SOUTH EAST EUROPE
Transnational Cooperation Programme

South East Europe (SEE)

Programme Manual

Version 1.1 September 2008

1st Call for project proposals

European Territorial Co-operation 2007 – 2013

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Glossary

Beneficiary

As indicated in art. 2 of the Reg. (EC) 1083/06, the beneficiary is an operator, body or firm, whether public or private, responsible for initiating and/or implementing operations. In the context of aid schemes under Article 87 of the Treaty, beneficiaries are public or private firms carrying out an individual action and receiving public aid.

Candidate countries

This status currently applies to Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Croatia is the candidate country with whom accession negotiations have started.

Control system

A system for validation of ERDF expenditures at a national level (it is the Member State responsibility to set it up)

Controllers

Private or public bodies responsible for the ERDF control activities as designated by the Member States

Decommitment

In the SEE Transnational Programme, if the entire sum committed for the year N has not been paid to the final beneficiaries and certified by the 31st December of the year N+3, the unspent funds are deducted from the sums initially planned. This rule will be applied until 2010 whilst from 2010 till 2013 the rule N+2 will be applied. In order to keep the programme financial performance on schedule, decomittment may be applied to approved projects that do not respect the spending timetable. Specific information can be found in section 3.4.10.

European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

From 1 January 2007 onwards, as part of the reform of EC assistance instruments, the MEDA, TACIS and various other programmes have been replaced by a single instrument – the ENPI. The ENPI will provide grants for local development projects that target sustainable development and link to EU policies and standards in countries that are direct neighbours of the enlarged EU. This will involve both EU Member States and partner countries. Eligible countries covered by the ENPI that belong to the SEE Programme are the Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The ERDF is one of the two Structural Funds and it is intended to help to reduce imbalances between regions of the Community. The Fund grants financial assistance for development projects in the EU regions. In terms of financial resources, the ERDF is by far the largest of the EU's Structural Funds.

Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

IPA aims at providing targeted assistance to countries which are candidates and potential candidates for membership of the EU. IPA supersedes the previously existing pre-accession instruments, Phare, ISPA, SAPARD, Turkey instrument, and CARDS, thus uniting under a single legal basis all pre accession assistance. Eligible countries covered by the IPA that belong to the SEE Transnational Programme are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Partners

All beneficiaries that commit themselves to implement a project approved under the SEE Transnational Programme. ***ERDF Partner:*** a beneficiary, as defined above, that receives ERDF co-financing and complies with ERDF rules. ***IPA Partner:*** a beneficiary, as defined above, that receives IPA co-financing and complies with IPA rules. ***ENPI Partner:*** a beneficiary, as defined above, that receives ENPI co-financing and complies with ENPI rules.

Partners can be further defined in relation to their role and responsibility within the project partnership:

- Lead Partner (LP or ERDF LP)

The Lead Partner is chosen among the Project Partners and has full financial and administrative ERDF responsibility for the entire duration of the project. The LP is also responsible for the proper reporting of progress during project implementation to the JTS, as stipulated in the Subsidy Contract. In principle, the Lead Partner has functional (coordination of the project's activities) and financial responsibilities related to ERDF funds. In the case of projects co-funded by IPA or ENPI, there is the possibility to split the functional and financial responsibility.

- Financial IPA Lead Partner

The financial IPA Lead Partner is chosen among the partners of the same IPA country. This partner would then be responsible for the part of the joint project taking place on the candidate/potential candidate country with IPA funds. The IPA Lead Partner signs the IPA grant contract.

- Financial ENPI Lead Partner

A project that has one or more partners from ENPI countries should identify a partner per ENPI country participating in the project to be the financial ENPI Lead Partner. This partner would then be responsible for the part of the joint project taking place in the country with ENPI funds. The ENPI Lead Partner signs the ENPI grant contract.

- Functional Lead Partner (IPA or ENPI)

The functional Lead Partner comes from a non-member state within the programme area, chosen among the Project Partners. The functional LP submits the EoI/AF and coordinates project contents related tasks and duties within the partnership. It is also responsible for the proper reporting of progress to the JTS, during project implementation, as stipulated in the Subsidy Contract. The functional Lead Partner has the functional responsibilities (coordination of the project's activities) while financial responsibilities are limited only to the IPA/ENPI funds contracted for the project in its own country.

- Project Partner (PP)

Other entities that, in addition to the ERDF LP, IPA LPs, ENPI LPs, and functional Lead Partner commit themselves to implement a project awarded by the SEE Monitoring Committee and sign a Partnership Agreement.

- 10% Project Partner

According to article 21 of Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006, the ERDF partners can finance the expenditures of a partner, for up to 10% of the ERDF project's budget (see also 3.4.8).

- Observer Partner

Any actor invited by the project beneficiaries to take part in the project in an observant role or with advisory capacity. These actors are referred as "non financing partners" in the SEE OP, or "Observer Partners", and do not contribute to the implementation of the projects in terms of financial contributions. However, the project is asked to lay down the involvement of observers in the Application Form and have them sign an observer declaration. Please check also section 4.1.1

Partnership Agreement

The Partnership Agreement is a legal document signed by all beneficiaries (Lead and Project Partners), which contains a clear definition of the responsibilities among the partners and a framework for efficient project implementation and governance. The Partnership Agreement allows the functional Lead Partner to extend the arrangements of the Subsidy Contract to the level of each partner. It is the responsibility of the partnership to define the contents of the Partnership Agreement as the programme is providing only an exemplificative template.

Potential Candidate Countries

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, are potential candidate countries.

Project

The activity for which funding is being sought under a particular priority. Projects are also referred to as "operations".

Subsidy Contract

It is the contract between the Joint Technical Secretariat (on behalf of the Managing Authority) and the ERDF Lead Partner (and functional Lead Partner if any). It determines the rights and responsibilities of the ERDF and/ or functional Lead Partner and the Managing Authority, the scope of activities to be carried out, terms of ERDF funding, and the requirements for ERDF reporting and financial control.

