be conceived and implemented within the boundaries set by the Programme strategy, and ensure ownership, coherence, sustainability, and impact. These aspects, as well as the project's intervention logic and expected impact, must be taken into consideration in the project planning stage and the selection process. The following questions should be considered:

- What kind of CBC added value does the project intend to bring? Why is a cross-border approach an effective means of meeting territorial needs?
- What does the partnership intend to achieve in relation to the Priority addressed?
- What kind of impact/change does the partnership intend to deliver to the concerned territories and the target groups?
- How does the project intend to reach its goals? What (human, natural, financial) resources do we dispose of? What kind of output(s) and action(s) are needed to achieve the expected result?

Partners should also be able to clearly define a result-based approach, identifying the following aspects: Objectives; Priority; (Expected) results; Outputs; Activities to be undertaken in order to achieve the desired results; (Set of) indicators in line with the Programme indicators; Mean(s) of verification/monitoring/evaluation risk analysis and mitigating measures (see chapter 2.5 of the JOP and Annex II).

In designing their project proposal, partners should consider that they will be part of a broader platform of funded projects contributing to the same thematic cluster. The aim of these clusters - coordinated by the MA in close cooperation with the National Authorities - is to work in close cooperation with other relevant projects and initiatives in order to pool knowledge and expertise and reinforce the expected impact of individual projects. Therefore, partners should consider the following questions:

- To what extent could the results be sustainable in the medium-long term? (Impact and sustainability)
- How could our practices be best integrated by other projects and in other territorial contexts across the cooperation area? Which aspects of a project could be widely replicable and by whom / where? (Synergies and transferability)
- How can our results contribute to improvements or innovations in the development or implementation of public sector policies in the targeted area? (Leverage/scale up effect)
- To what extent can our project further develop and build on existing knowledge and offer valuable good practice?

It is recommended that project proposals incorporate specific capitalisation activities. Capitalisation activities should aim at rolling out project results into broader policies, strategies, and action plans at national and regional level, and focus upon broadening the audience/target groups/relevant stakeholders and increasing their levels of awareness.

2.4 Common elements

The Programme aims to promote people-to-people cooperation and enhance institutional capacity building.

Project proposals shall consider “people-to-people” efforts as being essential for strengthening ownership and encouraging active participation of civil society across the countries bordering the Mediterranean. People-to-people modality is expected to be deployed in support of all selected Priorities under this call for proposals.

Institutional capacity building should be promoted as a way to reinforce the role of local institutions in shaping local economies and as catalysts for equitable and inclusive development, ensuring the well-being of communities.

The project proposals should also consider the following features:

- **ENI CBC added value:** proposals demonstrate an actual need for cross-border cooperation and address common territorial needs by providing tangible benefits for the identified target groups; expected results are achievable and sustainable through joint actions only;
- **Focus:** proposals adhere to the chosen Priority by considering the achievement of relevant results;
- **Accountability:** proposals contribute to the relevant Programme expected results and outputs, to be measured by relevant indicators. Once approved, six-monthly reports will be requested by the MA on projects’ technical and financial progress, using a standardized template.³ Project monitoring and evaluation processes will measure the impact and, where necessary, inform any necessary revision of activity;
- **Innovation:** proposals consider state of the art methods, techniques, international best practices and lead to innovative solutions and results for the concerned territories. This applies especially to follow-up projects which are based on the results of previous experiences;
- **Consistency:** activities are based on a sound needs analysis of the target groups, delivering the desired changes; the expected results are clearly defined, realistic, achievable and measurable; the foreseen budget is in line with the expected activities to be carried on and the partnership comprises the human and financial resources to achieve the expected results;
- **Commitment:** the proposals are jointly designed to foster efficient involvement of all relevant stakeholders and deliver mutual benefits in the concerned areas. Early involvement of all members of the partnership is a pre-requisite to sharing objectives, roles and solutions;
- **Complementarity:** proposals take into account international, national and/or regional policies and other initiatives, as well as other programmes in the cooperation area in order to exploit potential synergies and complementarities;
- **Impact:** foreseen impact of proposals in a medium- and long-term perspective (beyond project duration) is based on quantifiable result indicators. Benefits should potentially extend beyond the territories covered by the project proposal;
- **Sustainability:** The sustainability of project outputs and results (at least financial or/and institutional) will ensure territorial impact and long-term benefits. Sustainability has to be considered at the point of project design and be integrated into the action plan;

³ An Expenditure Verification Report will be requested at least every 12 months.

- **Capitalization:** Each approved project will form part of a thematic cluster (see paragraph 2.3.1), and should include activities aiming at creating synergies and complementarities with other projects / initiatives. These synergies between projects comprising a thematic cluster will be also be encouraged by the Programme through a series of dedicated events.
- **Environmental check:** The ENI CBC MED Programme was screened to verify its potential effects on the environment according to the European Directive 2001/42/EC available on the Programme website (www.enicbcmed.eu). Further details on the procedure are provided under section 5.5 of these Guidelines.

Finally, proposals should also address **cross-cutting issues** (see JOP - Section 2. 6) and **environmental aspects** (see JOP - Section 2.8).

2.5 The Applicant and Partners: roles and responsibilities

Each proposal must be submitted by an Applicant that is the actor responsible for management, implementation and co-ordination of activities among the partners involved. The Applicant is directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project. In fact, if a project proposal is approved, the Applicant becomes the Lead Beneficiary.

The Lead Beneficiary bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership *vis-à-vis* the Managing Authority, acting as a link between the project partners and the Managing Authority to:

- a. submit the Application Form on behalf of the partnership;
- b. ensure that each partner is fully aware of the composition of the partnership and of the contents of the Application Form;
- c. sign the Grant Contract with the Authorising Unit of the Managing Authority for the amount allocated;
- d. fulfil all obligations set out in the Grant Contract, including a potential financial guarantee to cover the pre-financing instalments to be received⁴;
- e. be responsible for the preparation of the Partnership Agreement to be signed by all partners;
- f. ensure the allocation and the fulfilment of the tasks amongst the project beneficiaries in compliance with the Grant Contract and the Partnership Agreement;
- g. ensure that the Partners receive the total amount of the grant as quickly as possible according to the arrangements referred to in the Partnership Agreement and in point (d). No amount shall be deducted or withheld and no specific charge with equivalent effect shall be levied that would reduce these amounts for the Partners for the first pre-financing. Transfers for further pre-financings and the balance payment shall be done in accordance with the actual level of expenditure and the conditions agreed by the partners;
- h. establish a proper communication with and among the project beneficiaries;
- i. set up a control system to ensure an efficient administrative and sound financial management of the project, as well as an adequate project monitoring and evaluation system;

⁴ The financial guarantee is not requested for EU Public Bodies, including EU bodies governed by public law and International Organisations as defined in section 3 of this document and for the public bodies of MPCs for which their countries are financially responsible, according to the Financing Agreement signed with the EC or other specific national regulation concerning financial responsibilities of national and local authorities. Please note that, the financial guarantees, up to the amount of the first pre-financing, may be requested only to Lead Beneficiaries, on the basis of a risk analysis performed by the Managing Authority and, among other elements, the financial capacity and previous experience. Lead Beneficiaries may ask financial guarantees to their partners as suggested in the model of the Partnership Agreement.

- j. ensure the access of the project accounting and related supporting documents, including the proof of delivery of all project activities, to the MA, CCPs, AA, EC, OLAF, Court of Auditors and any authorised auditor by any of these bodies during the period of time indicated in the Grant Contract;
- k. open a dedicated bank account in Euro⁵ ;
- l. be legally and financially responsible for the activities that it is implementing and for the share of the Union funds that it receives;
- m. be responsible for the recovery of the unused funds or Programme funds to be reimbursed to the Managing Authority from all the project beneficiaries, according to the provisions of the Grant Contract and the Partnership Agreement. In case of impossibility to recover funds from the Lead Beneficiary, the Managing Authority will apply the procedure sets by articles 74 and 75 of the ENI Implementing Rule (EC Reg. 897/2014) available on the Programme website: www.enicbcmed.eu

The Partners (beneficiaries):

- a. Participate with the Applicant in the design, elaboration and submission of the project application;
- b. Sign a Partnership Agreement with the Applicant as a prior condition for concluding the Grant Contract with the MA;
- c. Ensure the implementation of the Project's activities under their responsibility according to the Project and the Partnership Agreement signed with the Lead Beneficiary;
- d. Cooperate with the Lead Beneficiary and the other beneficiaries in the implementation of the Project, the reporting and monitoring;
- e. Provide financial and progress reports, including all supporting documentation, to the auditors/controllers for the verification of expenditure per each of the reporting periods established for the Project and ensure full cooperation and assistance for the timely and accurate performance of verification;
- f. Ensure the access of the project accounting and related supporting documents, including the proof of delivery of all project activities, to the MA, CCPs, AA, EC, OLAF, Court of Auditors and any authorised auditor by any of these bodies during the period of time indicated in the Grant Contract;
- g. Be legally and financially responsible for the activities that it is implementing and for the share of the Union funds that it receives, thus assuming responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure they have declared, and repay the Lead Beneficiary the amounts unduly received or unduly spent, as well as the reimbursement of pre-financing received in excess due to under spending.

2.5.1 Project coordination and management

The Applicant (Lead Beneficiary) ensures an efficient and timely implementation of the planned activities. Therefore, it makes sure that partners put at the project's disposal all the means needed in terms of the human resources, budget and knowledge to ensure:

- Overall management, coordination, reporting, including monitoring and evaluation arrangements

⁵ The obligation to open a dedicated bank account in euro does not apply to public bodies in the event they cannot open new accounts due to limitations set by the concerned national legislation. In this case the public body can use a pre-existing non dedicated bank account in euro provided that it guarantees to keep track of all the incomes and all the payments related to the funds transferred by the MA and of the amount of interests accrued.

