

Interreg Knowledge Fair 5-7 March 2024, Riga (Latvia)

Decision making and conflict of interest

Besiana Ninka, Mihaela Florea | Interact | 05.03.2024

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Welcome to the Interreg Knowledge Fair

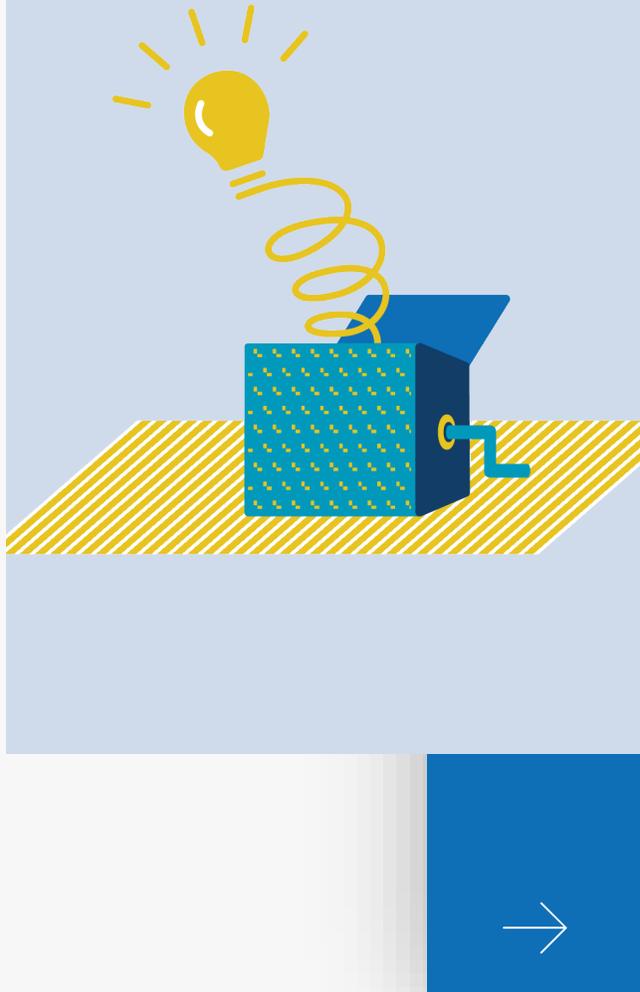
This is the **second edition** of the Interreg Knowledge Fair, it is still a new approach for us.

The **Conference Support** stand in the Exhibition Room is a one-stop shop for your questions.

At the end of this session, you are asked to rate the **session experience**.

At the end of the event, you will be asked your **overall feedback**.





Our aim for today's session

How to ensure the selection of relevant projects in a fair and transparent process?

How to establish a consistent policy framework and a comprehensive set of instruments to avoid Col?

Outline of the session

01

Intro and setting the scene

02

Decision-making and Col

03

Programmes approaches

04

Joint reflection and discussion

05

Outlook

Ground rules

- Be active – contribute, ask and share your thoughts and experience;
- This is an open exchange;
- Be curious and patient with the colleagues;
- There is no right or wrong approach; and
- All questions and inputs are relevant for the our exchange.



The selection process: key steps



The selection process: potential risks

1/3

Stage	Potential risk	Initial risk assessment	Adverse consequences
Guidance to applicants	Biased view on topics, guidance shaped by specific regional interests, "human factor"	High	Specific calls can lead to preferences for topics in the interest of MC members

The selection process: potential risks

2/3

Stage	Potential risk	Initial risk assessment	Adverse consequences
Quality assessment	Biased view of assessors (internal, external) driven by personal interests, missing four eyes principle	High	Biased view in the assessment could lead to the selection of preferential projects driven by personal interest of individuals or small groups

The selection process: potential risks

3/3

Stage	Potential risk	Initial risk assessment	Adverse consequences
Selection in the MC	The selection is in mostly linked to the assessment results – thus Col inherent to assessment will be transported to decision-making	High	JS might not want to have risky projects, thus recommendations for approval might favour well-known applicants, new applicants with innovative but difficult approaches might have lower chances for approval