Grant Contract (for IPA partners)

It is the contract between the relevant Contracting Authority and the Financial IPA Lead Partner. It determines the rights and responsibilities of the Financial IPA Lead Partner and the relevant Contracting Authority, the scope of the activities to be carried out, terms of IPA funding and the requirements for IPA reporting and financial control.

Verification

This is the process of ERDF control. Verifications to be carried out shall cover administrative, financial, technical and physical aspects of operations as appropriate. Verification shall include the following procedures: administrative verification of each claim received by beneficiaries and on-the-spot verification.

Validation of expenditure

This is the result of verification.

1 Purpose and content of the SEE Programme Manual

1.1 Purpose

The major challenge in the management and implementation of transnational cooperation programmes is to achieve a common understanding amongst a large number of programme partners. In order to reach a common understanding it is important to develop detailed guidelines and clarifications on issues of the operational programme which are of interest to stakeholders and potential project applicants. The SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007 – 2013 is characterised by the integrated use of Structural Funds, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. As a consequence, implementation provisions for the projects have been, as far as possible, harmonised.

All information included in this manual is based on the ERDF Regulations which are applicable to all applicants. Where different rules apply to IPA or ENPI applicants, this is clearly indicated.

The purpose of the SEE Programme Manual (SEE PM) is to provide stakeholders and potential project applicants with appropriate and high-quality information about the programme, the options and conditions for the development of their project ideas into full-fledged project proposals and the assessment and selection procedures for proposals. The SEE PM does not replicate the operational programme but adds depth and crispness to its content.

The SEE PM is one of the main programme documents and a major component of the Application Pack.

Please note that the present version of the manual includes the provisions and other elements which are mainly relevant for the 1st call for proposals. The outlined rules and procedures (i.e. eligibility of partners, financial instruments, etc.) may change slightly for the next calls for proposals.

1.2 What does the SEE Programme Manual not cover?

The SEE PM does not contain:

- the timeframe and other specific information on the call for proposals – these can be found in the **call for proposals announcement** and on the **Programme's website**;
- the templates used to fill in the detail of your project proposal in order to participate in a call and be assessed for funding – these are the **Expression of Interest (EoI)** and the **Application Form (AF)**;
- the practical information on how to fill in the documents for the calls for proposals (EoI and AF) – this piece of information can be found in the **Applicants' Guidelines**;
- information on the obligations and duties of ERDF/ functional Lead Partners and MA throughout the implementation of the project – can be found in the draft **Subsidy Contract**;
- any further relevant information at a **national level**.

All the above mentioned information/documents are available in the Application Pack for EoI and/or Application Pack for AF.

Information on the management and implementation of approved projects will be available in the **Implementation Manual**.

2 General programme information

2.1 Understanding the scope and purpose of transnational cooperation in South East Europe

The global objective of the SEE Transnational Programme is **the improvement of the territorial, economic and social integration process and contribution to cohesion, stability and competitiveness through the development of transnational partnerships and joint actions on matters of strategic importance**.

This global objective is supported by three specific objectives, which aim at:

- facilitating innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge economy and information society by concrete cooperation action and visible results;
- improving the attractiveness of regions and cities, taking into account sustainable development, physical knowledge accessibility and environmental quality by integrated approaches and concrete cooperation action and visible result;
- fostering integration by supporting balanced capacities for transnational territorial cooperation at all levels.

The global and specific objectives of the SEE Programme will be pursued through five Priority Axes (Innovation, Environment, Accessibility, Sustainable Growth Areas and Technical Assistance), which contribute differently to these objectives.

The SEE Programme supports projects which have a clear transnational focus, high quality partnerships and with appropriate transferable outputs/outcomes.

Applicants should be aware that the evolution of the transnational cooperation from the Community Initiative (INTERREG) to the mainstream calls for an increase in the effectiveness of the operations that will be co-financed. Plain networking exercises or stand-alone feasibility studies (i.e. without a clear link to the financial instrument that will support the subject of the study) will be no longer be taken into consideration.

It is important that projects demonstrate a clear need for transnational support and that the problem to be tackled has a clear transnational impact. Operations supporting local, national or cross-border actions only are recommended to apply for other instruments.

2.2 Programme's Priority Axes and Areas of Interventions

Detailed descriptions of each Priority Axis and the areas of interventions complemented by a number of practical project examples and indicative beneficiaries, are to be found in the SEE Operational Programme and in the Annex 1 of this Programme Manual.

The Priority Axes should not be considered as discreet entities, they follow an integrated approach and show many interfaces. In practice, applications may be closely aligned to one Area of Intervention only or may offer relevance for more than one priority axis. In the latter case applicants

have to consider which priority axis and Area of Intervention best matches the project's focus and apply under that Priority Axis/Area of Intervention only.

2.3 Role of the different management bodies of the programme

Chapter 7 of the OP, the roles of the transnational and national bodies responsible for the management and implementation of the SEE Transnational Programme are outlined as follows:

- Monitoring Committee (MC)

The overall tasks of the Monitoring Committee are to ensure the quality, effectiveness and accountability of the programme operations, and to select projects for funding.

- Managing Authority (MA)

The Managing Authority bears the overall legal responsibility for the management and implementation of the SEE OP.

- Certifying Authority (CA)

The main tasks of the Certifying Authority are to draw up and submit to the Commission certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment and receive payments from the Commission.

- Audit Authority (AA)

The Audit Authority is responsible for the tasks set out by article 62 of the Reg. (EC) 1083/2006. The Audit Authority is assisted by a Group of Auditors comprising of a representative from each of the Member States participating in the Operational Programme. Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries are not required to participate in the Groups of Auditors. However, they may send an observer in order to gain experience in this field.

The Audit Authority and the auditors appointed in the Transnational Group of Auditors shall be independent of the management and control system of the programme.

- Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) :

The Joint Technical Secretariat is an internationally staffed management unit which is in charge of the day to day management of the programme. It supports the Managing Authority, Monitoring Committee and Audit Authority in programme coordination and implementation.

The Joint Technical Secretariat's tasks are set out in section 7.1.5 of the OP.

- SEE Contact Points (SCP)

SEE Contact Points are formed and organised in each partner state, which facilitate the effective representation the programme in each SEE Programme country and supports the development of potential transnational projects.

- National Coordination (NC)

Each partner state establishes a National Committee or corresponding national procedures in accordance with its institutional structure. This facilitates the involvement of regional and local authorities, relevant sectoral authorities and institutions, non-governmental organisations and any other socio-economic and institutional partner considered relevant by the concerned partner state. NCs are not entitled to pre-select project applications, as project selection is reserved for the Monitoring Committee's consideration.

- Contracting Authority for IPA

The government of the beneficiary country or the legal person governed by public or private law concluding the contract, or on behalf of which the contract is concluded with the Beneficiary. It is either the European Commission, acting for and on behalf of the beneficiary country, in the case of the centralised management approach (at present this concerns Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) or the Contracting Authority appointed by the government of the beneficiary country, in the case of the decentralised management approach (at present this concerns Croatia).

2.4 Contacts at programme level

In principle, the JTS gives support to potential partners of the SEE Operational Programme on all transnational issues relevant to both the application and implementation phases.

The JTS can be contacted at the following address:

SEE Joint Technical Secretariat

VÁTI Kht.

H-1016 Budapest, Hungary

Gellérthegy utca 30-32

Email: jts@southeast-europe.net

Phone: 0036 1 224 3158

Annex III contains a list of all National Contact Points for the SEE Programme (SCPs).

2.5 Programme area

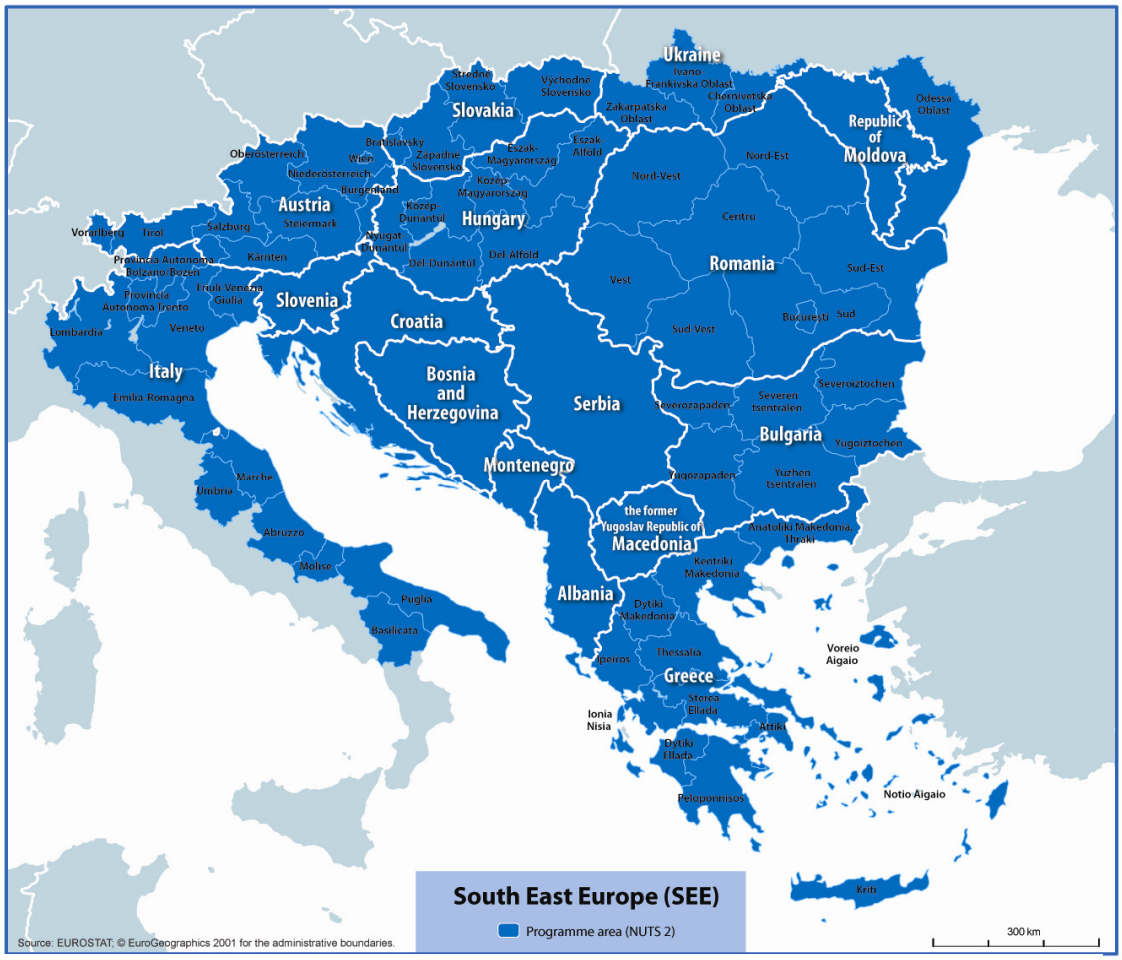


Figure 1 SEE eligible area

The SEE cooperation area is defined by the Commissions Decision of 31 October 2006/769/EC (see Fig. 1).

Partners from IPA countries can participate in projects using IPA funding. They are not allowed to directly apply to and manage ERDF funding (for special eligibility cases see also 3.4.8).

Italian and Ukrainian public authorities or bodies governed by public law which are competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area but which are located outside of it (e.g., ministries) are in effect assimilated, both in terms of rights and of obligations, to partners located in the SEE programme area.

