

Assessment criteria and links to application form

Project applications and assessment in European Territorial Cooperation Programmes

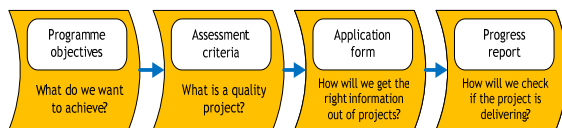
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The scope

1. The process
2. What is assessment?
3. Core assessment criteria
4. Application and assessment methodology
5. Group work: rethinking the assessment and application questions
6. Assessing the project
7. Links to the reporting process

The process



Purpose of assessment

It filters projects at two stages:

- As the published standards against which projects are assessed: Guide applicants into considering the important issues before application.
- As they set the quality level required: Define and maintain a programme quality standard by providing clear grounds for rejecting weak projects.

Defining assessment criteria

- ⇒ What are you aiming to assess?
- ⇒ Where is the focus in the project assessment?
 - ✓ "command and control" - are we too management oriented;
 - ✓ quality of content and results proposed

Look closely into your assessment criteria!

Core assessment questions

1. Is the project relevant?
2. What will be delivered?
3. Is the project feasible?

Does the project make sense?



Application and assessment methodology

- The way of asking questions (“is it” versus “how is it”)
- Clear difference between questions (what is required in each section, not to repeat answers)
- Coherent terminology (objective, goal, aim)
- User-friendly terminology
- Language issues (both for CB, EN, multiple)
- Overview tools (tables, summaries)
- Space limits
- Technical format

Can we KISS?



Assessment questions - How to ask?

- a) Are the objectives clearly described?
- b) Does the project demonstrate clearly how it will contribute to the programme’s objectives?

- a) Is the project contributing to the achievement of the programme’s objectives?
- b) To what extent is the project contributing to the achievement of the programme’s objectives?



Assessment questions - How to ask?

- a) Is there a clear description of results?
- b) Are results clearly defined, realistic and precisely quantified?
- c) To what extent are the proposed results relevant to the achievement of programme’s objectives?

- a) Does a project have a time plan?
- b) Is the time plan realistic and have any potential difficulties and delays been correctly assessed?



Assessment questions - How to ask?

- a) To what extent ...?
- b) In how far does the project ...?
- c) How well ...?
- d) How significant ...?
- e) Is there any evidence that ...?
- f) Is it demonstrated how the project will ...?
- g) What evidence is there that ...?



Application form

- Guidance for applicants (AF, AF Manual, Programme Manual)
- Explaining terminology
- Using examples (e.g. what do you mean by innovation)
- Application design (sections)
- Annexes (+/-)



Application questions

1. Justification for the project’s approval
2. How will the project ensure compliance with EU publicity rules?
3. Coherence of the working plan
4. Methodological approach
5. Capitalisation of results
6. Does the project foresee the evaluation?
7. Description of phases



GROUP WORK: Content-related criteria

1. Assessment criteria

- Is everything covered in suggested assessment questions?
- Do you assess something else?
- Would you rephrase some questions?
- Where would you provide additional guidance?

2. Application form

- How to "translate" programme requests into application form questions?
- Do you ask for something else?
- Would you add / rephrase anything?



Relevance

How and why is the project relevant to the programme / programme area?

- ⇒ Background
- ⇒ Target groups
- ⇒ Objectives
- ⇒ Relevance

WHAT? WHY? FOR WHOM?



Contribution / Consistency

How can the project contribute to the wider objectives?

- ⇒ Strategies and policies: Cohesion policy; Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas; national, regional, local strategies and policies; EU policies
- ⇒ Other programmes
- ⇒ Other projects

Q: Why do we need this?

Q: How detailed the information needs to be?



Contribution / Consistency

Example 1 - NWE:

- If and how the project strengthens the economic competitiveness of the programme area in response to the Lisbon Agenda?
- If and how the project increases the environmental sustainability of the programme area in response to the Gothenburg Agenda?
- If and how the project achieves a stronger territorial balance of the programme area by reducing regional disparities reflecting the aim of the EU Cohesion Policy?