- Financial management
- Communication, visibility and dissemination of results

As a minimum requirement, the following project management positions shall be ensured by the Applicant:

- **a project coordinator** responsible for the overall organisation and successful implementation. This person shall also guarantee a sound financial management of the project and he/she should be preferably part of the permanent staff of the Lead Beneficiary. This person should be able to duly monitor the overall aspects of the project (management, financial and communication issues). The coordinator, focusing on a partnership approach and with a time-frame perspective, is the key for achieving the objectives of the project and to report to the MA and JTS according to the result-based management approach detailed in Annex 2 of the JOP. Moreover, he/she should ensure the regular exchange of information among project beneficiaries. Several years of experience in the management of cooperation projects are recommended for this position as well as a good command of the project language (English or French). Knowledge of Arabic may be an asset for the success of the partnership.

The project coordinator should be supported by the following technical staff, depending on the tasks that he/she will directly perform:

- **a financial manager**, in charge of the management of the project financial and administrative functions, including accounting, reporting, internal control, procurement and relationship with auditors. This person should be duly skilled on the administrative and financial Programme rules and should have good knowledge of project financial management software and tools needed for financial reporting;
- **a communication manager**, responsible for the overall publicity and dissemination activities of the project, as well as capitalisation, if foreseen in the project. In this respect, he/she elaborates the project communication plan in close cooperation with the project beneficiaries and takes care of its implementation at all levels (e.g.: local, regional, national, transnational). The communication manager should have experience in the field of communication, public relations, information and/or media.

These key staff members should be preferably part of the permanent staff of the Lead Beneficiary.

2.6 Communication and visibility

All projects funded under the ENI CBC Med Programme shall incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the objectives for the project and the EU/Programme support in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

This section sets out the main legal requirements for visibility activities and main elements for designing Work Package 2 “Project communication”. In addition, it details the approach of the Programme under the 2014-2020 period which is based on the concept of “community”: this approach aims at approximating Programme and project visual identities, enhancing the links and collaboration between all concerned actors (Managing Authority/Joint Technical Secretariat, National Authorities/National Contact Points).

Specific guidelines will be issued once the projects are approved in order to orientate their communication and visibility activities.

Please note that the ENI CBC Med Programme also has its own communication strategy that can serve as a reference framework for the project communication. This strategy can be consulted in section 4.7 of the Joint Operational Programme. The ultimate goal of the strategy is to contribute to the diffusion of the objectives of the ENI CBC Med Programme, fostering wide awareness of the opportunities offered and results achieved, in order to promote the magnitude of mutual interests and long-term objectives of cooperation between the EU and Partner Countries in the Mediterranean area.

2.6.1 Legal requirements

The main legal reference for communication and visibility activities is contained in article 79 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 897/2014 and detailed in the [Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions](#).

Basic requirements are to ensure that appropriate information on the project is communicated to the public, while providing adequate visibility of the EU/Programme contribution to the projects in order to strengthen public awareness of the EU/Programme action and create a consistent image of the EU/Programme support in all participating countries.

This means that EU and Programme branding elements (logos) have to be clearly, prominently displayed and highly visible in publicity material and activities dedicated to the public (including, for instance, printed publications, audio-visual material, digital communication material - websites, social media - during events – banners, agenda, gadgets – and on equipment, infrastructures and office material).

Moreover, any printed material shall acknowledge the EU financial support to the project.

Compliance with visibility rules is of utmost importance to secure Programme funding to communication activities and avoid ineligible expenses.

2.6.2 Designing communication activities in the Application Form

The Application Form includes a mandatory Work Package dedicated to communication.

In designing Work Package 2, Applicants and partners are required to dedicate enough financial/human resources (a project communication manager is recommended, see section 2.5) and time to communication activities.

Communication shall be considered as an essential tool for the success of the project which will eventually contribute to achieving the project's objectives: communication is not as a simple "in-between" activity but a core part of any project.

Even though the outputs listed in Work Package 2 are indicative, it is highly recommended to foresee a communication plan which will guide the activities in case the project is approved: the communication plan should be considered as a roadmap for the timely and effective implementation of the contents included in Work Package 2, detailing at least the following main elements: objectives, target groups, key messages, activities, time plan, budget, evaluation.

There are many tools available for effective communication. In line with the financial/resources dedicated to communication, projects are expected to develop a mix of actions that can ensure an appropriate level of visibility and reach out the identified target groups. This includes for instance:

online communication (website, social media, Smartphone applications), media relations, public relations (events) and production of materials (printed, digital, audio-visual).

Finally, Work Package 2 also includes capitalization activities. While capitalization will be supported by the Programme through clustering and networking among projects, it is recommended to Applicants and partners to elaborate on actions that can foster the diffusion, ownership of results achieved, and the transfer of specific knowledge and solutions developed to decision-makers. Specific actions to encourage the contribution to policy development (mainstreaming) should be considered in the Application Form.

2.6.3 Project logo and website

In order to increase the visibility of the ENI CBC Med community as whole, the Programme has introduced substantial changes to its communication strategy. This approach has some practical implications for projects as detailed below:

- **Common branding:** an harmonized visual identity will be developed for all funded projects, based on the Programme corporate branding. In practical terms, this means that the Programme will provide each approved projects with its own logo. **In consequence, projects are requested not to develop their own project logo and no cost for designing project logos will be eligible not shall be included in the budget**, while costs for developing project communication supports (headed paper, PPT template, business cards, etc.) are eligible. Moreover, a specific logo might however be considered for an output/result (creation of a new brand, label, tourism product, etc.) that will be used beyond the life of the project. This should be duly justified in the application and prior approval of the Programme will be required.
- **Project websites:** all project websites will be standardized and integrated on the Programme website. Therefore, the Managing Authority will design, develop and host project web pages on the Programme website (www.encibcmed.eu). The use of these web pages will be mandatory for each project. **This means that costs for developing project websites are not eligible.** Only in exceptional cases, projects could envisage developing a separate website for a specific output/result when this is duly justified by the nature of project activities (specific e-learning, GIS, tourism promotion platforms) and approved by the Programme. In practical terms, all projects will be provided with a standardized space on the Programme website containing the following information, as per article 44 of EU Regulation No 897/2014: beneficiary name and partnership composition; title and acronym of the project; project summary (context, objectives, expected results, target groups and final beneficiaries); project implementation period; total eligible expenditure; Union co-financing rate; contacts; news and events; library of deliverables. The project partnership will be responsible for editing and updating their webpage with news, events, deliverables. Therefore, projects will be granted access to their webpage and be asked to update it on a regular basis.

2.7 Use of languages

The Programme languages are: English, French and Arabic.

However, in all procedures and in all documents referring to projects - from the submission of the proposal to the drafting of the final project reporting, only English or French shall be used. Moreover, only English and/or French are used for legal and arbitration issues. Requests of information addressed to the Managing Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat and Branch Offices and the related answers will have to be drafted in one of the project languages (English or French).

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

3.1 How to apply

Proposals must be submitted **only** by means of the e-Form available on the online platform at www.enicbcmmed.eu/eform. The prior registration of the Applicants in the online system is a necessary pre-requisite in order to fill in the e-Form.

Proposals are submitted in **one STAGE** and shall include:

- **Application Form, Logical Framework, Budget tables, Financial Plan and Financial Capacity Form (to be filled in through the online system).**
- **Mandatory documents** (to be uploaded onto the online system):
 - Declaration by the Applicant,
 - Partner Statements,
 - Associated partner declaration(s), if any,
 - International Organisation declaration(s), if any,
 - Calculation of the administrative costs (for both the Applicant and each partner),
 - State Aid Self-assessment check grid (for both the Applicant and each partner),
 - Documents related to the environmental check, as the case may be.

Proposals submitted, using different forms or incomplete, **will be rejected** (e.g. hand-written application forms, as word or pdf files etc. will not be accepted).

The e-Form must be filled in by using one of the following languages: **English or French**.

Courtesy forms can be downloaded from the Programme website, along with mandatory documents templates (Declaration by the Applicant, Partner Statement; International organisation(s) and Associated partner Declaration(s), if any).

Practical instructions to support Applicants in filling in the Application Form will also be available on the Programme website.

3.2 Deadline for the submission of the proposal

The deadline for the submission of proposals is indicated in the text of the Call for proposals. The compliance with the deadline will be evidenced by the notification email to be automatically sent by the IT system, **after the deadline is expired**. Such notification will include the reference number of the proposal.

Detailed guidance to support the submission procedure will be published on the Programme website. It is highly recommended to gather all the relevant information and documents well in advance, especially those regarding the partner organisations.

3.3 Further information

Information sessions on this call for proposals will be held in participating countries at the locations and dates indicated in the Programme website: www.enicbcmmed.eu

Questions may be sent in English or in French at the latest **15 calendar days** before the deadline for the submission of the Application Form through the dedicated “frequently asked questions” section of the Programme Website. As the questions that may be relevant to other Applicants, they will be published on this section of the Programme website, together with the answers. Only the answers provided through the “frequently asked questions” section of the Programme Website are considered as official Programme answers.

Please note that the answers given through the “frequently asked questions” (FAQs) section of the Programme website will be considered as binding. Any major inconsistency in the submitted documents with the content of these answers may lead to the rejection of the proposal.

In case of contradictions between the official call documents and the FAQs, the latter will prevail.

Replies will be given no later than **10 calendar days** before the deadline for the submission of the project proposals.

The Managing Authority has no obligation to provide additional clarifications for questions received after the above-mentioned time-limit.

In the interest of equal treatment of Applicants, the Managing Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat and the Branch Offices cannot give a prior opinion on the compliance of the proposals with the eligibility and selection criteria.

No replies to queries with regard to the status of the selection procedure shall be given.