2.6 Financing instruments for MS, IPA countries, ENPI countries

The SEE Operational Programme uses three types of funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) to achieve its objectives.

Financing Instruments for MSs

The Lead and Project Partners from the Members States of the EU will be financed by the ERDF. This being the case a Subsidy Contract will be concluded between the JTS (on behalf of the MA) and the ERDF Lead Partner (and the functional Lead Partner, if any)[1] on behalf of all the Project Partners. The ERDF Lead Partner will be reimbursed for the overall ERDF spent on the basis of an approved and validated claim submission and a regular progress report.

Following the above process the LP will thereafter distribute the ERDF co-financing to the ERDF Project Partners according to claim payment requests and to the relevant Partnership Agreement. The PA being a compulsory document concluded between the LP and Project Partners in line with Regulation (EC) 1080/2006.

The LP will retain only the co-financing ERDF finances corresponding to its own validated expenditure.

Financing Instruments for Non MSs

Sources for funding the participation of non-Member State Project Partners may come from other EU sources (e.g. IPA, ENPI) allocated at programme level. To ensure a properly working financial flow, close cooperation is necessary between the relevant European Commission General Directorates, appropriate Contracting Authorities of the relevant funds, programme management bodies (MA, JTS), the Monitoring Committee and relevant national authorities. The IPA and ENPI contracts will be concluded separately from the ERDF Subsidy Contract with the relevant Contracting Authorities.

IPA funds

IPA funds are provided for the participation of Project Partners from candidate and potential candidate countries (e.g. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia)

Applications should not be submitted to the Contracting Authority in the IPA countries but directly to the SEE JTS by the project Lead Partner. The LP acts for the whole partnership during the regular call for proposals.

The IPA contracts will be concluded with the relevant Contracting Authorities in the IPA countries.

PRAG (Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions) rules will apply to IPA contracts. By derogation, provisions of chapter 6.Grants, points 6.1.1., 6.1.2. , 6.2.1, 6.2.8, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 will not apply entirely to the applications of the IPA partners. Detailed description of the derogations will be available in the Rules of procedure for IPA grants contracts within the framework of transnational cooperation under the South East Europe Programme.

No expenditure can take place before the financing contract is concluded (PRAG, Chapter 6, Point 6.2.5. – non retroactivity). The amounts requested are advanced to the Project Partners and not reimbursed like in the case of ERDF.

If in a project there is more than one partner from the same IPA country, the project should select an IPA Lead Partner for that country who will conclude the contract with the Contracting Authority on

[1] Although not compulsory, it is strongly recommended that the responsibilities of functional Lead Partner and ERDF Lead Partner are undertaken by the same beneficiary.

behalf of all the partners in that country. The IPA Lead Partner will be advanced the IPA co-financing from the Paying Authority in the respective country and afterwards distribute the IPA co-financing to the co-national partners according to each budget, to the payment request and to the Partnership Agreement (template will be provided for the 2nd step). This agreement is compulsory and should be concluded between the Project Partners in line with Reg. (EC) 1080/2006.

The co-financing rate for IPA contracts will be 85%. This means that partners must bring in the remaining 15% of funds to the project.

ENPI funds

The ENPI Interregional Programme for 2007-2010 (to be adopted by the Commission) states "with the view to ensure the continuation of the co-operation started in the period 2004-6 under the CADSES Neighbourhood Programme, this programme may also provide funding (approximately EUR 2 million for the period 2008-10) to ensure that local actors of the relevant partner countries can obtain co-financing to participate in projects selected under the relevant ERDF trans-national programmes."

This provides funding possibilities for partners from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the content of the South East Europe Programme.

The European Commission will establish rules relating to the use of this funding in the course of 2008.

There are no ENPI funds available for the 1st call for proposals.

3 Project generation and development

3.1 Project generation

The SEE Programme provides useful tools and resources to potential applicants to assist with project generation. The programme website, www.southeast-europe.net, hosts a "Partner Search" section, where all potential applicants can upload their project ideas in order to search for project partners and to facilitate collaboration between similar project ideas.

Transnational thematic workshops related to the programme's priorities will be organised, in order to steer and inform potential applicants on specific programme needs. On a national level, information days and trainings will be organised by the SCPs.

The aim of all the above mentioned support is to encourage the generation of **high quality projects**.

Quality projects are generated and developed with the active contribution of partners and relevant stakeholders. This sharing and collaboration helps to prevent unilateral behaviour and mitigates against operations being planned and drafted by the Lead Partner alone or indeed by an antity external to the project altogether.

A bottom-up approach in project generation is therefore important, coupled with adequate support, including the provision of quality information from higher levels (i.e. programme level structures).

Partners with previous experience in the subject matter of the project as well as previous cooperation experience can add value to the development of a sound project.

A conceptually effective project should also contain sound financial planning that will carry the project through to implementation. To this end, the financial capacity of partners is another key criterion for successful project generation. In addition to that mentioned above, programmes which include new Member States such as the South East Europe Programme, need to effectively manage the transition from previous cooperation instruments to European Territorial Cooperation Programmes.

Importantly, the SEE Programme strives towards generating projects with a deep and widespread impact along with strong political commitment.

3.2 Partners and partnerships

3.2.1 Eligibility of partners

ERDF Funding

According to Article 2 of Reg. (EC) 1083/2006, a wide range of actors such as public authorities, public equivalent bodies and any legal body governed by public or private law can be beneficiaries of ERDF and therefore are able to participate in the SEE Transnational Programme as partners and receive direct financial support.

The OP (Chapter 5) provides, for each Area of Intervention, an indicative list of potential beneficiaries.

The following types of partners are eligible:

- Public bodies
- Bodies governed by public law
- Bodies governed by private law

A variety of eligible partners can act as the Lead Partner in a particular project. However, in order to avoid a situation where State Aid Regulations have to be applied, the project shall not include activities (or partners) that have a commercial or industrial character. In all cases the outcome and results of the projects have to be made available for the general public free of charge.

