**Annex AG\_M** How to plan a project

How to plan a project

1. Lead Partner and partnership rules

In compliance with the “lead partner principle” each project partnership shall appoint one applicant acting as lead partner, which takes full financial and legal responsibility for the implementation of the entire project. The tasks of the Lead Partner are provided in article 26 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council. You have already identified and proposed a partnership and a LP in the 1st step.

However, please consider the following aspects:

* The tasks, responsibilities and the relations between the lead partners and the partners are include the partnership agreement (*Annex AG\_H Template Partnership Agreement*).
* The responsibilities of the lead partner are laid down in detail in the subsidy contract signed with the Managing Authority (*Annex AG\_F Template Framework subsidy contract*).
* All partners should dispose of the expertise, resources and capacity to fulfil their designated tasks. The applicants must state their financial and administrative capacity to manage their share of the project.

2. Developing the application

Logic of intervention

The project must follow an intervention logic that reflects the need of the territory (and of the partner) and the intended change the project seeks to induced through its implementation[[1]](#footnote-1). The Programme intervention logic should be mirrored in the projects' intervention logic.

The project must be in-line with the specific objective of the Priority under which is submitted and to contribute to the Programme output and results indicators. This linkage should be reflected by the application.

The project must clearly describe its objectives, activities and the expected outputs and results. These aspects should have been considered from the beginning, when starting thinking to you project. As such, during the 1st step you should have taken into consideration the elements of the logic of intervention. However, in the 2nd step, when developing the full project, the partners should describe:

* **The overall project objective** - Provides overall context for what the project is trying to achieve, and aligns to Programme priority specific objective. It relates to the strategic aspects of the project and to the planned project results (and intended territorial change). The overall project objective is broken down into one or more project specific objectives.
* **Project specific objectives** – is a concrete statement describing what the project is trying to achieve through its planned activities and related outputs and deliverables. It has to clearly contribute to the overall project objective and should be specific and measurable (it refers to the project main outputs). It should be verifiable whether the specific objective has been reached.
* **Project activities** – are the specific tasks performed for which resources are used. It's a work package component which may or may not result in a deliverable or an output. The project activities can be grouped in a project work package.
* **Project output –** is a product that results from the implementation of project activities. All project activities and outputs need to be clearly consistent with and contribute to the achievement of one or more project specific objectives. The project outputs must be linked to the Programme output indicator set for the SO under which the project is submitted.
* **Project deliverable -** is side-product or service of the project that contributes to the development of a project's main output, e.g. analysis reports, feasibility studies, strategy documents, pilot action reports, training documentations. It is recommended to limit the number of project deliverables.
* **Project result** - is the immediate effect and change compared to the initial situation in the area which a project intends to achieve through the use of its outputs. The project results must be linked to the Programme results indicator set for the SO under which the project is submitted.

**The project logic intervention**

**Project**

**Interreg Programme**

The need and the challenge addressed by the project

The territorial need and the challenge identified by the Programme

The project overall and specific objectives

The Programme specific objective under which the project is submitted

The project activities (correlated with the resources)

The indicative types of actions identified within the SO under which the project is submitted

The project deliverables and outputs

The output indicators set for the SO under which the project is submitted

The project results

The results indicators set for the SO under which the project is submitted

change and impact

Project objective and result indicators

The project must select a Programme priority specific objective to which the project contributes and describe how it will contribute. It is important to secure consistency between the project objective(s) and the Programme priority SO as it will help to focus the reach of the project and underline what impact the project will make.

The project can define a number of project specific objectives. The project specific objectives need to show direct contribution to the project overall objective.

Project Work Plan (application form Section C.4)

A project is structured into Work Packages (WP) and activities, and produce deliverables and outputs that contribute to the achievement of the results and the set objectives.

The Work Package (WP) is defined as group of related project activities required to produce project main outputs. This means that the project will have as many work packages as it will have project specific objectives defined.

It is recommend to have up **to 3 work packages**, but in some cases up to 5 should also be acceptable. Work packages have to be broken down into activities, deliverables and outputs. A work package may include investments.