4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible under the ENI CBC Med Programme, project proposals must meet the following requirements referring to:

- Eligible territories
- Financial dimension
- Specific requirements
- Eligibility of Applicant and Partner organisations
- Eligibility of budget costs

4.1 Eligible territories

Proposals must implement activities in the eligible territories of the countries participating in the ENI CBC MED Programme, as listed in the table below.

Only in case of participation of partners from **adjoining territories**, project activities can take place in these areas.

Exceptionally, specific activities outside the eligible area may be included, provided that their added value to the Programme area is well justified. Their eligibility will be assessed on a case by case basis.

For the complete list of eligible territories and adjoining regions, please refer to the following table:

COUNTRIES	CORE ELIGIBLE REGIONS	ADJOINING REGIONS
Algeria	Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, Oran, Mostaganem, Chlef, Tipaza, Alger, Boumerdes, Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia, Jijel, Skikda, Annaba, El Tarf	To be defined
Cyprus	Whole country	None
Egypt	Ad Daqahliyah, Al Buhayrah, Al Iskandanyah, Al Isma'iliyah, Ash Sharquiyah, Bur Sa'id, Dumyat, Kafr ash Shaykh, Marsa Matruh	Al Gharbiyah, Al Minufiyah, Al Qalyubiyah, As Suways
France ⁶	Corse, Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	Auvergne, Midi-Pyrénées, Rhône-Alpes
Greece	Anatoliki Makedonia – Thraki, Attiki, Dytiki Ellada, Ionia Nisia, Ipeiros, Kentriki Makedonia, Kriti, Notio Aigaio, Peloponnisos, Sterea Ellada, Thessalia, Voreio Aigaio	Dytiki Makedonia

⁶ Despite the administrative reform, the French eligible and adjoining regions have not changed compared to the 2007-2013 programming period.

Israel⁷	Whole country	None
Italy	Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana	Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, Marche, Molise, Piemonte, Umbria
Jordan	Al-Aqaba, Al-Balga, Al-Karak, Al-Tafilah, Irbid, Madaba	Ajlun, Al-Mafraq, Amman, Az Zarqa', Jarash, Ma'an
Lebanon	Whole country	None
Malta	Whole country	None
Palestine	Whole country	None
Portugal	Algarve, Lisboa ⁸	Alentejo
Spain	Andalucía, Cataluña, Ceuta, Comunidad Valenciana, Islas Baleares, Melilla, Murcia	Aragon, Castilla-La-Mancha, Extremadura
Tunisia	Ariana, Béja, Ben Arous, Bizerte, Gabès, Jandouba, Mahdia, Médenine, Monastir, Nabeul, Sfax, Sousse, Tunis	Gasfa, Kairouan, Kebili, Le Kef, Manouba, Sidi Bouzid, Siliana, Tataoiune, Zaghuan

Please note that the participation of Algeria is under suspension clause. Entities located in the eligible territories of Algeria may apply for this call for proposals but can receive Programme funds only if Algeria signs the Financing Agreement with the European Commission within the deadline of the call⁹.

4.2 Financial dimension of projects

The minimum EU contribution to projects is € 2.5 million while the maximum contribution is € 3.5 million. The maximum budget for a project proposal is **€ 4 million**.

The EU contribution cannot exceed 90% of the project total eligible costs and the project co-financing must be at least 10% of the total eligible costs. Regardless the percentage of EU contribution, the total EU contribution cannot exceed in any case €3.5 million.

The co-financing provided with the Applicant's and partners' own resources, or with public or private (national/regional/local) sources other than the European Union Budget and the European Development Fund, shall cover the remaining budget costs. The source of co-financing must be indicated in the budget.

Co-financing in kind is not eligible¹⁰. Expenditure for staff (Human Resources) is not considered as contributions "in kind" and may therefore be considered as part of 10% contribution to be provided by project as co-financing .

⁷ The eligibility criteria formulated in the Commission Notice Nr. 2013/C- 205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19.07.2013) establishing **Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards**, shall apply for all actions under this ENI CBC MED Programme, including with respect to third parties receiving financial support in the cases where the respective action involves financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries in accordance with article 137 of the EU's Financial Regulation.

⁸ Applicants and partners based in Lisbon may apply **only under the Overarching Objective 1**.

⁹ For further information, please see the text of the call for proposals.

4.3 Eligibility of Applicant and Partners

4.3.1 Location of Applicant and Partner organisations

Applicants and partners must be based in the Programme eligible territories (see table par. 4.1).

The participation of Applicants and partners having a decentralised registered office or structure in the eligible regions is admitted provided that this office has been established at least 2 years before the deadline set for the submission of the on line Application Form and it has the capacity to undertake legal obligations and assume financial responsibility¹¹. Applicants and Partners cannot apply through third parties acting on their behalf (e.g. through agreements, agency contracts, etc.).

The participation of Ministries and other national public administrations located outside the eligible territories is admitted, provided that the action is carried out in and for the full benefit of the Programme eligible regions. In the event a Ministry or a national public administration is represented at local level in an eligible territory, the project activities should be implemented by the local structure.

Organisations established in adjoining regions are not eligible as Applicants under this call.

Only on a case by case basis, and considering the real benefits for the proposal, the Joint Monitoring Committee **may allow** the participation as **partners of the organisations located in the adjoining regions**. In any case, the budget of partners coming from the adjoining regions shall not exceed **20%** of the total direct costs of the project.

Applicants and partners based in Lisbon region¹² can apply only under the Overarching Objective 1.

International Organisations can participate as Applicants or Partners only if they have an operational office in the eligible area. However, they do not contribute to the fulfilment of the minimum geographic partnership requirement (see section 4.4.2).

4.3.2 Legal Status of Applicant and Partner organisations

According to the Programme, public and private bodies¹³ established in the participating countries, as well as international organisations, in accordance with the provisions of the ENI Regulation and ENI-CBC Implementing Rules (mentioned above), and with the other applicable EU and national legal frameworks, can submit project proposals.

¹⁰ An example of contribution in kind (not eligible) is the inclusion in the budget of the cost of a meeting room that the beneficiary/partner uses on a free basis.

¹¹ These conditions must be proved by providing supporting documents (such as statutes, registration papers and/or other official documents) that will be requested during the evaluation process. If a document is not written in an official language of the European Union, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the Applicant's or partner's eligibility, into the language chosen for the proposal.

¹² See JOP - chapter 1.2.2 on **major economic centres**.

¹³ A non-exhaustive list of possible eligible bodies follows: National administrations and institutions; Decentralised bodies such as regions, departments, provinces and municipalities; Joint bodies set up by the participating countries and regions (i.e. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation - EGTC) international organisations, including regional organisations, UN bodies, departments and missions, international financial institutions and development banks, in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the ENI Regulation. European Union agencies provided that they meet the conditions set by the EC to participate; (i) public or public equivalent or parastatal bodies, local authorities or administrations and consortia thereof; (ii) companies, firms and other private organisations and businesses; (iii) financial institutions that grant, promote and finance private investment in partner countries and regions; (iv) non-state actors as defined in the following point; the following non-state actors: (i) non-governmental organisations; (ii) organisations representing national and/or ethnic minorities; (iii) local citizens groups and traders associations; (iv) cooperatives, trade unions, organisations representing economic and social interests; (v) local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration; (vi) consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations, teaching, cultural research and scientific organisations; (vii) universities and research centers/institutes; (viii) churches and religious associations and communities; (ix) the media; (x) cross-border associations, non-governmental associations and independent foundations.

The concerned organizations must be **legal entities** in accordance with National legislations, laws and regulations.

Public bodies, according to the National legislations, laws and regulations, include also the “**bodies governed by public law**” according to article 2 (4) of Directive 2014/24/EU. They are governed by public laws and shall meet all following conditions:

- they are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- they have legal personality;
- they are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have 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.

Bodies governed by public law in Mediterranean Partner Countries are those bodies obliged to follow the public procurement rules, in accordance with the respective national law.

Private organisations are eligible under the ENI CBC MED programme¹⁴, **but they shall be established at least for 2 years from the launching date of the call to participate.**

Pursuant to Article 43 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation for the General Budget of the European Union (EC Regulation n. 1268/2012), **international organisation**¹⁵ means international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements, and specialised agencies set up by such organisations - these organisations may have worldwide or regional scope. Organisations created under national law are not international organisations (e.g. national NGO with several regional/country offices). In cases of doubt, to ascertain whether an organisation is covered by the above-mentioned definition, it is necessary to assess the nature of the organisation mainly on the basis of the legal instruments of the organisation (for instance, its statutes and/or the intergovernmental agreement setting-up the organisation).

International organisations act under international law and they can only participate in the Programme upon their explicit acceptance, in line with what is requested to any of the Programme eligible bodies, of all the requirements deriving from the ENI CBC Regulations and the other provisions applicable in the framework of the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme. This acceptance implies the non-applicability of other agreements with the European Commission for the use of the own rules of the International Organisation. It includes -but is not limited- to the following:

- Full acceptance of the Programme provisions, including all the requirements set by the Grant Contract and its annexes in the framework of the Programme and by the management and control systems;
- Acceptance of undergoing audits and checks by all those bodies entitled to carry out such controls in the framework of the Programme, including the European Commission, the Managing Authority, the Audit Authority, the European Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office, as well as the

¹⁴ “The Programme is open to public and private bodies established in the participating countries, and international organisations” (JOP page 134). As natural persons are not mentioned in the JOP, they are not allowed to participate in Calls for proposals as applicant or partner.

¹⁵ International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF) are also recognized as international organisations.

relevant national authorities if the organisation is located in a EU Member State. Storage of all documents required for these controls must allow their performance in the geographical area covered by the Programme;

The international organisation will have to submit an *ad hoc* declaration explicitly stating it undertakes these obligations. The format of this declaration will be provided by the Managing Authority.