Public bodies

Public bodies are organizations which are founded and governed by public law. Their main purpose is to fulfil the needs of the public.

Bodies governed by public law

The definition of a body governed by public law is the following according to Article 1 of Directive 2004/18/EC:

A "body governed by public law" means any body:

(a) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;

(b) having legal personality; and

(c) financed, for the most part, by the state, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or subject to management supervision by those bodies; or having 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.

Non-exhaustive lists of bodies and categories of bodies governed by public law are set out in Annex III of the above mentioned Directive.

Bodies governed by private law

In the contest of this programme, “bodies governed by private law” means all organizations which are founded by private law such as chambers of commerce, trade unions or non-governmental organisations. They may receive ERDF funding if they fulfil the following criteria:

- 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 make available the results of the project to the general public;
- they apply the principles of public procurement.

Please note that it may vary from country to country as to whether a certain type of organisation falls under public or private law.

International organisations acting under international law are not eligible. However, international organisations acting under the national law of any SEE Partner State can be considered as eligible if they fulfill the criteria foreseen for the bodies governed by private law.

Only legal entities listed in the Application Form eligible for funding may report their costs. In order to ensure a proper audit trail the MA needs to know which organisations receive programme funding and whether they are eligible according to the programme rules. Therefore, an "umbrella" type of partnership structure, where one partner collects funding and represents other partners without naming them is not possible.

Economic operators (undertakings), such as bodies effectively carrying out activities having industrial and/or commercial character within the frame of the project are not eligible to the first call for proposals.

IPA Funding

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- be legal persons **and**
- be non profit making **and**
- be specify types of organisations such as:
    - Associations: non-governmental organisations, Trade unions, employer's associations, professional associations etc.
    - Institutions: public sector operators, educational and research institutions,[2] etc.
    - Foundations;
    - Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Crafts and Trade, public employment service
    - Canton, municipalities/towns and the district
    - Regional development agencies, Business incubators, Entrepreneurship centres, Research and development Institutes and other business support institutions.
- be nationals[3] of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia; a Member State of the European Union, and;
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary and

2 Private research and educational institutions are eligible to apply if they will not derive profit from the project

3 Such nationality being determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the internal law of the country concerned. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if they are registered locally or accompanied by a "Memorandum of Understanding".

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure the continuity of their organisation throughout the lifespan of the project and whose financial resources are not exclusively made up of subsidies and grants from the European Union or other foreign donor organisations.

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations which are listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions (available from the following Internet address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/index_en.htm).

3.2.2 Compliance with the competition rules

The analysis on the State Aid compliance will be performed by the State Aid expert of the Managing Authority during the project evaluation and will be based on the examination of the Application Form and the information provided by the partners (Lead Applicant and Project Partners) in the "Declaration on the status in relation to the State Aid discipline". The analysis of the State Aid expert has to be considered as a recommendation and should be endorsed by the Monitoring Committee.

The analysis of the State Aid expert has to be done parallel with the JTS' quality assessment (see also Chapter 5). The analysis will bring to the assignment of a high or low risk of State Aid compliance:

- the project does not contain any risk of State Aid compliance;
- the project does contain a risk of State Aid compliance and has been identified by the partnership;
- the project does contain a risk of State Aid compliance and has not been identified by the partnership;
- the project does not allow identifying the risk of State Aid compliance.

3.2.3 Lead Partner principle

A Lead Partner (LP)[4] should be nominated by the partners from amongst themselves. As already mentioned in chapter 2.6, the Subsidy Contract will be concluded between the JTS on behalf of the MA and the Lead Partner, being formally the final beneficiary of the ERDF funding and the only direct link between the project partnership and the programme.

According to Reg. (EC) 1080/2006, article 20, the LP assumes the following responsibilities:

- it shall lay down the arrangements for its relations with the Project Partners participating in the project in a Partnership Agreement comprising, inter alia, provisions guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the project, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;

[4] In case of IPA or ENPI funding, a functional Lead Partner might be appointed as well.

- it shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the entire project;
- it shall ensure that the expenditure presented by the Project Partners has been incurred for the purpose of implementing the project and corresponds to the activities agreed between those Project Partners;
- it shall verify that the expenditure presented by the Project Partners participating in the project has been validated by the controllers;
- it shall be responsible for transferring the ERDF contribution to the Project Partners;

The LP is the contact institution for the Joint Technical Secretariat on behalf of the partnership

3.2.4 Public procurement

According to article 1 of Reg. (EC) 1083/2006 ERDF partners are required, during their procurements related to the projects financed by the SEE, to respect the relevant Community and national public procurement rules.

The IPA partners should make their procurements on service, supply and work under the terms of article 121 of Reg. (EC) 718/2007 and especially Commission Decision C(2007)2034.

3.2.5 National contribution

Under the SEE Transnational Programme, projects are co-financed by ERDF and IPA up to a maximum rate of 85%. The co-financing rates per partners cannot exceed the maximum rate of 85%.

The remaining budget (at least 15%) has to be covered by national contribution, brought in by each project participant. The national contribution can be covered by state contribution and/or other public contribution (regional/local/other public sources) of the project participant.

State contribution has to be indicated in the AF only in case the partner state provides (by automatic or by specific calls) national public contribution at state level for the project selected by the Monitoring Committee, and therefore the amount covered by state contribution will be reimbursed to the project partner.

Each partner state applies a different system in providing state public contribution. Some apply an automatic procedure for granting the funds (e.g. Hungary, Italy, Romania) whilst others envisage specific calls (e.g. Slovenia) and others require the project partners to provide the co-financing themselves. Therefore, SCPs should be contacted in order to clarify the position.