For each Work Package, a project shall define one project specific objective to be achieved in the project lifetime through the implementation of planned activities and related outputs and deliverables. Please note that each work package should have a distinct project specific objective (i.e. project specific objectives should not be repeated in other work packages).

Each work package should also have at least one communication objective, and related target audiences that contributes to the achievement of the project specific objective.

Project activities, outputs and results

The project activities must contribute to the achievement of the project’s output and result indicators, as well as the project specific objectives. Thus, each working package should include activities that are contributing to the achievement of the project specific and communication objectives set in that WP. Please note that the activities should contribute to the development of the planned outputs. The number of activities per work package depends on its complexity, such as the number and type of outputs to be developed. Usually no more than 4 to 6 activities per work package should be foreseen.

Please note that each working package includes specific **communication objectives and activities**. As such, each project is required to set out the envisaged approach to communication and visibility of the WP. Thus, the applicant must identify a communication objective(s) and specific communication activities to be integrated in each work package. The communication activities are designed for each communication objective based on the needs to achieve a specific project objective.

Communication activities vary according to the WP specified and to the identified target groups and messages for them.

Communication activities can also contribute to the capitalisation of achieved project outputs and results. Communication activities focused on capitalisation should address audiences/target groups that go beyond the partnership and participating regions.

Moreover, during all stages of your project, you must make sure that the activities carried out within the project comply with the mandatory requirements for ensuring the publicity and visibility of the EU financial intervention, mentioned by art. 36 paragraph 4 of EU Regulation 1059/2021 and detailed in the **Manual for Visual Identity[[2]](#footnote-2)** of the programme. Thus, please note that properly branding all project thematic and communication activities will be crucial for their eligibility.

Details on how to approach the communication activities are included in the documents Communication Starter Kit, the Manual for Visual Identity of the Programme[[3]](#footnote-3) and Go Green!

**Please note**: The work plan includes only thematic work packages and there are no separate work packages for project management and communication in the application form. The overall approach to project management and communication has to be described in section C.7 of the application form.

Deliverables

For each activity, at least one deliverable should be defined. Deliverables should present in an aggregated form the outcomes of intermediate (smaller) steps within a certain activity. A deliverable should thus be sufficiently comprehensive. **Overall, it is recommended to limit the total number of deliverables per work package** (e.g. not more than three deliverables per activity), also keeping in mind that project implementation will be monitored against the deliverables foreseen in the application form.

When planning outputs, please take into consideration the Programme output and results indicators corresponding to your project. Definitions of output and result indicators can be found in *Guidance on monitoring Programme indicators for Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria*.

Please pay attention also to a realistic timing of activities, deliverables and outputs. Project implementation will have to report project implementation by submitting the deliverables and outputs according to the delivery dates set in the application form.

Investments (where applicable)

There are also no separate investment work packages. Thus, you need to provide detailed information about investments that will be included in the work packages (details are included in the Application form).

Please note that for investments in infrastructure with an expected lifespan of at least five years, the expected impacts of climate change need to be described and how climate proofing will be ensured.

For each investment, a clear and concise description needs to be provided, including of the cross border relevance. This shall include a justification of the investment, its physical location, information on its environmental sustainability and risks, technical and legal requirements and ownership. For determining the total amount of the investment, only items falling under cost categories 5 (Equipment) and 6 (Infrastructure and works) should be considered.

**During the assessment stage, if applicable, the assessors shall verify how the climate proofing was considered by the project partners for investments in infrastructure, according to the *Commission Notice, Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027 (2021/C373/01)*. The Programme requires an assessment of expected impacts of climate change related to *Climate resilience (adaptation to climate change) Pillar.* You must provide the *Documentation of climate proofing[[4]](#footnote-4) (maximum 30 pages)* and the related statement, *according to the Commission Notice (including the related requirements set by Annex B.2)*[[5]](#footnote-5). The related statement has an open format and should include the main conclusions/findings of the climate proofing documentation or reference to the documentation of climate proofing.**

**Please note that the documents shall be analysed and assessed based on the evaluation criteria.**

**Please bear in mind, that an independent verification is not compulsory. However such verification providing assurance that the climate proofing adheres to the applicable guidance and other requirements may be required during the assessment process in case the documentation of climate proofing/statement on climate proofing is unclear or not in line with the Commission Notice, Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027 (2021/C373/01).**