In addition to the categories of Applicants and Partners, the proposal may involve other subjects as follows:

Associates. They are associated organisations which may be involved in the project but they **cannot receive funding from the grant**. They may be invited to participate in partnership and project events and the related costs of travel and accommodation, are covered by the partners/applicant. Associates do not have to meet the geographical eligibility criteria of the previous sections. The associates have to be clearly mentioned in the e-Form. Their role is not compatible with that of sub-contractor, meaning that associates cannot participate in procurement procedures launched by the project.

Subcontractors. If the project partners or the lead beneficiary are unable to accomplish a specific activity of the project, this activity may be outsourced to subcontractors. However, under no circumstances, the activities assigned to subcontractors will include the bulk of the project core tasks. Moreover, the lead beneficiary and partners cannot act as subcontractors of other partners.

Sub-grantees. They are the recipients of the sub-grants schemes implemented by the project. They may be natural or legal persons and have to be resident or established in the Programme area of the participating countries of the applicant and partners.

4.4 Specific requirements

4.4.1 Participation

A proposal shall address only **one (1) of the Priorities opened under this call for proposals** even if there may be cross-over effects with other Priorities.

The same organisation¹⁶ can only participate once as Applicant under each Priority. No limitation applies for the participation at partner level. In case an organisation participates in more than one (1) project as Applicant under the same Priority, all concerned projects submitted under that Priority will be rejected.

Please note that an Applicant cannot be awarded more than three (3) grants as Lead Beneficiary under this Call for Proposals. In case more than three (3) proposals from the same Applicant are preselected according to the rules for this call, only the three (3) best ranked proposals will be retained in the list to be financed.

¹⁶ Any legal entity, indicated under Reference to the par. on the eligible partners and according to the national legislations of Mediterranean Partner Countries, which is provided with juridical, economic, technical and human capacities committed by the legal person as a whole. These conditions must result from supporting documents (such as statutes, registration papers and/or other official documents) proving the capacity to undertake legal obligations (signing contracts), to assume financial liability and to manage the resources for the achievement of stated purposes (i.e. Public administrations or Universities will be considered as ONE organisation represented by ONLY ONE legal person despite the functional independence of their departments or units). The participation of each organisation will be checked under step 1 (relevance and quality of the design) on the basis, among others, of the following information: national registration number (e.g. VAT, national code, social security etc.), name of the organisation and name of the legal representative.

4.4.2 Partnership composition

The project partnership shall represent a minimum of four (4) eligible countries including at least two (2) EU Mediterranean Countries (EUMC) and two (2) Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC).

International Organisations as defined in section 4.3.2 **do not contribute** to the fulfilment of the above mentioned minimum partnership requirement.

The partnership shall not include more than three (3) organisations from the same Country.

To facilitate the establishment of the partnership, it is strongly recommended to contact the concerned National Contact Points (the list of NCPs is available on the Programme website).

A maximum of ten (10) organisations in the partnership is recommended to ensure a smooth and efficient project management and implementation. A well-balanced geographical representation is also recommended.

4.4.3 Specific financial requirements

When preparing the budget, **at least 50%** of the total direct costs shall be dedicated to activities to be implemented in the Mediterranean Partner Countries territories (MPCs) (see section 4.1). This criterion is fulfilled in the following cases:

a) foresee to allocate **at least 50%** of the budgeted direct costs to the partners from the Mediterranean Partner Countries

or

b) in case the financial allocation to partners from Mediterranean Partner Countries is lower than the said minimum percentage, the difference up to the minimum of 50% shall be justified by activities implemented by the EU Applicant and/or partner/s and/or International Organisations in the Mediterranean Partner Countries. The said budgeted direct costs shall be indicated and justified in the dedicated budget table. During project implementation the MA will monitor the actual achievement of the level of expenditure in MPCs in order to ensure the compliance with this rule.

A maximum of 35% of the total direct costs can be allocated to an organisation. The amount of financial resources devoted to the participation of partners from adjoining regions shall not exceed 20% of the total direct budgeted costs of a project. Please refer to section 4.1 for the geographic eligibility criterion.

4.4.4 Project duration

The estimated project duration shall not be less than **24 months** and must not exceed **30 months**¹⁷.

4.4.5 Compliance with eligibility criteria

The compliance with the eligibility criteria listed in the table below will be checked automatically by the online system.

¹⁷ According to article 18.3 of the “COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 897/2014 of 18 August 2014 laying down specific provisions for the implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes financed under Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument”, all project activities financed by the programme shall end on 31 December 2022 at the latest.

Project requirements	Minimum	Maximum
EU contribution	€2,500,000	€3,500,000
EU co-financing rate	50%	90 %
Co-financing rate by the partnership	10 %	50%
Project total costs	€2,777,777	€ 4,000,000
N. of countries in partnership	4	
N. of organisations of Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) in the partnership	2	
N. of organisations of EU Mediterranean Country (EUMC) in the partnership	2	
N. of organisations from the same country		3
Duration (months) ¹⁸	24	30

4.5 Eligible costs and budget structure

It is in the Applicant's interest to submit a **realistic and cost-effective budget**. Therefore, when preparing the budget, the applicant has to consider carefully the expenditure eligibility rules as follows.

4.5.1 Eligible costs

According to Art. 48 of Reg. (EU) 897/2014 and Art. 14 of the Grant Contract, in order to be eligible, costs shall meet the following conditions:

- a. they are incurred during the implementation period of the project, in particular:
 - (i) Costs relating to services and works shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period. Costs relating to supplies shall relate to delivery and installation of items during the implementation period. Signature of a contract, placing of an order, or entering into any commitment for expenditure within the implementation period for future delivery of services, works or supplies after expiry of the implementation period do not meet this requirement. Cash transfers between the Lead Beneficiary and/or the other partner(s) shall not be considered as costs incurred;
 - (ii) Costs incurred should be paid before the submission of the final reports. They may be paid afterwards, provided they are listed in the final report together with the estimated date of payment;
 - (iii) An exception is made for preparatory costs incurred after the publication of the call for proposals and before the submission of the proposal, and for costs relating to final reports, including expenditure verification and final evaluation of the project, which may be incurred after the implementation period of the project;
 - (iv) Procedures to award contracts may have been initiated and contracts may be concluded by the Lead Beneficiary and partner(s) before the start of the implementation period of the project.¹⁹

¹⁸ Each project can consider a duration of 24 or 30 months.

¹⁹ If the implementation of a project requires procurement of goods, works or services by a beneficiary, articles from 52 to 56 of the ENI Implementing Rules (Reg. EU 897/2014) shall apply as well as the applicable public procurement legislation at European and national level. For procurement procedures with a value of less than EUR 60.000, national rules and procedures apply, in accordance with the legal status of the

- b. they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the project;
- c. they are necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d. they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Lead Beneficiary or partner(s) and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the Lead Beneficiary or partner(s);
- e. they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- f. they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency;
- g. they are supported by expenditure and payment documents (e.g. contracts, invoices, proofs of payment documents etc.).

4.5.2 Ineligible costs

The following costs relating to the implementation of the project shall not be considered eligible:

- (a) debts and debt service charges (interest);
- (b) provisions for losses or liabilities;
- (c) costs declared by the beneficiaries and already financed by the European Union budget;
- (d) purchases of land or buildings for an amount exceeding 10 % of the eligible expenditure of the concerned project;
- (e) exchange-rate losses;
- (f) duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, except where non-recoverable under the relevant national tax legislation, unless otherwise provided in appropriate provisions negotiated with CBC partner countries, as per the provisions of the related Financing Agreement;²⁰
- (g) loans to third parties;
- (h) fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- (i) contributions in kind as defined in Article 14(1) of ENI-CBC Implementing Rules²¹;
- (j) costs for project website and logo (see section 2.6 “Communication and visibility for more information”).

4.5.3 Budget structure

The Budget of the proposal is divided in **direct and indirect costs**.

DIRECT COSTS are organised according to the following categories:

- A. PREPARATORY COSTS** are eligible provided that the following conditions are met:
 - a) are incurred after the publication of the call for proposals and before the submission of the proposal;

beneficiaries and, for MPCs, with the contents of the concerned Financing Agreement. In all cases, the rules of nationality and origin set forth in Articles 8 and 9 of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 shall apply, as well as as well as the provisions set in article 52.2 of ENI CBC IR, i.e. principles of transparency, fair competition for potential contractors and the need to avoid any conflict of interest.

²⁰ For details on VAT and tax provisions set in Financing Agreements (FA), the potential applicants and partners may refer to the note on specific national provisions.

²¹ The contribution in kind is defined as any provision of non-financial resources free of charge. The cost of staff assigned to a project or programme shall not be considered a contribution in kind and be considered as eligible expenditure.

- b) are limited to travel and subsistence costs of staff employed by the Applicant and/or the Partners;
 - c) do not exceed the amount of 10.000 euro at project level;
 - d) are proven by supporting documents.
- B. HUMAN RESOURCES (STAFF COSTS)** related to the costs of activities which the Lead beneficiary and partners would not carry out if the project was not undertaken and corresponding to actual gross salaries of the staff assigned to the project, including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs. Salaries and other costs must not exceed those normally borne by the Lead Beneficiary and/or the partners, unless it is proven that the higher amounts are essential to carry out the project activities.
- C. TRAVELS AND SUBSISTENCE COSTS**, foreseen to cover the travel expenditures of staff and other persons involved in the Project. These costs should neither exceed those normally borne by the Lead Beneficiary or its partners according to its rules and regulations nor the rates published by the Commission at the time of the mission if reimbursed on the basis of lump sums, unit costs or flat rate financing. EC rates are available at the following website link: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/per_diems/index_en.htm_en ;
- D. INFRASTRUCTURES** (e.g. solar plants, organic waste treatment plants etc.) can be eligible. They must be carefully described and justified in the relevant sections of the application form, in order to allow their assessment. In particular, it is essential to highlight their potential environmental impact in the concerned territories (See Section 3. of the Application Form);
- E. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES** includes purchase or rental costs for equipment and supplies (new or used) and consumables²²;
- F. COSTS OF SERVICES** due to Grant Contract requirements (external expenditures verification²³, information and dissemination activities, evaluations, translation, etc.) and financial services costs (in particular the cost of bank transfers and financial guarantees). They have to be aligned with the current market rates and cannot concern the bulk of the costs of the project. Such costs shall not duplicate costs already budgeted under other categories (e.g. human resources).
- G. OTHER** includes any cost not falling in the scope of the previous Cost categories. Nevertheless, only those costs mentioned as such in the approved Application Form can be considered as eligible (e.g. sub grants, rent of an office exclusively devoted to the project implementation and concerned costs, etc...). They may not include ineligible costs as referred to in section 4.5.2 or costs already declared under another cost item or heading of the budget of the project. Purchase of office equipment, IT hardware and software, and furniture and fittings cannot be included under this cost category.