As the programme follows the "public costs" principle, private sector expenditure cannot generate EU co-financing. In the case whereby ERDF private project participants join a partnership as Project Partners, they have to prove that their national contribution will be provided by public authorities only for the project purposes and that it is therefore ensured that the expenditure co-financed by the ERDF are financed only by public funds. The regular public funds provided to private bodies for their operation can not be considered as public contribution to the project.

3.3 Eligibility of project activities

Activities and related expenditures are eligible according to the eligibility rules set out in the Operational Programme. However, in conjunction with these there are wider considerations for project providers as the SEE Transnational Programme 2007 – 2013 is fully integrated within the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the EU's Cohesion Policy which in turn is strongly linked to the achievement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives. This being the case projects should carefully consider the following aims:

- contribution to sustainable territorial development
- leverage effect on investment, development perspectives and policy development
- facilitation of innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge economy and information society by concrete cooperation action and visible results (creation of new products, services, development of new markets, improvement of human resources based on the principles of sustainability)
- contribution to integration by supporting balanced capacities for transnational territorial cooperation at all levels (systems building and governance)

The orientation on research, technology and innovation encompasses a significant entrepreneurial development aspect. As a consequence, pure academic research activities cannot be supported under this programme.

Projects could include activities such as studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and development of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. Additional activities could include networking and exchange of information, though not as stand alone activity, as purely networking activities will NOT be supported.

It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

The three dimensions of transferability and sustainability of the project's results are an essential element of the SEE Programme and should be considered at a project level:

- *Financial sustainability*: securing one's own resources or other sources of revenue for covering future operating and maintenance costs after the completion of the project;
- *Institutional sustainability*: identification of the structures that will take over after the end of the project
- *Political sustainability*: the impact of the project on the political choices, leading to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.

The programme emphasises the importance of building upon past efforts and existing knowledge. This being the case relevant and up-to-date knowledge, tools and partnerships which are appropriate for the development, implementation and dissemination of planned outputs and results are needed to build a solid ground for innovation and to avoid the duplication of efforts. Furthermore, this will allow for existing disparities between regions and uneven development of regions in the cooperation area to

be effectively addressed. In this respect, the programme also invites partnerships to reach out to relevant stakeholders and professionals in order to ensure effective networking beyond the partnerships.

3.4 Eligibility of expenditures

3.4.1 General eligibility criteria

ERDF – Eligibility of Expenditure

ERDF costs are generally eligible for funding if:

- they have been actually incurred and paid by the project beneficiaries, and they can be verified on the basis of original invoices or other accounting documents of equivalent nature;
- they are directly related to the project, necessary for the development starting and/or implementation of the project, and they are planned in the approved project budget;
- they have been incurred and paid within the eligibility period of the project;
- they have been incurred in the eligible area of the SEE Programme (see also section 3.3.8);
- they are in compliance with the principles of efficiency, economy and expediency;
- they are in line with the relevant EC regulations and National legislation[5].

In all cases, if there is national legislation regarding eligibility of expenditure, project beneficiaries have to follow the national legislation of their country as well. National legislation applies also whenever stricter than the corresponding EU legislation, and vice versa. The Project Partners are responsible in clarifying which relevant national legislations of their country they may have to apply when implementing the project.

IPA – Eligibility of expenditure

The following eligibility rules have been established for IPA funding in this programme.

(1) Expenditure under this programme shall be eligible for Community contribution from the IPA if it has actually been incurred after the signature of the relevant Financing Agreement.

(2) The following expenditure shall not be eligible for Community contribution under this programme:

(a) taxes, including value added taxes;

(b) customs and import duties, or any other charges;

(c) purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings;

[5] The relevant EC Regulations are listed in paragraph 3.4.9

(d) fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;

(e) operating costs;

(f) second hand equipment;

(g) bank charges, costs of guarantees and similar charges;

(h) conversion costs, charges and exchange losses associated with any of the component specific euro accounts, as well as other purely financial expenses;

(i) contributions in kind;

(j) interest on debt;

(3) By way of derogation from paragraph 2 above, the following expenditure shall be eligible:

(a) value added taxes, if the following conditions are fulfilled:

(i) they are not recoverable by any means,

(ii) it is established that they are borne by the final beneficiary, and

(iii) they are clearly identified in the project proposal.

(b) charges for transnational financial transactions;

(c) where the implementation of a project requires a separate account or accounts to be opened, the bank charges for opening and administering the accounts;

(d) legal consultancy fees, notarial fees, costs of technical or financial experts, and accountancy or audit costs, if they are directly linked to the co-financed project and are necessary for its preparation or implementation;

(e) the cost of guarantees provided by a bank or other financial institutions, to the extent that the guarantees are required by national or Community legislation;

(f) overheads, provided they are based on real costs attributable to the implementation of the project concerned. Flat-rates based on average costs may not exceed 25% of the staff costs (budget lines 1.1. and 1.2. of the IPA budget).. The calculation shall be properly documented and periodically reviewed. The beneficiary should decide on the most appropriate method which is suitable for the accounting of the organisation's overheads. The chosen method should remain the same during the whole implementation period. A combination of the two methods is not allowed;

(g) the purchase of land for an amount up to 10% of the eligible expenditure of the project concerned.

(4) In addition to the technical assistance for the programme referred to Article 94 of the IPA Implementing Regulation, the following expenditure paid by public authorities in the preparation or implementation of a project shall be eligible:

(a) the costs of professional services provided by a public authority other than the final beneficiary in the preparation or implementation of an;

(b) the costs of the provision of services relating to the preparation and implementation of an operation provided by a public authority that is itself the final beneficiary and which is executing an operation for its own account without recourse to other outside service providers if they are additional costs and relate either to expenditure actually and directly paid for the co-financed project.

The public authority concerned shall either invoice the costs referred to in point (a) of this paragraph to the final beneficiary or certify those costs on the basis of documents of equivalent probative value which permit the identification of real costs paid by that authority for that project.