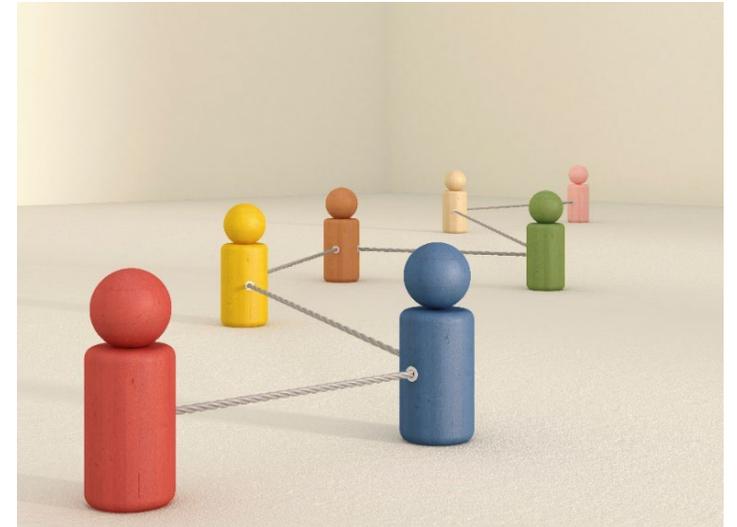
Decision making & Conflicts of interest.

Oana Mantog, Team Leader, Joint Audit Directorate for Cohesion

What is conflict or interest (Col)?

A conflict of interest exists where the *impartial and objective exercise of the functions* of a *person involved in implementing the EU budget* is **compromised** for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect **personal interest**.

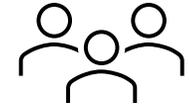
**objectively perceived*



See Article 61 of the Financial Regulation.

Who is concerned in shared management?

- **National, regional and local** authorities



Examples:

- ✓ A head of MA who is at the same time in the board of a beneficiary (even public)
- ✓ A member of a monitoring committee selecting the projects for which his daughter in law offers consultancy
- ✓ An external expert evaluating grant applications he previously wrote
- ✓ A staff member of a control and certification department verifying expenditures from the company of his/her partner
- ✓ A member of the Government who has the power to influence the selection of operations and who has shares in a company applying for funding

When are we in conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest can arise even if the person does not actually benefit from the situation

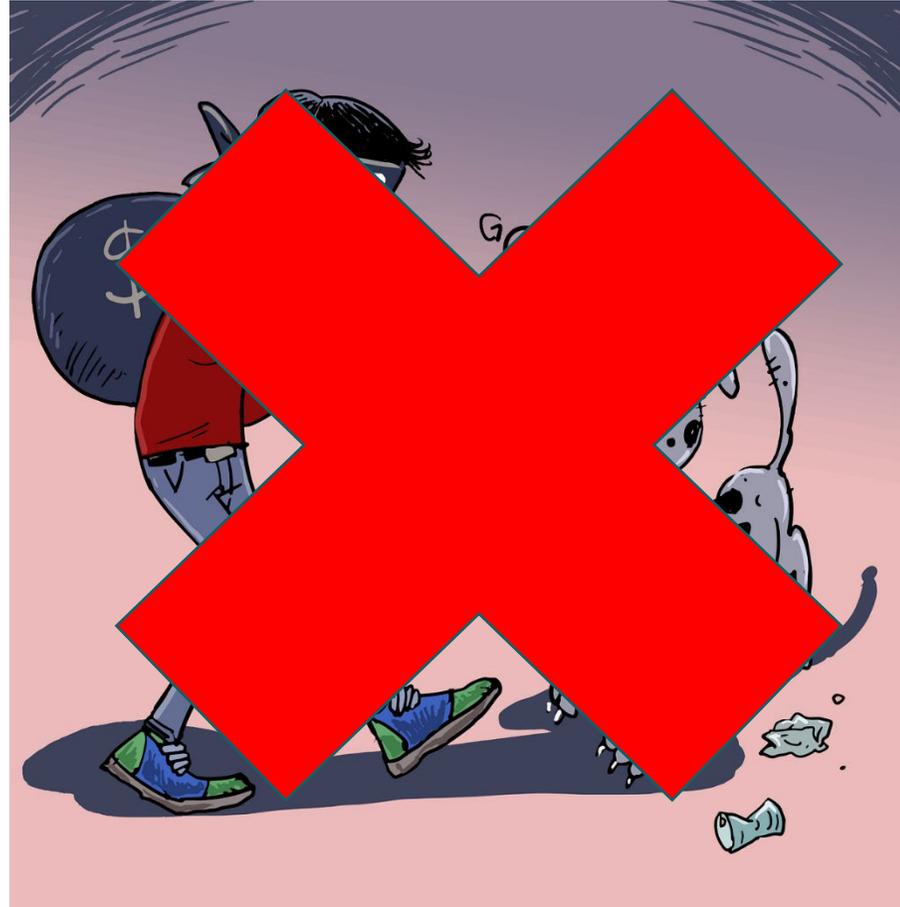


Image by [Azmi Talib](#) from [Pixabay](#)

A mere link with beliefs, views, opinions or preferences of the person does not usually or automatically constitute a personal interest (but each case may be different from the other).

What to do? Programme level.