Please note that the budget dedicated to Work Package 1 “Management” cannot be higher than 20% of the total direct costs.

INDIRECT COSTS include:

²² In accordance with article 8 of ENI Common Implementing Rules (Regulation (EC) 236/2014), all supplies purchased shall originate from an eligible country (EU, ENI, IPA & EEA). However, they may originate from any country when the amount of the supplies to be purchased is below 100.000 EUR. For the purposes of this Regulation, the term ‘origin’ is defined in Article 23 and 24 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2913/92 (1) and other legislative acts of the Union governing non-preferential origin.

²³ Costs for external expenditures verification shall not exceed 3% of the total eligible budget costs.

- A. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS** are the indirect costs incurred by the Lead Beneficiary and its partnership. They may be eligible for flat-rate funding, fixed at a maximum of 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs excluding the costs incurred in relation to the provision of infrastructures provided that the rate is calculated on the basis of a fair, equitable and verifiable calculation method. The MA will provide a table to support the calculation method. As indirect costs for a project shall be considered those eligible costs which may not be identified as specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the project and may not be booked to it directly according to the conditions of eligibility previously described. They may not include ineligible costs as referred to in section 4.5.2 or costs already declared under another cost item or heading of the budget of the project. The approved flat-rate percentage will be indicated in the Grant Contract. No additional supporting documents will be requested to justify these costs during regular reporting. However, the MA may request information to verify the actual calculation method during the project implementation period.
- B. CONTINGENCY RESERVE.** A contingency reserve not exceeding 3% of the direct eligible budgeted costs **may** be included in the budget of the Project²⁴. It can only be used with the prior written authorisation of the Managing Authority.

4.5.4 Exchange rate

In accordance with article 67 of the Implementing Rules on the use of the euro as specified in par. 4.8.3 of the JOP, expenditure incurred in a currency other than the euro, by project beneficiaries, shall be converted into euro using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission for the month during which the expenditure was submitted for examination to the auditors for its verification at each payment claim. EC rates are available at the following website link:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm

4.5.5 Sources of funding

Budget should specify the sources of funding foreseen for the implementation of the project, including:

- ENI contribution, which cannot exceed 90% of the project total eligible costs.
- Co-financing (at least 10% of the total eligible costs) provided with own resources, or with public or private sources other than the European Union Budget and the European Development Fund. Co-financing in kind is not eligible. Staff costs reported under the cost category Human Resources may be considered as co-financing.
- Any other income generated by the project activities will be deducted from the grant.²⁵

4.5.6 Sub-granting

Sub-grants can be foreseen to offer financial support to third parties involved in the proposal and they should be duly justified and compliant with the State Aid provisions (*de minimis* regime) as referred in par. 5.6. The Applicant will have to provide information on how the sub grants procedures will be

²⁴ The use of the contingency reserve is allowed, for instance, in case of exceptional fluctuations in the exchange rates preventing the purchase of goods, works or services needed by the project.

²⁵ See JOP par. 4.10.1

managed, selection criteria, indicative number of sub-grants to be awarded, final beneficiaries and expected impact. The Sub-grants have to be included in the Budget heading “Other costs” with the following limitations:

- a) Maximum 30% of the total direct costs can be awarded as sub-grants;
- b) Maximum amount of the sub-grant per each third party is € 60.000.

4.5.7 No profit principle

In accordance with article 125(3) of Financial Regulation (Regulation (EC) 966/2012), grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project. This shall not apply to, inter alia:

- (a) study, research or training scholarships paid to natural persons;
- (b) other direct support paid to natural persons most in need, such as unemployed persons and refugees;
- (c) low value grants (less than 60.000€), i.e. sub-grants (see above).

Where a profit is made, the MA shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the project. Profit is defined as “a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs approved by the Managing Authority when the request for payment of the balance is made”.

4.6 Ineligible proposals

Project proposals concerning only or mainly the following activities are ineligible:

- individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- pure academic and research oriented activities;
- studies;
- one-off conferences: conferences can only be funded if they form part of a wider range of activities to be implemented in the life-time of the project. For these purposes, preparatory activities for a conference and the publication of the proceedings of the conference do not, in themselves, constitute such "wider activities".

To avoid any “double funding”, projects already financed by other European Union initiatives or other donors will be considered ineligible. To this end the MA may conduct any consultation it deems appropriate.

4.7 Exclusion situations

Applicants and partners will be excluded from participating in this call for proposals or from being awarded grants if they are in any of the following situations²⁶:

²⁶ Please refer to art. 45 of the Regulation (EU) No 897/2014.

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations (including voluntary liquidation);
- b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;
- c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the MA can justify;
- d) have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or those of the country where the project is to take place;
- e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the EU's financial interests;
- f) have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations in connection with a procurement procedure or other grant award procedure financed by the Community budget;
- g) have failed to reimburse the MA and/or the European Commission for any sum due in relation to the ENPI and/or any other Programme funded by the EU;
- h) are subject to a conflict of interests;²⁷
- i) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the MA as a condition of participation in the call for proposals or fail to supply this information;
- j) attempted to obtain confidential information or influence the Project Selection Committee or the other subjects involved in the evaluation process of current or previous calls for proposals.

²⁷ Art 57 (4) of EU Financial Regulation (EU Reg. 966/2012):

“a conflict of interests exists where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a financial actor or other person, as referred to in paragraph 1, is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with a recipient.”

Art. 32 of the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation (EU Reg. 1268/2012):

“Acts likely to constitute a conflict of interests and procedure (Article 57 of the Financial Regulation)

1. Acts likely to be affected by a conflict of interests within the meaning of Article 57(2) of the Financial Regulation may, inter alia, take one of the following forms without prejudice of their qualification as illegal activities under Article 141:

- (a) granting oneself or others unjustified direct or indirect advantages;
- (b) refusing to grant a beneficiary the rights or advantages to which that beneficiary is entitled;
- (c) committing undue or wrongful acts or failing to carry out acts that are mandatory.

Other acts likely to be affected by a conflict of interests are those which may impair the impartial and objective performance of a person's duties such as, inter alia, the participation in an evaluation committee for a public procurement or grant procedure when the person may, directly or indirectly, benefit financially from the outcome of these procedures.

2. A conflict of interest shall be presumed to exist if an applicant, candidate or tenderer is a member of staff covered by the Staff Regulations, unless his participation in the procedure has been authorised in advance by his superior.

3. In the event of a conflict of interests, the authorising officer by delegation shall take appropriate measures to avoid any undue influence of the person concerned on the process or procedure in question.”

In the cases referred to in points a), c), d) and f) the exclusion applies for a period of two years from the time when the infringement is established. In the cases referred to in points h) and i), the exclusion applies for a period of four years from the date of notification of the judgment.

If, anytime during the evaluation process, an Applicant or a partner is found under one or more of the above mentioned exclusion situations, the whole project will be rejected on this sole basis.

In the “Declaration by the Applicant” and the “Partner Statement”, Applicants and Partners must declare that they do not fall into any of the above categories a) to i).

Any attempt to obtain confidential information or to influence the evaluators or the staff of the Programme during the evaluation process will lead to the disqualification of the project.

The clarifications provided in the evaluation phase will under no circumstances be able to alter the initial content of the Application form.

Applicants will be excluded in case it is proven that are guilty of misleading the MA or the evaluators by providing false information that are being taken into consideration in the evaluation process, or if they did not inform the evaluators on issues that would have led to a different decision of the evaluators or MA staff.

5. EVALUATION

5.1 Selection procedure

Strategic proposals are submitted in one stage.

Only the proposals meeting the following pre-conditions will be considered for selection:

1. It has been fully submitted in all its parts by using the online system.
2. The deadline set out in the Call for proposals is met.
3. It is drawn up in English or French.

The selection process is performed in two different steps.

STEP 1

A. Administrative check (compliance with criteria reported in Section 4)

B. Strategic Evaluation:

- Relevance
- Quality of Design

STEP 2

A. Operational Evaluation:

- Operational and Financial capacity
- Effectiveness
- Sustainability
- Cost Effectiveness.

B. Verification of the eligibility of Applicants' and partners' organisations.

5.2 Methodology and scoring

The qualitative (strategic and operational) evaluation of the proposals against the award criteria will be performed by external independent experts. They will assess to what extent each proposal meets the defined criteria. This evaluation will be based on the information provided in the e-form only. Therefore, experts will only assess information stated explicitly in the relevant sections of the proposal, as indicated in the evaluation grid below. Relevant information appearing in other sections will be considered where it further substantiates evidence relevant to the evaluation criteria.

When performing the assessment, a common methodology and range of scores will be used. The evaluation framework corresponds to the following standards:

Evaluation	Score
very good	5
good	4
adequate	3
poor	2
weak	1

VERY GOOD: the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.

Any shortcomings are minor.