The costs referred to in point (b) of this paragraph must be certified by means of documents which permit the identification of real costs paid by the public authority concerned for that project.

A contingency reserve not exceeding 5 % of the direct eligible costs may be included in the Budget of the Action. It can be used only with the prior written authorisation of the Contracting Authority

Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another heading of the budget of the Contract.

Unless otherwise specified in the Special Conditions, any contributions in kind, which must be listed separately, do not represent actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary. The cost of staff assigned to the Action is not a contribution in kind and may be considered as co-financing in the Budget of the Action when paid by the Beneficiary or his partners. Notwithstanding to the above, if the Description of the Action foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

3.4.2 Eligibility in time

All expenditures are eligible for ERDF funding from the date of approval of the project by the Monitoring Committee (2nd step, in case of a 2 step procedure) to its closing date, as defined in the approved Application Form. Preparation costs as defined in section 3.4.8 are exempted from this rule.

The eligibility period of the project means that for ERDF partners all expenditures shall be incurred within this period.

All expenditures are eligible for IPA funding only after IPA contracts are concluded between the partners and the relevant Contracting Authorities in the IPA Countries.

Since the programme must be finalised by the end of 2015, all activities within the projects must be completed before the end of 2014.

Projects must clearly indicate their intended duration when applying for funding. The duration is specified in each call for proposal.

When deciding the starting date of the project, partners should take into account the timeframe for the selection process and any potential delays in the start-up phase, even if the programme seeks for an early start of operations soon after approval.

3.4.3 Eligible area

As a general rule, eligible costs shall be incurred in the programme area defined by the SEE Operational Programme (see section 1.3).

Expenses incurred outside the EU and/ or programme area are considered eligible according to the "10% ERDF flexibility rule", these are only foreseen in very particular cases, as detailed in paragraph 3.4.8

An exception to the general rule is the case of those public authorities or bodies governed by public law which are competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area but which are located outside of it (e.g., ministries). Italian and Ukrainian institutions falling under this definition are in effect assimilated, both in terms of rights and of obligations, to partners located in the SEE programme area.

Travel and accommodation costs within the EU and the programme area should be considered as eligible.

IPA expenditure is only eligible if it is made within the programme area. Exceptions are travel and accommodation costs which are eligible if they occur outside the programme area but inside the European Union.

3.4.4 Ineligible expenditures

The following expenditure is considered as ineligible for ERDF funding:

- interest on debt *(Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006)*;
- decommissioning of nuclear power stations *(Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006)*;
- recoverable Value Added Tax *(Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006)*;
- expenditures on housing *(Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006);*
- fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes *(Article 49 of Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006)*;
- any forms of double financing of expenditures: expenditure which is already supported by a Community, or other international or national grant;
- unpaid partial amounts of invoices (e.g. discounts, rebates, etc.);
- subcontracting which adds to the cost of execution of the project without adding proportionate value to it;
- subcontracts with intermediaries or consultants in which the payment is defined as a percentage of the total cost of the project unless such payment is justified by the final beneficiary by reference to the actual value of the work or services provided;
- any expenditures invoiced further to third parties and not born by the LP or its partners;
- expenditures not directly associated with the Lead Partner or its partners;

- any costs incurred before or beyond the eligible period of the project (this does not include eligible preparation costs);
- any costs of services, procurements or investments not directly related to the project and not approved in the Application Form;
- costs of settlement of interest payable, cost of credit overdrawing;
- currency exchange commissions and losses;
- commissions and dividends, profit payments;
- purchase of business shares;
- leasing;
- fringe benefits, rewards, redundancy payments;
- items for entertainment e.g. entrance fees, gifts, flowers, decoration materials, etc, if not necessary for the implementation of the project's activities.

3.4.5 Common costs

Costs associated with the project's activities normally related to the project's common management and coordination and to common communication and dissemination activities can be shared among ERDF Project Partners.

For each common activity, a responsible partner is to be selected. This partner is in charge of the implementation or the subcontracting of the activity and following the relevant National Public Procurement Law on behalf of the whole partnership. Partners can choose between two ways of proceeding:

a) *Common costs are advanced, accounted and validated by the responsible partner. The responsible partner will secondly ask the involved partners for reimbursement of their shares;*

b) *Each involved partner will directly relate to the subcontractor for the payment of their shares within the common activity, in case the national public procurement law of the responsible partner allows this option.*

Common activities and related budgets are outlined in the approved Application Form with the partners who are involved in the common activity, and indicate their share of the costs in the related tables provided. Partners should understand that the budget assigned to the common activities is not an additional budget, but a part within the partners' total budget.

The budget commitment of the partners and their responsibility within the common activities will be detailed in a specific section of the Partnership Agreement.

Procedures for the eligibility of common costs can be different in each Member State. Partners will always have to ask their national Controller in the respect of the method accepted for sharing costs before the submission of the Application Form.

Costs cannot be shared between an ERDF and an IPA Project Partners. For further information applicants should contact the relevant Contracting Authority

3.4.6 Project revenues

In line with Article 55 of the of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, if a project generates revenue, the amount of net revenues must be deducted from the eligible costs in full or pro-rata depending on whether it was generated entirely or partly by the co-financed project. Where it is objectively not possible to estimate the revenue in advance, the revenue generated within five years of the completion of a project shall be deducted from the expenditure declared to the Commission.

Where it is possible to objectively estimate the revenues in advance, projects should indicate the amount of possible revenues in the Application Form. Project generated revenues have to be reported regularly by the Project Partners in the progress reports and in the final report, and verified by the designated controllers at the partner level. The ERDF co-funding will be calculated on the basis of the eligible expenditure reduced by the amount of net revenues.

Only the cash in-flows *directly paid by users* for the goods and/or services provided by the project, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payments for services has to be considered as project generated revenues. Project generated revenues could as an example be conference participation fees, revenues from the sales of publications or books, etc.