When setting the Work Package and the corresponding activities and outputs, please consider the following aspects:

**Cooperation**

The projects must promote the **cooperation** among the partners and should continue beyond the project lifetime. Cooperation could also involve associated partners and lead to cooperation (e.g. cooperation networks, agreements etc.). The cooperation should be sustained through formal cooperation agreements or other types of tools. The cooperation is reflected in the following pair of Programme indicators:

* Output indicator RCO87 “*Organisations cooperating across borders*”
* Result indicator “RCR84 “*Organisations cooperating across borders after project lifetime*”

**It is not mandatory to choose this pair of indicators, but, considering the main purpose of Interreg programmes, it is recommended to select it.**

This pair of indicators has been selected for each Programme specific objective (reflecting the specificity of each priority), with the main purpose to promote and enhance the cooperation in the programme specific fields.

At the end, all the projects will promote the cooperation, as through the implemented activities and the generated outputs and results, the project partners will acquire experience in cooperating in the project field and promote the development of long term partnerships for future joint initiatives, including beyond the Programme scope.

In order for a project to promote and enhance the cooperation, the following conditions should be fulfilled:

* the cooperation is formalized under other form than the “partnership agreement” signed between the project partners;
* the purpose of the project is to develop and maintain the cooperation between structures over a longer period of time than the duration of the project;
* ****not all the project partners need to sign the “cooperation agreement”, only a minimum of 2 partners.

**Please, when filling in the section dedicated to durability and transferability of the project results, refer to these conditions**.

**Investments in cycling infrastructure**

Activities will be focused on the development of **cycling infrastructure**. These are reflected through the following pair of indicators:

* Output indicator RCO58  *Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported*
* Result indicator RCR64 *Annual users of dedicated cycling infrastructure*

The scope of the interventions in cycling infrastructure is to focus on activities aimed at developing the cycling route along EuroVelo Route 6.

**Investments in tourism and connected sectors and industries**

The activities will focus on supporting cultural and natural sites.

The specific pairs of indicators, selected for capturing these activities are:

* Output indicator RCO77 *Number of cultural and tourism sites supported*
* Result indicator RCR77 *Visitors of cultural and tourism sites supported*

**Output and result indicators**

The **Programme** has defined a set of indicators to capture outputs and results achieved by projects. Detailed definitions of indicators and further information on the interlinkages between output and result indicators are presented in *Guidance on monitoring Programme indicators for Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria*.

Result indicators were set in direct correlation with the specific objectives of the programme and the changes that are planned to happen at the level of the programme area through the programme interventions. Thus, the result indicators measure short term effects of the interventions with reference to direct addressees, i.e., target groups.

Each result indicator is connected to one output indicator and the outputs (and deliverables) produced under one output indicator will contribute to the achievement of the corresponding result indicator.

Output indicators cover all the thematic fields of interventions of the programme, deriving from its intervention logic and expressing its actions. Thus, the output indicators measure specific outcomes of the actions undertaken by the programme.

**Please bear in mind that:**

1. For **result indicator RCR64**, projects must install permanent counters as part of the construction stage. The counters can provide long-term information on the number of cyclists passing a specific location and can assist in converting short period field surveys into longer duration estimates of activity.

**2. For the result indicators RCR64, RCR77**, the lead partner together with the project partners must prepare and submit together with the application form the methodology (1-2 pages maximum) used to set the project target value of the indicator, which will be used to measure these indicators throughout the lifetime of the project. Details regarding these indicators are included in the *Methodological descriptions of Interreg VI-A RO-BG indicators - SO 5.2* (<https://interregviarobg.eu/en/project-implementation-manual>).