GOOD: the proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

ADEQUATE: the proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

POOR: the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

WEAK: the criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

<u>AWARD CRITERIA</u>	<u>MAX SCORE</u>
1. RELEVANCE	(30 POINTS)
2. QUALITY OF DESIGN	(20 POINTS) – ONLY FOR STEP 1
3. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY	(20 POINTS)
4. EFFECTIVENESS	(20 POINTS)
5. SUSTAINABILITY	(15 POINTS)
6. COST EFFECTIVENESS	(15 POINTS)

For each award criterion, the evaluation grid includes specific sub-sections scored from 1 to 5 points. The total score of the evaluation grid is the sum of the totals for each section.

The **Relevance** will be calculated only during the STEP 1 and its score will be transferred to STEP 2, whereas the score for Quality of Design will be taken into account only in STEP 1.

After STEP 2, a proposal may receive a score of maximum 100 points.

During the Strategic and Quality evaluation, minimum **thresholds** will be applied under **Relevance**, **Quality of Design** and **Operational Capacity** award criteria, which project proposals must exceed in order to be considered for funding.

Furthermore, a minimum threshold of 70 points is set in order to consider the award of the grant by the JMC.

The Project Selection Committee (PSC) - set up by the JMC – is composed of one representative and one substitute for each participating country and collectively bears the responsibility of carrying out the selection of projects and supervising and reviewing the outcome of the work carried out by internal and external assessors.

The officers of the Managing Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat and the Branch Offices will act as internal assessors to perform the administrative check, while the external assessors, in charge of the qualitative evaluations, are recruited according to criteria set by the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC).

In particular, the PSC approves the evaluation reports after each STEP of the evaluation and decides on the short-listed project proposals to be submitted to the JMC for a grant award decision. Each member has equal voting rights and he/she is appointed on a functional basis. He/she must be impartial and free from conflict of interest and possess the technical and administrative capacities necessary to give an informed opinion on the proposals.

5.3 STEP 1

5.3.1 Administrative check

All proposals digitally submitted will be first assessed as regards their compliance with the requirements detailed in Section 4.

If the proposal does not meet the eligibility criteria, the proposal shall be rejected on this sole basis.

Only the proposals passing the administrative check by complying with all the criteria included in the “**Administrative Checklist**” will be considered in the following evaluation steps (see table below).

BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL, PLEASE CHECK THAT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS IS COMPLETED AND RESPECTS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA FOR THE APPLICATION FORM:	To be filled in by the Applicant	
	Yes	No
ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK		
1. All requirements set out in Chapter 4 are fully met by the proposal		
2. The electronic or scanned version of the Declaration by the Applicant has been uploaded onto the online application system. It is on headed paper and/or stamped, dated and signed.		
3. All requested mandatory information is included in the Declaration by the Applicant.		
4. The electronic or scanned version of all the <i>Partner Statements</i> by the partners has been uploaded onto the system and they are: - on headed paper and/or stamped; - dated; - signed.		
5. All requested mandatory information is included in the <i>Partner Statements</i> .		
6. If an international organisations is foreseen in the proposal, the electronic or scanned version of the International Organisation Statement(s) has/have been uploaded onto the online application system: - on headed paper and/or stamped; - dated; - signed.		
7. All requested mandatory information in the International Organisation Statement(s) is included.		
8. If associated partners are foreseen in the proposal, the electronic or scanned version of the <i>Associated Partner(s) Statement(s)</i> has/have been uploaded onto the online application system: - on headed paper and/or stamped; - dated; - signed.		
9. All requested mandatory information in the Associated Partners Statements is included.		

<p>10. The following mandatory documents are filled in according to the format provided by the Programme and uploaded onto the e-Form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calculation of the administrative costs (for both Applicant and each partner), - State Aid Self-assessment check grid (for both Applicant and each partner). 		
<p>11. Environmental screening: Section 3 of the e-Form is filled in (only for proposals under Programme Priorities 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4)</p>		

Any inconsistency or non-compliance identified during the administrative check will lead to the rejection of the proposal. However, in case of minor errors or inconsistencies in the e-form and/or submitted documents, following the notification by the Managing Authority, Applicants will be given 14 calendar days to provide clarifications.

Clarifications will only be requested when the provided information is unclear, thus preventing the Managing Authority from conducting an objective assessment. **Missing documents will not be requested and will lead to the rejection of the proposal.**

The same applies in case the MA requests to the Applicant specific information to comply with the Environmental screening. In fact, upon the evaluation of the MA of *Section 1.6.2 Environmental sustainability*, regardless the Priority addressed, any Applicant may be required to fill in *Section 3. Environmental Screening*.

Clarification will be requested only via email to the Applicant’s contact person indicated in the e-form. Failure to provide clarifications within the set deadline will lead to the rejection of the proposal on this sole basis.

5.3.2 Strategic Evaluation

All proposals passing the administrative check will be assessed on the basis of **two Strategic Award Criteria: Relevance and Quality of Design**.

Each award criteria is further specified by a series of questions as outlined in the evaluation grid below. These must be taken into account by external assessors when assessing the proposal.

TABLE 1. RELEVANCE

<p>1. RELEVANCE Minimum threshold: 18/30</p>	<p>Reference to Application Form section(s)</p>	<p>Max Sub-score</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>1.1 Why and how is the proposal relevant at Mediterranean Sea Basin level to the achievement of the corresponding Overarching Objective of the Programme, and in particular to the Thematic Objective, Priority and specific Terms of Reference under which it has been submitted? To what extent are institutional capacity building and people-to-people cooperation taken into account?</p>	<p>A - PROJECT SUMMARY 1.1 - Compliance with the Programme strategy 1.4 - KEY ORIENTATIONS</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the common challenges and particular needs in all the territories involved? Does the proposal adequately take into account/reflect and respond to common territorial problems and needs at Mediterranean Sea Basin level?</p>	<p>1.1 – Compliance with the Programme strategy 1.4 - KEY ORIENTATIONS</p>	<p>5</p>	

<p>1.3 Does the proposal have a real cross-border approach and added value? To what extent is cross-border cooperation necessary to achieve the results in the territories concerned? Will the project produce tangible impact and change both in EU Mediterranean Countries and Mediterranean Partner Countries?</p>	<p>1.2 - CROSS BORDER IMPACT 1.3 - EXPECTED CHANGE</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>1.4 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are the proposals' target groups? Does the proposal define their needs and address them adequately taking into account cross-cutting issues and the cross-border context?</p>	<p>1.5 - TARGET GROUPS 1.6 – CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>1.5 Will the proposal ensure valuable, new and/or innovative solutions for the final beneficiaries that go beyond the existing practice in the sector and/or in the concerned territories? To what extent the proposal will positively impact the identified final beneficiaries?</p>	<p>1.7 - FINAL BENEFICIARIES 1.8 – INNOVATION</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>1.6 Are synergies and links with other initiatives at all levels e.g. international / EU/ national and local well demonstrated and likely to be exploited with potentially far-reaching effects and benefits in the partners' territories? How does the project add value through building upon previous/on-going investments and initiatives?</p>	<p>1.9 – SYNERGIES</p>	<p>5</p>	

TABLE 2. QUALITY of DESIGN

<p>2. QUALITY of DESIGN Minimum threshold: 12/20</p>	<p>Reference to Application Form section(s)</p>	<p>Max Sub-score</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>2.1 Are the project outputs consistent with the needs of the target groups and the Programme objectives and performance framework?</p>	<p>1.5 - TARGET GROUPS 2.1 - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>2.2 Are the results indicators realistically quantified and achievable with the planned financial resources?</p>	<p>2.1 - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK 2.1.2 - EXPECTED RESULTS AND INDICATORS 2.1.3 - PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTPUTS 2.2 - POTENTIAL RISKS AND EXTERNAL CONDITIONS 2.4 - BUDGET PER WORKPACKAGE</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>2.3 Are the partners' competences, experience and expertise consistent with their contribution to the delivery of the outputs and the achievement of the expected results?</p>	<p>2.1.2 - EXPECTED RESULTS AND INDICATORS 2.1.3 - PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTPUTS 2.1.2 - EXPECTED RESULTS AND INDICATORS (PROJECT LEVEL) 2.3.3 - COMPETENCES AND EXPERIENCES 2.3.4 - ASSOCIATED PARTNERS</p>	<p>5</p>	

<p>2.4 Are the outputs foreseen likely to contribute to the achievement of the expected results and desired impact? Is the timeframe for the delivery of the proposed outputs logically connected and realistically planned?</p>	<p>2.1.3 - PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTPUTS 1.3- EXPECTED CHANGE 2.5 - OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>5</p>	
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Following the assessment under the above award criteria a proposal can **receive a maximum total of 50 points**. Considering the minimum **thresholds** included under Relevance (18/30) and Quality of Design (12/20) only proposals that receive a **minimum score of 30 points** may be further evaluated.

Furthermore, proposals failing to meet these two minimum thresholds will be rejected on that basis.

The external assessors will submit their evaluation grids (with justification of the scores provided) for approval to the Projects Selection Committee. The Projects Selection Committee - supported by the external assessors - will draft a list of projects ranked by total score for each Priority.

The list of proposals is then reduced, taking into account their ranking, to those whose sum of requested funding amounts to twice the available budget for this Call for Proposals in line with the indicative financial envelopes foreseen for each Priority.

The PSC approves the Evaluation Report on the Relevance and Quality of Design, which is then sent to the JMC.

After the approval of the pre-selected proposals by the JMC, the MA will publish the results of Step 1 on the programme website. The publication shall also be deemed to constitute notification to the applicants.

Applicants that have been rejected and estimate that irregularities occurred during STEP 1 may request a clarification to the Managing Authority within **15 calendar days from the date of the publication of results on the Programme website**. Any request sent to the Managing Authority beyond the indicated deadline will not be taken into consideration.

The Managing Authority shall reply to the Applicant within 15 calendar days from the receipt date of the complaint.