- ✓ *Raise awareness. Explain. Set the tone.*
- ✓ *Set in place policies, rules and procedures.*
- ✓ *Other measures (use Arachne)*



Obligations when a risk of Col arises

Reporting a risk of Col to a hierarchical superior



Confirming in writing by the superior whether Col exists

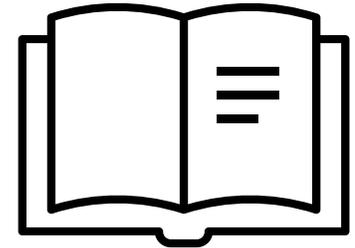
Ceasing all activity in the matter + taking any other action in line with applicable law

Examples of measures in MS

- ✓ *Declaration of interest, Declaration of assets*
- ✓ *Abstention from voting, Refrain from participation in debate, expression of opinion*
- ✓ *Guidance to avoid conflict of interest*
- ✓ *Ethics referent within the Managing Authority*
- ✓ *Whistleblowing system*
- ✓ *Code of conduct for Programme staff*
- ✓ *Managers in Government not allowed to own more than 10% in companies*
- ✓ *Companies who have owners managers of Government – excluded from public procurements*
- ✓ *Obligation for those who have shares in a company and then take a job in Government to make the necessary arrangements*

Reading list

- [Commission Notice Guidance on the avoidance and management of conflicts of interest](#)
- [OECD 'Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Sector', OECD Guidelines and Country Experiences \(2003\)](#)
- [OECD 'Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Sector', a toolkit \(2005\)](#)
- [OLAF Identifying conflicts of interests in public procurement procedures for structural actions](#)
- [OECD \(2009\), Revolving doors, accountability and transparency](#)



Slido time #3431110



Thank you for your attention



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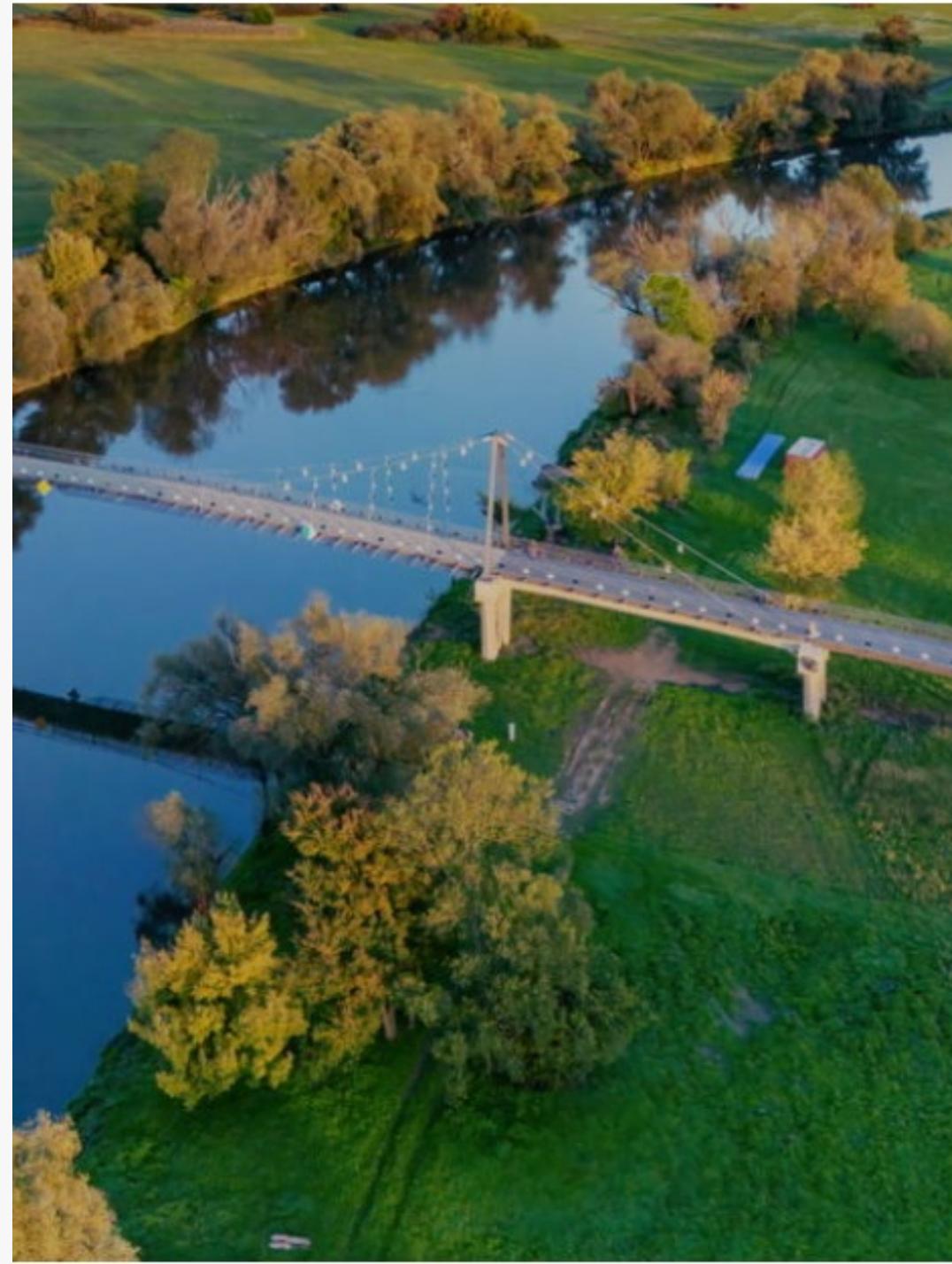
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Programme approach