Example 2: project



Value !!!

How valuable is the project for the programme area?
Where does it make a difference?

- ⇒ Cooperation element
- ⇒ Innovative approach/character and/or outcomes
- ⇒ Added value



Value – Cooperation element

- ⇒ Need for cooperation
- ⇒ Durability of the cooperation
- ⇒ Value of the cooperation
- ⇒ 4 cooperation criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint financing, joint staffing

INTERREGIONS *winning together* CONTENT-RELATED CRITERIA

Value – Innovative approach

- ⇒ **Innovation** – an effort of one or more individuals to create economic profit through a qualitative change (Joseph Schumpeter) → is something new that makes a difference, that is significantly new with a positive added value, which can be measured or communicated
- ⇒ **Innovative action** – creation or generation of something new or improved (creativity!) → 3 fundamental elements: risk, network, market
- ⇒ **In cooperation programmes**: innovative features, leading to new approaches, methodologies and practices

Q: Could all projects have innovative aspects?

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Value – added value

- ⇒ **Additionality**
- ⇒ **Impact of results**
- ⇒ **Other (Y/N):**
 - In terms of investment
 - In terms of innovation
 - Of the cooperation
 - Of the partnership
 - To the completed projects

MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Q: What else could be an added value of the cooperation project?

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Outcomes

Will the project deliver useful outcomes contributing to the programme's objectives?

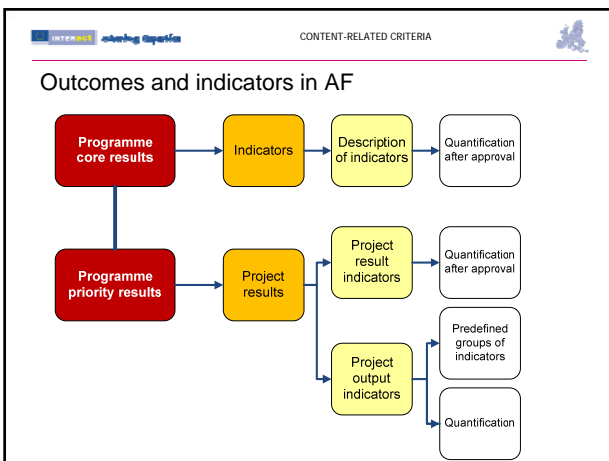
- ⇒ Outcomes
- ⇒ Indicators

Q: Quantitative and/or qualitative indicators?
Q: What to do if the chosen indicators do not correspond with the proposed activities and outcomes?
Q: How to link description of outcomes and indicators in the AF!

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Outcomes and indicators links

Priority result	Project result	Project result indicators
Strengthened international performance of innovation sources and improved links to SMEs	Increased transnational research activity of SME employers in different fields of energy techniques in the project area	Number of entrepreneurs and SME employers taking part in transnational research and development projects carried out by the R&D organisations participating in the project
		Increased amount of transnational research or development projects in the participating R&D organisations designed in co-operation with SMEs



- INTERREGIONS *winning together* CONTENT-RELATED CRITERIA
- ### Example: groups of output indicators
- Guidelines and Manuals
 - Documents for Specific Investment (feasibility studies, technical concepts, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) Territorial Impact Assessments (TIAs), building plans, construction design etc.)
 - Thematic Expertises (including economic analysis; e.g. analysis of the cargo flow in the area of concern, market analysis etc.)
 - Business plans
 - Management Plans (crisis management, management plans for the marine environment, logistics, etc.)
 - ICT-based Supporting Tools (databases, information exchange portals, other Decision Support Systems, etc.)
 - Territorial Development Concepts (strategies, visions, scenarios etc.)
 - Transnational Action Programmes or Plans
 - Branding and Marketing Concepts and Strategies
 - Tourism Products
 - Educational Products (e.g. training programmes or methods, curricula, etc.)
 - Others



Horizontal issues

Are the project activities in line with horizontal issues?