5.4 STEP 2

5.4.1 Operational evaluation

By using the same scoring methodology previously described, the external evaluators will now assess the shortlisted proposals as regards their **Operational and financial capacity, effectiveness, sustainability** and the **Cost effectiveness**.

The score of the “Relevance” award criteria will be automatically reported in the final evaluation grid of Operational Evaluation.

<p>RELEVANCE - Score transferred from the evaluation grid step 1.</p>	<p>30</p>
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The external evaluators will use the following evaluation grids to assess the remaining Award Criteria:

TABLE 3. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

3 OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY (PARTNERSHIP) Minimum threshold: 12/20	Reference to Application Form section(s)	Max Sub-score	20
3.1 Are the roles and tasks of the Applicant and partners clearly defined and appropriate? Do all partners actively contribute to the achievement of the expected results consistently with the 50% rule?	2.1 – LOGICAL FRAMEWORK 2.4 - BUDGET PER WORKPACKAGE 2.3 - PARTNERSHIP	5	
3.2 Do the partners complement each other in terms of competences and expertise to achieve all expected results? Does the partnership demonstrate adequate breadth and have all relevant actors/stakeholders been considered / approached and is their involvement foreseen and included in all stages of the proposed project?	2.3.3 - COMPETENCES AND EXPERIENCES	5	
3.3 Do the Applicant and partners have adequate management capacities to implement the project?	4 - OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY 4.1 - APPLICANT AND PARTNERS DETAILS.	5	
3.4 Do the Applicant and partners have stable and sufficient financial capacity to ensure the cash-flow during all the project implementation? In case of private partners, does the information provided in the Application Form show adequate financial capacity, in particular as regards the amount of grant to be managed? ²⁸	4.1 - APPLICANT AND PARTNERS DETAILS. FINANCIAL PLAN	5	

TABLE 4. EFFECTIVENESS

4 EFFECTIVENESS		Max Sub-score	20
4.1 Is the proposed management and coordination methodology clear and effective in relation to the project activities?	5 - EFFECTIVENESS 5.1 - DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION: WP NR 1	5	
4.2 Are the project’s expected result indicators realistically quantified with regards to the planned project activities, concerned territories and the identified target groups?	1.3 - EXPECTED CHANGE 1.5 - TARGET GROUPS, FINAL BENEFICIARIES AND NEEDS 2.1.2 - EXPECTED RESULTS AND INDICATORS	5	
4.3 Is the action plan clear and feasible? Is the time plan realistic and does it include activities and outputs in a logical time sequence?	2.5 - OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNED OUTPUTS TO BE ACHIEVED	5	

²⁸ For details on the assessment of the financial and operational capacity, please refer to the “note on financial and operational capacity” published with this call for proposals.

	5 - EFFECTIVENESS 5.2 - OVERVIEW OF THE FORESEEN ACTIVITIES-PLANNING		
4.4 Is the communication strategy well designed? Are the foreseen activities adequate and cost-effective to raise the awareness of the target groups, media, institutional stakeholders and general audience? Does the communication strategy foresee any innovative activity or tool to reach out and engage the identified target groups?	5 - EFFECTIVENESS 5.1 - DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION WP NR 2	5	

TABLE 5. SUSTAINABILITY

5 SUSTAINABILITY		Max Sub-score	15
5.1 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? At what scale? (local, regional, national and/or Mediterranean Sea Basin level?). In addition, does the project foresee effective actions and strategies to ensure the transfer, capitalisation and mainstreaming of its results?	6 - SUSTAINABILITY 6.1 - IMPACT 6.2 - MULTIPLIER EFFECTS	5	
5.2 Does the proposal demonstrate an adequate strategy to ensure the sustainability of the expected results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financially (how will the results be financed and maintained after the end of the project?) - technically How the “ownership” and use of the results of the project both in EUMC and MPC will be supported?) - environmentally (where applicable) (will the project have environmental externalities²⁹?) 	1.6.2 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY 3 - ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING 6.3 - LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EXPECTED RESULTS 6.4 - ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS	5	
5.3 How and to what extent will the project ensure its relevance to policy-makers and achieve policy change, policy learning or policy innovation?	6.3 - LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EXPECTED RESULTS	5	

²⁹ "Externalities refers to situations when the effect of production or consumption of goods and services imposes costs or benefits on others which are not reflected in the prices charged for the goods and services being provided." Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3215>

TABLE 6. COST EFFECTIVENESS

6 COST EFFECTIVENESS		Max Sub-score	15
6.1 Is the financial allocation per work package consistent with the foreseen activities and outputs? Are the costs realistic, necessary and justified?	7 - BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS 7.2 - TABLE 2 BREAKDOWN PER WPs AND ORGANIZATION 5 - EFFECTIVENESS 5.1 - DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION	5	
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the quantification of the expected results satisfactory?	2.1.2 - EXPECTED RESULTS AND INDICATORS 7 BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS 7.1 - TABLE 1 OUTPUT COSTS PER ORGANIZATION 7.2 - TABLE 2 BREAKDOWN PER WPs AND ORGANIZATION 7.3 - TABLE 3 BREAKDOWN COST CATEGORIES PER ORGANISATION	5	
6.3 Is the budget -including financial plan- well designed and appropriately allocated across partners? Is it logically distributed throughout the duration of the project to ensure the timely delivery of the outputs and the management of the project cash-flow?	2.5 - OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNED OUTPUTS TO BE ACHIEVED 5.1 - DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION 7 BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS 7.1 - TABLE 1 OUTPUT COSTS PER ORGANIZATION 7.2 - TABLE 2 BREAKDOWN PER WPs AND ORGANIZATION	5	

A **minimum threshold of 12/20** under Financial and Operational capacity (Award Criterion 3) is applied. Once all assessments are finalized, the external assessors will submit them to the Projects Selection Committee to establish the final ranking lists.

The projects that will be recommended by the PSC for funding will be those having exceeded all minimum thresholds and having achieved the highest scores per priority. The number of projects that will be funded will depend on the available budget (see section 2.1). In case two or more proposals falling within the same thematic Priority obtain the same final evaluation score, the one having the highest score under the “Relevance” criterion will be selected for funding. In case two or more proposals reach the same final evaluation score and score for “Relevance”, the proposal having obtained the highest score under “Quality of design” will be selected for funding. The same approach will apply, using the next criterion in the evaluation grid, in case two or more proposals reach the same final score and scores for “Relevance” and “Quality of design” criteria.

Finally, in order to be selected for the award of a grant by the JMC, a project proposal shall reach a minimum threshold of 70 points.

5.4.2 Verification of the eligibility of Applicant and Partner organisations

The MA will check if Applicants' and Partners' organisations fulfil the requirements listed under par. 4.3, as declared in the Application Form and in the mandatory declarations, by analysing the supporting documents.

These documents will be requested by the Managing Authority only to Applicants and partners whose proposals have been shortlisted for STEP 2.

Applicants will be requested to provide the following documents:

- 1. Original (hard copies) of the Declaration by the Applicant, the Partner Statements, and the International Organisations Declarations** already submitted electronically with the e-form.
- 2. The statutes or articles of association** of the **applicant** organisation³⁰ and the **partner organisations**³¹ proving their legal status. This obligation does not apply to international organisations having signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.³² Applicants that have passed the eligibility process under previous calls of the ENI CBC MED programme may refer to the statutes/official documents already submitted, provided that they did not change their legal status. This option will be enabled only upon decision of the Managing Authority. In addition, in case of doubts as regards the exact location of the applicant/partners a national registration document could also be requested.
- 3. Composition of the Management Board** or other relevant document (where appropriate) proving that the person who signed the declarations was legally empowered to sign such documents.
- 4. Partnership Agreement** signed by the Applicant and all Partners (**scanned version**). The original document will be requested in case the application is selected for a grant;
- 5. The external audit official report**³³ made by chartered auditors of the applicant's annual accounts for the last 2 financial years available. In the report, the data concerning the Financial Capacity (i.e. for companies the Total Annual Income, Net income (profit and loss), Own funds and Total liabilities) have to be pointed out and/or highlighted.
- 6. The external audit official report** of all partners organization³⁴, made by chartered auditors of the partners' annual accounts for the last 2 financial years, if available. Those entities which are not requested by the national law to produce such official annual reports, will have to provide the annual accounts for the last 2 financial years signed by the legal representative. In the report, the data concerning the Financial Capacity (i.e. for companies the Total Annual Income, Net income (profit and loss), Own funds and Total liabilities) have to be pointed out and/or highlighted.

³⁰ Where the applicant and/or (a) partner(s) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided.

³¹ When the Council of Europe Convention n. 124 on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organizations is applicable, nationality shall be determined on the basis of the official evidence issued by the country concerned under the said Convention.

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=124&CM=8&DF=07/03/2011&CL=ENG>

³² A list of the relevant framework agreements is available at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/financing/international_organisations/other_international_organisations/index_en.htm

³³ This does not apply to public administrations, public bodies (including bodies governed by public law) and international organisations.

³⁴ See note 31.

When a document is not written in English or French, a courtesy translation of its relevant parts shall be attached.

If none of the supporting documents listed above are provided within the deadline indicated by the MA, the proposals will be rejected on this sole basis.

The applicant/partner assume the full responsibility for the content of the documents and the accuracy of the translation.

In case of minor errors or inconsistencies in the submitted documents, Applicants will be given 14 calendar days to provide clarifications or integrations.

The legal status of the partners located in their territories will be confirmed by the relevant National authorities of each participating country.

If an Applicant a partner proves to be ineligible, the whole project will be rejected on this sole basis.

5.5 Environmental screening

The ENI CBC MED Programme was screened to verify its potential effects on the environment according to the European Directive 2001/42/EC, and in consultation with all Mediterranean Environmental Authorities indicated by the Participating Countries. The results of this screening are available on the Programme website (www.enicbcmmed.eu)

Based on the outcomes of this screening, all proposals will be required to list any project output(s) with a potential environmental impact, and its (their) possible positive and/or negative direct or indirect effect(s). This information is part of the mandatory “Environmental sustainability” sections of the Application Form.