Andrea Kasanicka Kostolna
Andrej Batyás,

Head of Joint Secretariat
Interreg Slovakia – Austria



CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME

INTERREG VI A SLOVAKIA-AUSTRIA

Andrea Kasanická Kostolná / JSP-Vienna

Andrej Batyás JS Bratislava

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> **Interreg III-A AT-SK**
2004-2006



> **Interreg IV-A AT-SK**
2007-2013



> **Interreg V-A SK-AT**
2014-2020



> **Interreg VI-A SK-AT**
2021-2027



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Programming area



Sources: Centropemap, Openstreetmap
Cartography and geoinformation: www.mecca-consulting.at
December 2021

- Bratislava Region
- Trnava Region
- Nordburgenland
- Niederösterreich - Süd
- Sankt Pölten
- Waldviertel
- Weinviertel
- Wiener Umland/Nordteil
- Wiener Umland/Südteil
- Wien

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Programming period 2021 – 2027

Allocation

69,3 mil. EUR

ERDF

55,5 mil. EUR

Priorities

4

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Programming period 2014 – 2020

Allocation

89,3 mil. EUR

ERDF

75,9 mil. EUR

Priorities

5

Applications
submitted

84

Projects
contracted
(without TA)

47

Project
partners

130

Call for
proposals
launched

8

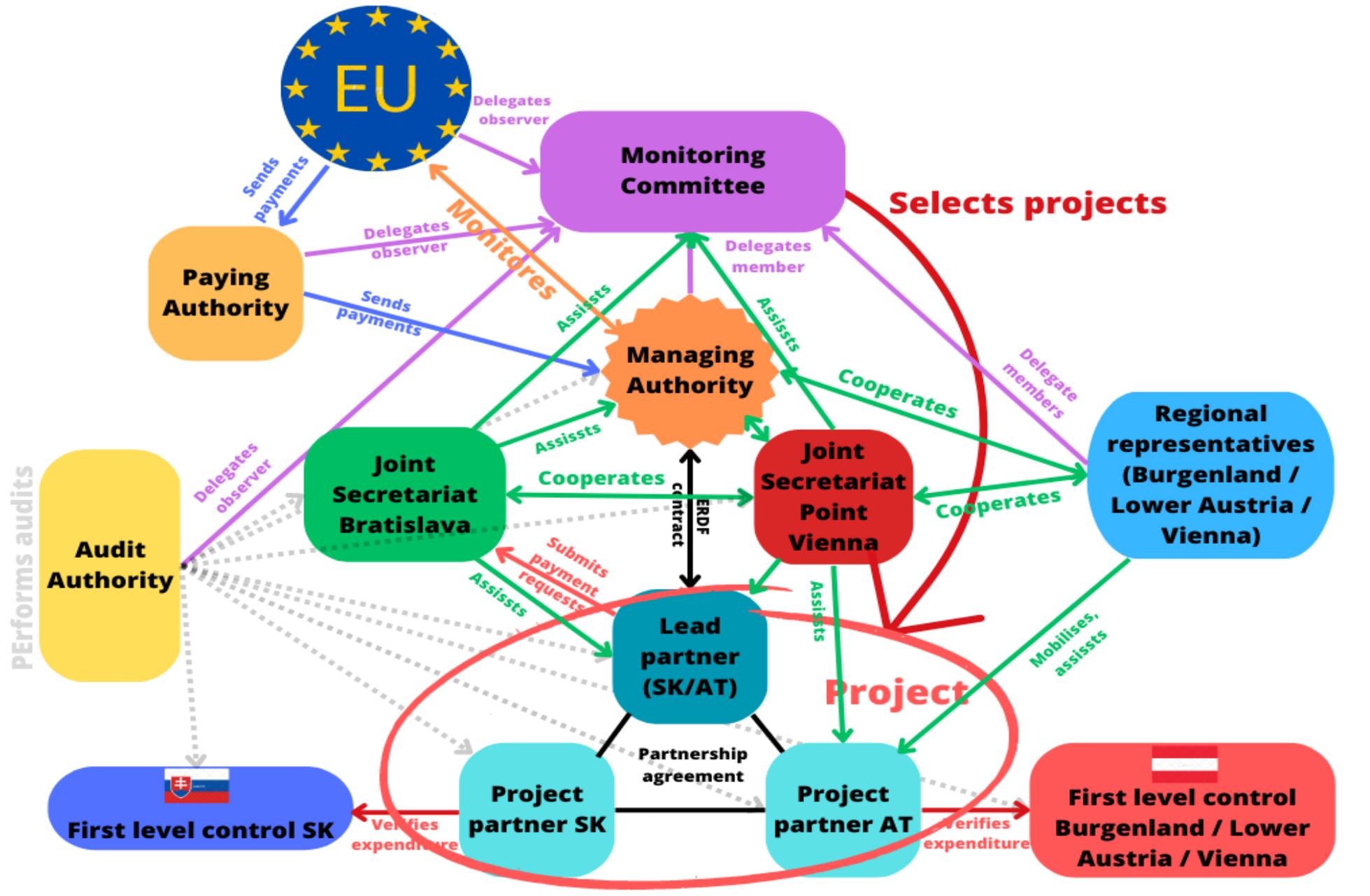
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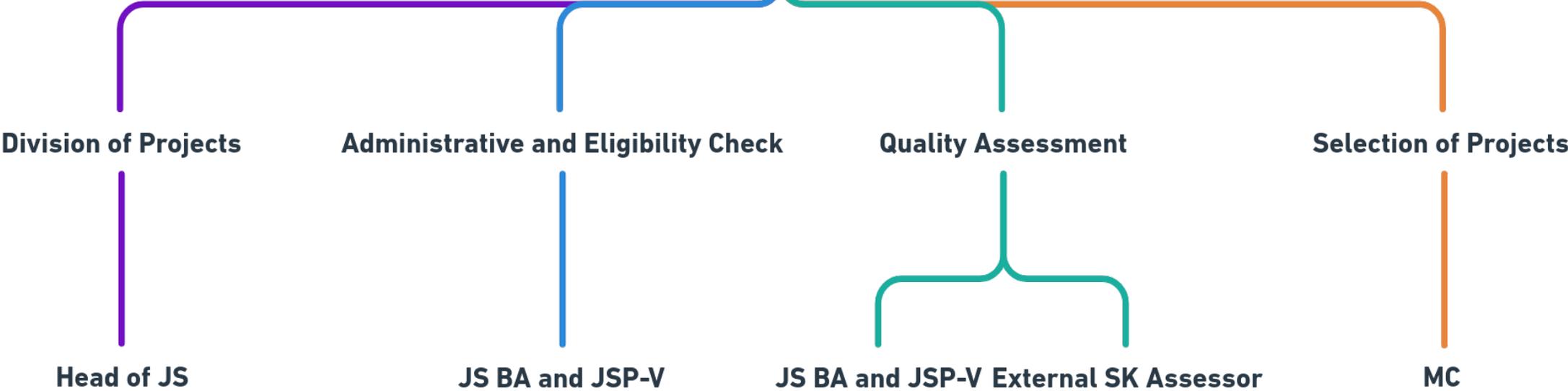
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Diagram managing structures