- ⇒ Equal opportunities and non-discrimination
- ⇒ Sustainable development
- ⇒ Area specific - mountain, maritime etc.
- ⇒ Other: human resource development, innovation, information and communication technology

Q: Do we assess this and why?



Example (IE): Equal opportunities

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without
- between persons with dependants and persons without



Example (IE): Sustainable development

- Activities simply comply with environmental regulations.
- Actions that clean up the mess from past activities or actions that promote physical regeneration.
- Actions that put in place environmental infrastructure to reduce the negative environmental impact of development activities.
- Actions that help organisations to meet increasing environmental standards.
- Actions that improve the resource efficiency ("eco-efficiency") of existing activities.
- Actions that support, as well as encourage, new types of activity or behaviour using fewer environmental resources, or producing less pollution, than existing activities in the area.



Environmental issues	+	-	o	Explanation
Biodiversity, flora and fauna				
Population and human health				
Soil				
Water				
Air and climatic factors				
Material assets				
Cultural heritage				
Landscape				
Land take				
Energy efficiency				
Use of renewable and non-renewable resources				
Adaptation to climate change				
Transport demands, accessibility and mobility				



IMPLEMENTATION-RELATED CRITERIA



Partnership / Management

Is the partnership competent to deliver envisaged outcomes?

- ⇒ Partners and partnership as a whole
- ⇒ Project management (structures, procedures)

Q: How much information is needed to assess if it is the right partnership for the proposed project?

Q: How detailed should be the description of management procedures and structures to be certain that the partnership will work well together?



Budget

Is the budget requested in reasonable relation with proposed outcomes?

- ⇒ Budget lines
- ⇒ Budget summary and specifics

Q: How detailed should be the budget?

- (1) *detailed budget → we can see everything;*
- (2) *summary tables → what can we assess then?*



Budget

Is the budget requested in reasonable relation with proposed outcomes?

1. Budget summary and specifics

- Per WP, per partner, per period, per budget line
- Separately for: ERDF, IPA and/or ENPI partners and partners outside programme area or EU
- Budget for activities implemented outside EU or eligible area
- Budget explanation / justification - if needed



Budget

Is the budget requested in reasonable relation with proposed outcomes?

2. Budget lines

- **Normal budget lines:** staff costs, external experts and services, travel and accommodation, meetings & events, promotion & publication, equipment & infrastructure, other (e.g. insurance) & financial charges and guarantees, overheads, general costs
- **Additional budget lines:** in-kind contributions, revenues, VAT, ineligible costs



Budget – level of details

- Easier to have detailed budgets in CB than TN
- More general budgets → easier to change
- Detailed budgets → easier to assess
- Less de-commitment risk when planning detailed
- Difficult to plan in big transnational partnerships
- Taking into account different cost levels in different countries



Budget

Danger signs before approval:

- Unrealistic spread of funds across project lifetime
- Uneven split of funds across partnership
- Partners not contributing co-financing
- Excessive staff costs
- Excessive external expert costs
- Unrealistic figures

Possible consequences:

- De-commitment
- Over-budgeting
- Risk of ineligible expenditure
- Threat to value for money



Communication

Will the project be effectively communicated?

1. Communication strategy

- List project's communication *objectives*. What is communication going to help you achieve?
- List the main *target audiences* of the project and their main messages.
- List the main *communication tools and actions* planned for the different target groups during the course of the project.
- List the *evaluation tools* which will be used to sustain the effectiveness and intensity of both internal and external communication (e.g. questionnaires, web-statistics etc).

Q: Described in the AF or as a separate annex?

Q: Do you encourage the use of innovative and progressive communication techniques?



Communication

Will the project be effectively communicated?

2. Consistency of communication activities

- Project theme
- Target groups needs
- Proposed activities
- Proposed outcomes

Q: Should be the target groups the same as in relevance or somebody needs to be added? General public?

Q: Could excessive communication also be a problem? ?



Other categories in application forms

What?

- Project evaluation
- Description of partner's resources (staff, techniques, logistics)
- Project's contribution to the bilingualism
- Description of complementary activities

Why?

- All project data in one document
- No extra checking
- Data for monitoring purposes (input indicators)