Moreover, those proposals submitted under certain Programme priorities (i.e. 1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) will be requested to provide additional information, as they were identified among those which can potentially have an environmental impact (see check list A). In any case, the MA could require further information (including the checklist A) also to any proposal submitted under other priorities.

Based on the information included in the “Environmental screening” - check list A, applicants may be immediately requested to fill in also the “Environmental effects” - check list B (e.g. in case an infrastructure component is foreseen). Once assessed these two check lists, the MA may require to pre-selected applicants further details along with the supporting document, as specified in the “Environmental report” - check list C of the application form.

In fact, those proposals **needing a more detailed environmental assessment and project applications including an infrastructure component of at least 1 million euro** (according to art. 43 of the Implementing Rules) shall submit:

- a) a detailed description of the infrastructure investment and its location;
- b) a detailed description of the capacity building component of the project, except in duly justified cases;
- c) a full feasibility study or equivalent carried out including the option analysis, the results, and independent quality review;
- d) an assessment of its environmental impact in compliance with the Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and, for participating countries which are parties to it,

UM/ECE Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context of 25 February 1991;

e) evidence of ownership by the beneficiaries or access to the land;

f) building permit.

The above mentioned documents for a more detailed environmental assessment are to be submitted together with the supporting documents (see par. 5.4.2). Exceptionally and in duly justified cases, the Managing Authority may accept a later submission of the documents referred to in point (f).

After receiving all these documents, the MA could require a consultation of the concerned National Environmental Authorities, prescribe mitigation measures or also reject the project.

Overall, four levels of environmental screening have been established as follows:

1st LEVEL	Environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All proposals are required to identify the output(s) which might have a positive/negative impact on the environment.• The MA reviews the content and may ask further information/documents, as the case may be.
2nd LEVEL	Environmental screening - Checklist A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposals submitted under one of the following priorities: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4 are also required to fill in the Check list A.• The MA may ask to fill in this check list for any proposal submitted under other priorities.
3rd LEVEL	Environmental effects - Checklist B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposals needing a greater level of assessment are required to draft the Checklist B.• Based on the information provided, the MA may require to fill in the Checklist C.
4th LEVEL	Environmental Report - Checklist C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposals needing a more detailed assessment and those including an infrastructure of at least 1 million euro (according to art. 43 of the IRs) are required to submit the Checklist C.

Proposals that after all stages of environmental screening are reporting **major** environmental issues which may not be addressed and solved by the Applicants will be not recommended for funding.

Applicants of the proposals reporting **minor** environmental issues will be requested to address them before signing the grant contract, if recommended for funding.

5.6 Compliance with State Aid provisions

EU applicants and partners shall comply with the State Aid provisions as foreseen by EC Implementing Regulation 897/2014 art. 12, 31 and 39 (applicable for organisations from EU Member States only)³⁵.

Moreover, the provisions of any bilateral agreements between the MPCs and the EU (e.g. the aid should not distort or threaten to distort competition and trade between the European Union and that specific Mediterranean Partner Country) should be taken into consideration³⁶.

³⁵ For details on the conditions to be met on state aid, please refer to the “note on state aid” published with this call for proposals.

In particular, private and public bodies, **acting as economic operators**, are subject to the following limitations:

- the amount of public funding granted to State Aid relevant activities included in the project shall not exceed the thresholds set by the *de minimis* regulation (EC) 1407/2013.

Applicants and partners from all EU Members States and from Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia are required to provide information on State aid relevant activities, by using a specific self-assessment grid to be uploaded onto the e-Form.

5.7 Financial capacity assessment

In order to minimize the risk of difficulties in project implementation, a financial capacity check is performed when assessing project proposals on the basis of the information contained in the documents submitted by private applicants/partners.

The check is aimed at assessing whether the applicant/partners have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain activities throughout the project implementation period and to participate in its funding.

As a general principle, the financial capacity check will have to demonstrate that the private applicant/partner:

- Has sufficient liquidity - is able to cover its short-term commitments;
- Is financially autonomous;
- Is solvent - capable of covering its medium and long-term commitments.

Each private applicant/partner shall fill-in a self-assessment grid whose template is part of the application package.

In case of private companies the following criteria shall be met:

- Grant rate: the ratio "total grant requested divided by the number of project years" / "shareholders' equity" is lower than 1
- Liquidity rate: the ratio "current assets" / "current liabilities" is higher than 1
- Debt rate: the ratio "total debts" / "total assets" is lower than 0.8
- Operating profit rate: there is a positive operational profit

Private companies acting as applicants shall meet 3 out of the 4 criteria above in order to be funded; in case this condition is not met, the proposal will be rejected on this sole basis.

Private companies acting as partners not meeting 3 out of the 4 criteria above will be considered at risk; countermeasures may include the compulsory issuing of a financial guarantee for the benefit of the applicant before the signature of the Grant Contract.

In case of private no profit partners (e.g.: NGOs) the following criteria shall be respected:

- Liquidity rate: the ratio "current assets" / "current liabilities" is higher than 1

³⁶ In the event state aid provisions are applicable to a specific Mediterranean Partner Country, a national informative note will be published in the programme website. The list of MPCs to which the *de minimis* is applicable will also be included in the informative "note on state aid" published with this call.

- Debt rate: the ratio "total debts" / "total assets" is lower than 0.8
- Grant rate : the ratio "total grant requested divided by the number of project years" / "subsidies" is lower than 1

Private no profit organisations acting as applicants shall meet 2 out of the 3 criteria above in order to be funded; in case this condition is not met, the proposal will be rejected on this sole basis.

Private no profit organisations acting as partners not meeting 2 out of the 3 criteria above will be considered at risk; countermeasures may include the compulsory issuing of a financial guarantee for the benefit of the applicant before the signature of the Grant Contract.

If the application passes the assessment steps described in the previous paragraphs, the private applicants/partners shall be asked to deliver the supporting documents listed under par. 5.4.2 (i.e.: balance sheets, audit reports etc.) which were used to fill-in the self-assessment financial capacity grid. The MA/JTS will verify the correctness of the calculations reported in the self-assessment grid, and the compliance with the documents provided. In case of mismatched/not consistent data, the MA/JTS may require a clarification to the applicant.

In case of failure to provide the requested clarification within the set deadline, the financial assessment will be completed by taking the most prudent approach, i.e. the criteria concerned will be considered as "not met".

5.8 Notification of the Joint Monitoring Committee decision

Based on the verification of the supporting documents by the Managing Authority and according to the ranking lists, the Project Selection Committee will prepare its recommendations in the Evaluation Report, including a table per Priority listing the proposals ranked according to their score and within the available financial envelope for each Priority as well as a reserve list following the same criteria.

The Evaluation report is transmitted to the Joint Monitoring Committee by the MA. The MA will send the Evaluation report with the final ranking list of projects to the European Commission for inter-services consultation, whose results will be presented to the Joint Monitoring Committee.

The Joint Monitoring Committee takes the final decision on the list of projects proposed by the **Project Selection Committee**. The European Commission will be informed accordingly. Whenever the Joint Monitoring Committee decides not to follow all or part of the recommendations of Project Selection Committee, it shall justify its decision in writing.

In addition to the publication of the final list of approved projects on the Programme website, Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of STEP 2. In case of non-eligible or not approved applications, information will include the reasons for non-eligibility or non-approval.

5.9 Complaint procedure

Any complaint related to the assessment and selection of the project proposals under STEP 1 and/or 2 shall be addressed by the Applicant, on behalf of the entire partnership, to the MA within 30 calendar days from the notification of the results. Complaints received by project partners individually shall not be taken into consideration.

Applicants must duly justify their complaints, specifying what failures or mistakes have been assumed to happen and including clear reference to the Programme documents.

The complaint can only make reference to:

- a) Outcomes of the admissibility and eligibility checks;
- b) The respect of the assessment procedure.

Requests for information or clarifications shall not be considered as complaints.

The MA shall be in charge of verifying the admissibility of the request from the formal point of view. Should the Managing Authority find the Applicant's complaint admissible, or should it not be able to settle the dispute with the Applicant, the case will be forwarded to the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), which shall examine it and provide its position on the complaint.

The outcome of the JMC decision shall be communicated in written by the MA to the Applicant. The decisions taken after each complaint procedures will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the Programme if the complaint is based on the same reasons.

Against the final decision an official litigation procedure could start according to the Italian legislation and in this case the legal proceedings will take place in Italy. The venue is the Administrative Court in Cagliari.

5.10 Indicative time-table of the selection procedure³⁷

Procedure	Indicative calendar (days)
1. STEP 1 - Administrative check and Strategic Evaluation	55
2. PSC assessment and decision	20
3. JMC decision	25
4. Information to all Applicants on STEP 1 results	5
5. STEP 2 - Operational Evaluation including 45 calendar days for Submission of mandatory supporting documents only for pre-selected Applicants	55
6. Environmental Assessment, State Aid Check	30
7. Check of the mandatory supporting documents including financial capacity (in cooperation with PSC members) and final evaluation assessments.	30
8. PSC assessment and decision	20
9. EC consultation and JMC decision	25
10. Information to Applicants on STEP 2 results	5
TOTAL calendar days 270	

The indicative timetable may be updated by the Managing Authority during the selection procedure. In such case, the updated timetable will be published on the Programme website: www.enicbcmec.eu

5.11 Conditions applicable to project implementation

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered to sign a contract based on the Grant Contract model. By signing the Declaration by the Applicant, the Applicant declares to accept, in case a grant is awarded, the conditions as laid down in the Grant Contract.

³⁷ Depending on the number of proposals received. The calculation is made on 700/800 applications received.