Assessment procedure



Division of Projects

Administrative and Eligibility Check

Quality Assessment

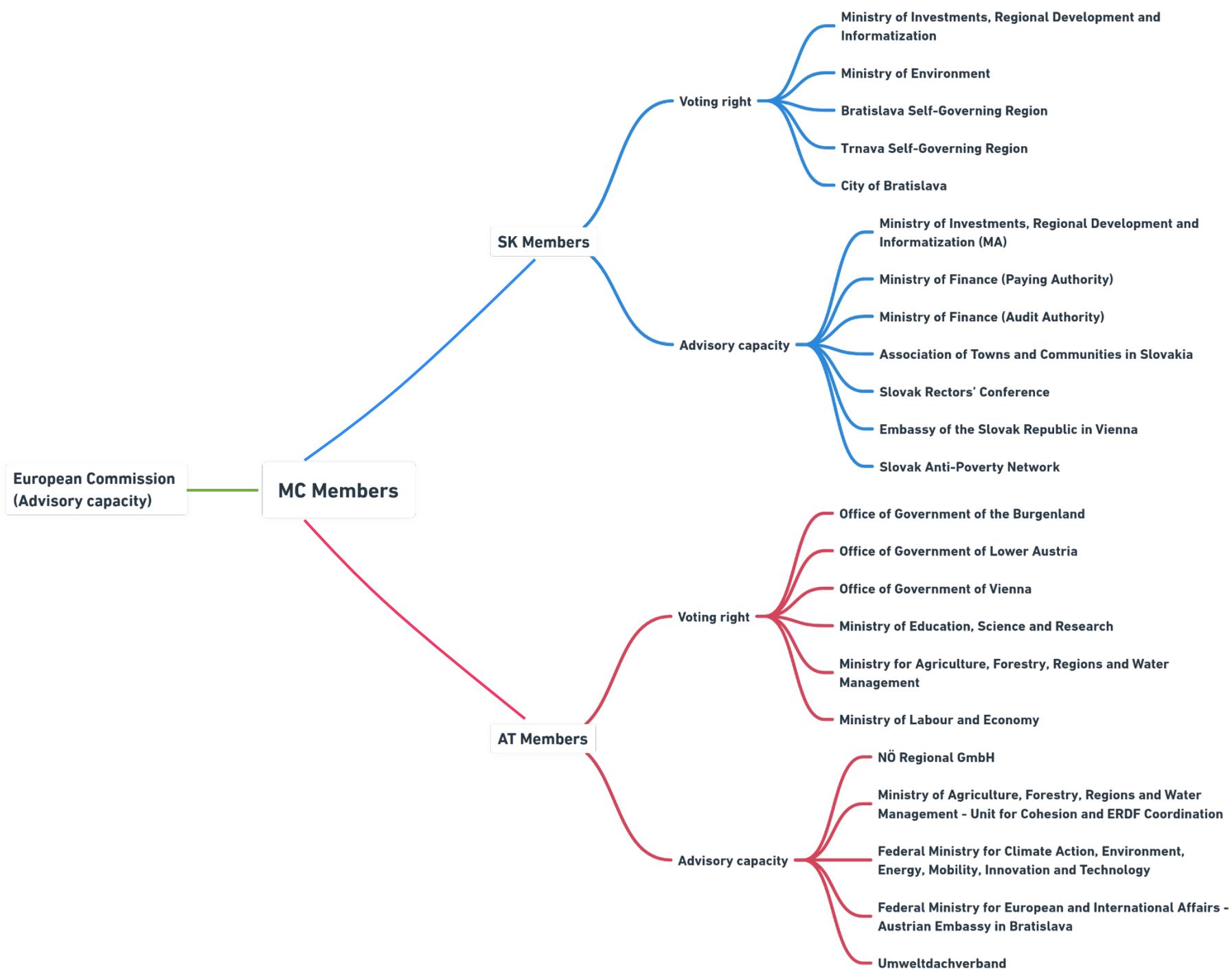
Selection of Projects

Head of JS

JS BA and JSP-V

JS BA and JSP-V External SK Assessor

MC



Monitoring Committee decision: SK-AT case study

- Nominations: members of advisory capacities such as the representatives of the embassy
- MC meetings set up: location and rotation principle
- Trust: when assessing and selecting project MA/JS ensure the process is transparent
- Ranking having rather low importance
- Rules of procedure: MC decision *by consensus* needs time (MC pre-meeting if necessary)
- Implement what suits your programme the best: such as „put on hold procedure“

Put on hold

Consensus

Rules of procedure

Trust

Transparency

assessment process, MC pre-meetings etc.