The methodology needs to cover:

* Base line – is 0, for the new investments. In case of already existing investments, the base line should be estimated one year before the intervention starts.
* Data collection: the target value of the indicator, to be achieved until the end of the implementation period/within 1 year from the completion of the intervention (documented by the partners through databases, data sourced; statistical data, studies, analyses, surveys, etc. available at that time for that specific area/geographic area covered) and the justification for the proposed target.
* Reporting method: information on how the data (on-achieved result indicators) will be collected and reported. Keep in mind that your reporting has to be well documented from verifiable and reliable sources. The available evidence (such as statistic data, surveys, etc.) should be made available in the Programme monitoring system (Jems).

Output indicators cover all the thematic fields of interventions of the programme, deriving from its intervention logic and expressing its actions. Thus, the output indicators measure specific outcomes of the actions undertaken by the programme.

* One project can contribute to one or more output indicator, respectively one or more result indicators. However, each output indicator is linked to one result indicator and this link is mandatory to be kept. A project cannot contribute to a result indicator if it does not contribute to its paired output indicator and vice-versa.
* Within a certain Specific Objective, the output indicators RCO87 - Organisations cooperating across borders and with its corresponding result indicator RCR84 - Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion cannot be used on its own. They always have to be complemented by another output indicator (respectively result indicator) set for that Specific Objective.
* When reporting on indicators, the project will report only data stemming from the implementation of that project`s activities.
* The lead partner bears the responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the level of achievement for the project`s output and result indicators, meaning that they should collect and/or collate relevant data received from the project partners and report against each of the output and result indicator relevant to their project.
* Please bear in mind that for some result indicators the reporting period is extend even after project completion (1 year after project completion) and/or specific supporting documents are required. The lead partner will take all the necessary measures for that measurement to be done in time and accurately and that the results are reported to the programme structures. For more details, please check the description for each indicator, within the pages below.

The lead partner should take every measure in order to avoid double counting and to ensure consistency between the achievements reported by each partner.

Based on the activities the project needs to implement in order to achieve its specific objective, each project will list in the Application Form the outputs (and the corresponding results) that will be delivered during the implementation.

Please consider:

* Unlike the output and result indicators, which are defined at Programme level and the project only selects (from a drop-down list) the ones it contributes to, the project outputs and results need to be defined and described in detail in the Application Form.
* When quantifying the targets of the indicators, please set a reasonable, relevant and realistic target value, in direct connection with the Specific Objective of the Programme.
* Evidence should be collected and considered when setting the targets. Later on, during the implementation phase, relevant evidence (documents, statistics, analysis etc.) shall be used in supporting the reported contribution to the indicators targets.
* An output is the main achievement of a set of project activities and it is different from a deliverable. More than one project output can contribute to the same programme output indicator.
* As it can also be seen in the tables below (presented just as examples), the measurement units for both outputs and results are the same as for the output and result indicators defined at programme level. This will allow for the aggregation of data at project and programme level.

Please note that the project outputs and results must have the same measurement unit and definition as the programme output and result indicators, and can be aggregated on project and programme level (project output 🡪 programme output indicator; project result 🡪 programme result indicator).

All the requirements set for each Programme output and result indicators should be reflected and observed at project level by the outputs and results.

The Work plan in a nutshell (this is just an example):

**Project overall objective**

**Work package 1**

**Work package 2**

**Project specific objective 1**

**Project specific objective 2**

**Communication objective 1**

**Communication objective objective 2**

**Activity 1.1**

* **Deliverable 1.1.1**

**Activity 1.2**

* **Deliverable 1.2.1**
* **Deliverable 1.2.**

**Activity 1.3**

* **Deliverable 1.3.1**

**Activity 2.1**

* **Deliverable 2.1.1**

**Activity 2.2**

* **Deliverable 2.2.1**
* **Deliverable 2.2.2**
* **Deliverable 2.2.3**

**Investment 2.1**

**Output 1.1**

**Output 1.2**

**Output 2.1**

**Project results**

**Tips:**

* Set realistic targets (when setting the target of each indicator, please be realistic and based on you previous experience and the data sources).
* When setting the target indicators please consider the data availability, as you have to justify the data sources (e.g. statistic data, surveys, questionnaires etc.).
* The indicators must reflect the project activities.
* The indicators reflect the joint outputs/results (so the reporting will be at project level). When setting the target, all the partners should be involved and commonly discussed.
* Please bear in mind that the output indicators must be reported at the end of the project competition. This means that all the outputs must be completed by the end of the project implementation period, and not during the sustainability period. No contribution from the sustainability shall be considered.
* The result indicators shall be reported within 6 months or 1 year from the date of the project completion (for more details, please check the *Guidance on monitoring Programme indicators for Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria).*