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Project examples

ROBOCOOP



B4B



NEMONET



BIG LING



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Project examples

VYSOMARCH



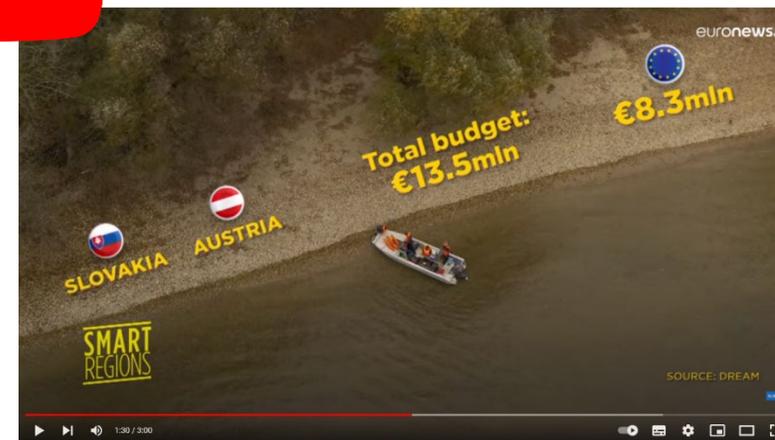
NEMONET



ROBOCOOP



DREAM SK-AT



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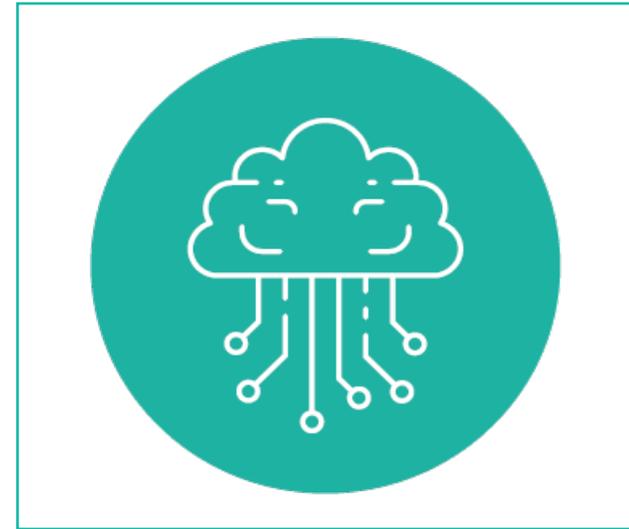
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Priority 1

Priority 1: A more competitive and smarter SK-AT border region

1.1 Promoting advanced technology, research and innovation capacities

7,4 mil. €



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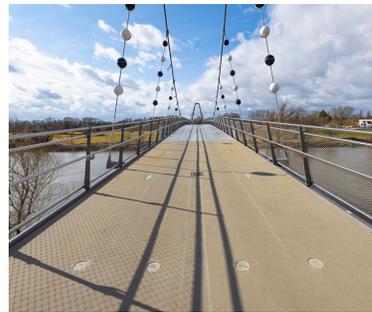
Priority 2

Priority 2: A greener SK-AT border region

2.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience

2.2 Improving nature and environmental protection, green infrastructure and preserving biodiversity

16 mil. €



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Priority 3

Priority 3: A more social SK-AT border region

3.1 Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning

3.2 Ensuring equal access to healthcare and fostering the resilience of healthcare systems

3.3 Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

21,1 mil. €



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Priority 4

Priority 4: A better cooperating SK-AT border region

4.1 Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens

4.2 Promoting people-to-people actions to build trust among the population

7,2 mil. €



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Interreg SK-AT is an EU programme for funding crossborder projects on innovation, culture, environment and transport

Government Administration · Bratislava · 129 followers



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5 Posts 28 Followers 1 Following

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Interreg Slovakia 🇸🇰 - Austria 🇦🇹 is a Cross-border Cooperation Programme funding #smart #green #social #cooperating projects



<https://www.sk-at.eu/>

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Thank you for your attention!

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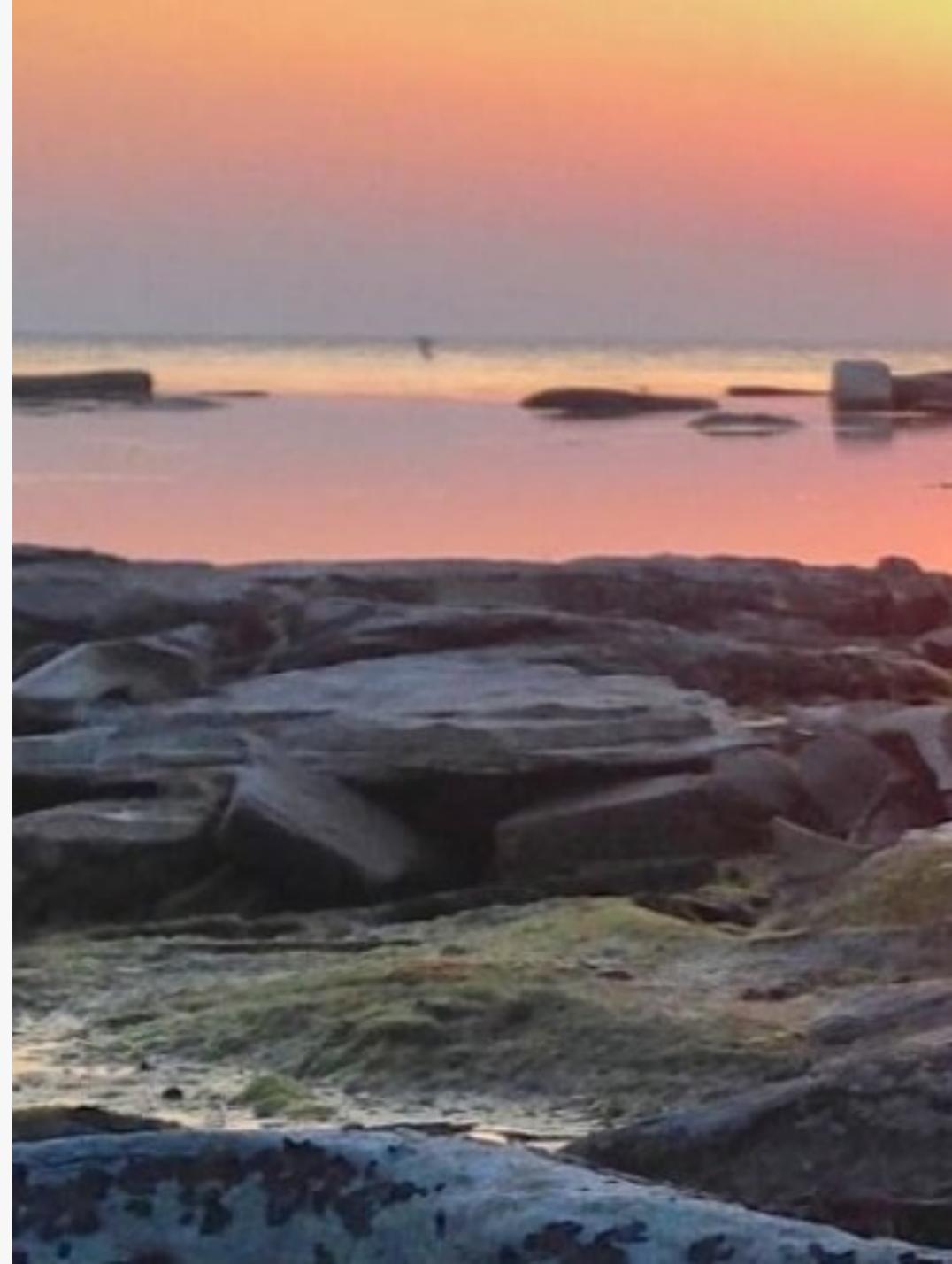
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Programme approach