**Before setting the indicators targets, please read and consider the *Guidance on monitoring Programme indicators for Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria,* the section dedicated to your indicators. Also, please have in mind that failure of meeting the targets during implementation, if the project is selected for financing, may result in financial corrections / decommitment of the project’s budget.**

Project Management and Communication (application form Section C.7)

Projects need to establish a clear management concept including a decision-making structure - a project steering group (more details regarding the project steering group are included in the *Annex.AG\_H Template Partneship Agreement*). This group will steer and monitor project progress and, in case of unforeseen situations or risks, to adjust project implementation and find adequate mitigation measures.

Furthermore, projects should set clear provisions for quality management, internal communication as well as reporting procedures at the level of partners towards the LP.

The general approach to communication should describe how communication objectives and activities as defined in the individual work packages across the work plan will help to achieve the project’s overall result(s). In this section of the application form it should become clear which role communication plays in the project and how it is approached by the partnership. The description should explain which channels will be used by whom in which way for what reason. It is recommended to define this general approach before defining concrete communication objectives and activities in the thematic work packages.

You must take into consideration the mandatory communication requirements at project level included in the Communication Starter Kit, such us:

* Designating a communication officer at project level
* Organising an opening conference of the project or a public promotion event, in compliance with the conditions set by art. 36 paragraph 4, letter e) of EU Regulation 1059/2021
* Creating a Facebook/Twitter page and/or a dedicated website, if the case
* Promoting at least 2 press articles during the life of the project
* Promoting at least 5 photos reflecting ‘’before and after’’ concept of the project
* Ensuring promotion on social media of a minimum 2 key life moments of your project.

Details on how to approach the communication activities at project level are included in the documents *Communication Starter Kit, Go Green!*  *(*<https://interregviarobg.eu/en/project-implementation-manual>) and the *Manual for Visual Identity of the Programme*[[6]](#footnote-6) available at <https://interregviarobg.eu/en/implementation-rules>.

Projectcapitalization and synergies (Part C)

The Programme promotes the capitalizations of the already implemented projects, financed from different sources. Thus, it is expected that the project partners will research and take on board the outputs and the results of the previous projects financed by the Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme, as well as other Interreg Programmes or EU instruments.

Budgetplanning (Part D)

The Programme is committed to simplification and removal of administrative burden. In this respect, the following simplified cost options have been up-taken and **shall be considered during the budget planning phase:**

* Lump sum for project preparation of **14,000 Euro (total value)**
* Lump sum for project closure of **6,500 Euro (total value)**
* Staff costs *-* reimbursed on the basis of a flat rate up to 20% of direct costs
* Travel and accommodation costs – reimbursed on a bases of a flat rate of up to 15% of eligible direct staff costs.
* Office and administrative costs - reimburses on a bases of a flat rate of up to 15% of eligible direct staff costs.
* Real costs (services, equipment, infrastructure and works) + the real costs for project preparation, on the conditions mentioned by the guide.

Tips and tricks for budget planning – Please read carefully the information below when planning the project budget!

A strict correlation between the financial resources allocated within the project, the activities foreseen and the expected results shall be ensured!

For details please see the Invitation for submission of the full application, section *dedicated to Eligibility of expenditures.*

1. For hints you can check <https://www.interact-eu.net/library?title=&field_fields_of_expertise_tid=43&field_networks_tid=All#1735-info-sheet-interreg-project-quality-characteristics> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://interregviarobg.eu/en/implementation-rules> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://interregviarobg.eu/en/implementation-rules> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Observing the information included in Commission Notice, Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027 (2021/C373/01) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XC0916(03)&from=EN), Section B.2., page 50 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As mentioned in the Commission Notice, Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027 (2021/C373/01), <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/23a24b21-16d0-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>, page 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://interregviarobg.eu/en/implementation-rules> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)