Merike Niitepõld

Head of Managing Authority
Interreg Central Baltic



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Central Baltic Programme

Central Baltic 2021-2027

Decision-making, Conflict of interest

Interreg Knowledge Fair, Merike Niitepõld,
5.3.2024



Basics in Central Baltic

Assessment methodology in Programme Manual

Scores and assessment in 2007-2013 and 2014-2020

Total score (based on merit enforced) in 2021-2027

Tandem assessment by two JS colleagues

MC (incl social partners) discussion and decision

MA administrative decision



Decision-making made effective

2007-2013 experience

➤ 2014-2020 MC training

- ❖ Programme content
- ❖ Assessment methodology
- ❖ Division of tasks between JS and MC
- ❖ Repeated at every MC decision meeting

Decision-making made effective

2014-2020 experience

➤ 2021-2027 MC training

- ❖ Programme content gone through in person for the first time ever
- ❖ Assessment methodology
- ❖ Division of tasks between JS and MC
- ❖ Not repeated before every MC decision meeting, but...?

Conflict of interest

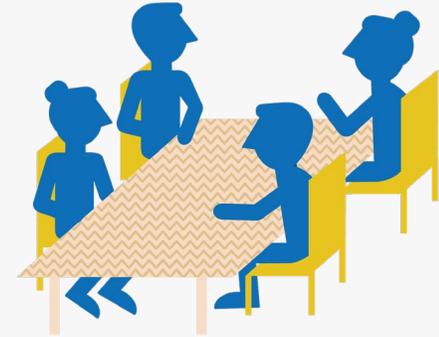
Rules of Procedure (reference to agenda point)

Declaration of Confidentiality and impartiality

Going through at the beginning of each meeting

Recording in minutes

Floor is open for joint reflection



- What are the main challenges faced during the decision-making process?
- How do you ensure the selection of relevant projects in a fair and transparent process?
- How is the ECA recommendation “**to prioritise and award support to projects by ranking them based on merit**” aligned with the decision-making process in your programmes?

Key points to establish a comprehensive system

1. **Start**
with a clear
definition of
Col

2. **Implement**
a short test
in order to
identify
apparent
and
potential
conflict of
interest

3. **Develop** a
checklist
for
identifying
risk areas
related to
conflict of
interest

4. **Adopt** a
Code of
conduct in
the MC

5. **Include**
rules to
conflict of
interest in
the RoP of
the MC

6. **Conduct**
brief
training for
JS and MC
members

Thank you for being here!

Your opinion matters to us.

Please take a few minutes to provide us with feedback to help us improve our services.

Log into the **Whova app** and tell us what you think in the **session Q&A, from 1 (bad) to 5 (amazing)**
Please check which session you are in!

You can also talk to us at the Conference Support stand in the networking area.