IPA Project Partners must not, in any case, implement revenue generating activities.

The Beneficiary accepts that the grant can under no circumstances result in a profit for themselves and that it must be limited to the amount required to balance income and expenditure for the Action. Profit shall be defined as:

– In the case of a grant for an Action, a surplus of receipts over the costs of the Action in question when the request is made for payment of the balance. However, in the case of Actions designed specifically to strengthen the financial capacity of the Beneficiary, it is distribution to the members making up the beneficiary body of the surplus revenue resulting from its activity leading to their personal enrichment.

- In the case of an operating grant, a surplus balance on the operating budget of the Beneficiary.

These provisions shall not apply to study, research or training scholarships paid to natural persons, nor in the case of prizes awarded following contests.

For further information applicants should contact the relevant Contracting Authority

3.4.7 Eligibility of expenditures by budget line

ERDF project expenditures are eligible under the following budget lines (IPA project expenditure must be presented in standard external aid budget tables, that are part of the Application Form):

1.	**Staff costs**
2.	**Overheads**
3.	**Travel and accommodation costs**
4.	**External expertise and services**
5.	**Equipment**
6.	**Small scale investments**
7.	**Financial charges and guarantee costs**

1. Staff costs

The costs of the personnel executing tasks for the project management (project coordinator, project manager, assistant, financial manager, etc.) are eligible under the following conditions:

- members of the project team should be directly employed by the project beneficiaries' organisation on the basis of a regular work contract between themselves as employees and the project beneficiaries' organisation as employer. The employee could work full-time or part-time for the project. In instances where the beneficiary's organisation does not have the adequate professionals to perform the tasks related to the project, they can employ/contract external experts for these tasks. These costs shall be budgeted under the cost category "*external expertise and services*".
- staff costs shall be calculated in hourly rates according to the following rules:
    - only gross salaries based on payslips or other documentation of similar status can be taken into consideration;
    - social contribution charges shall be calculated according to the national legislation concerned. No additional charges besides the social contribution charge can be included in the hourly rate;
    - fringe benefits, rewards over the monthly salaries are not eligible.
- staff costs must be supported by the following documents:
    - work contracts which permits the identification of the employment relationship between the project staff and the partner's organisation;
    - a clear assignment including information on the extent of involvement with the project;
    - payslips, proofs of payment (e.g. bank statements), and calculation evidence for the determination of the hourly rates of the project staff;
    - timesheets which prove the overall working time and the time spent on carrying out activities for the project (name of the employee, date, time and detailed description of the

activity); the timesheet must be signed by the project's assigned employee and by the employer.

2. Overheads

Overheads can be allocated to the project according to two methods:

a) overheads directly allocated to the project (real costs);

b) overheads allocated proportionally to a project (flat rates based on average real costs).

Overhead costs cannot exceed **25 % of the staff costs** of the project[6]. The same rule has to be applied at project partner level. The beneficiary should decide on the most appropriate method which is suitable for the accounting of the organisation's overheads. The chosen method should remain the same during the whole implementation period. A combination of the two methods is not allowed.

a) overheads directly allocated to the project

This method can be applied if it is possible to allocate the overhead costs directly to the project and are justified by receipted invoices or accounting documents having an equivalent probative value.

Eligible costs for this method:

- Office costs such as office rental fees, electricity, heating, water and service charges related solely to the project and corresponding to the m^2 space used for project activities. Besides standard accounting material, a copy of the office rental contract/agreement is obligatory for eligibility.
- Administrative costs such as phone calls, fax, internet, postage, copying, and office supplies related solely to the project.

b) Overheads allocated proportionally to project

This method can be applied if it is impossible to allocate the overhead costs directly to the project. The general conditions for the use of flat rates are the followings:

- Proportionally distributed overhead costs must be attributable to the implementation of the project;
- The calculation of overheads shall be properly documented and reviewed yearly. In the case of on the spot checks, the relevant accounting documents supporting the calculation method should be made available for the controllers at the partners' premises.
- The costs must be distributed according to the following methods depending on which can best reflect the type of cost:
    - the ratio of the number of people working for the project / number of people working in the organisation or department
    - the ratio of the number of hours worked on the project / number of hours worked in total in the organisation or department

[6] direct costs of an operation which can affect the level of overheads

- the ratio of the surface used by the personnel working for the project/surface of the organisation or department

Eligible costs for this method:

- administrative service, book-keeping, salary administration, postal / telephone services, copying and centralized computer support;
- office supplies;
- office costs such as office rental fees, electricity, heating, water and service charges related solely to the project and corresponding to the m^2 space used for project activities. Besides standard accounting material, a copy of the office rental contract/agreement is obligatory for eligibility.

3. Travel and accommodation costs

Project related travel and accommodation costs and subsistence allowances (per diems) are eligible costs under the following conditions:

- only travelling costs of the "project staff" – as defined by the budget line 1. – are eligible. Travelling costs of external experts shall be included in the service contracts and budgeted under the *external expertise and services* budget line;
- travels within the programme area are eligible costs (see also section 3.4.8 for further details);
- as a general rule the most economical way of transport should be used. Exceptions from this principle must be duly justified in each case;
- beneficiaries shall apply per diem rates according to the national rules of the partner's organisation. Per diems accounted for in the project include social contributions according to the relevant national rules;
- accommodation costs can be accepted without reservation if they are in the middle price range. Higher price ranges must be duly justified in each case.

4. External expertise and services

Services directly related to the project and ordered from an external party are eligible for the cost categories listed below, under the following conditions:

- the work of the external expert is essential to the project;
- rates charged by the external expert are reasonable and are in relation to level of experience and expertise;
- the selection of the external experts shall comply with the relevant National Public Procurement Law in force;
- Project Partners cannot be contracted as an external expert or a subcontractor.

a) External expertise

a. professional expertise (e.g. studies, researches, etc.);

b. experts for project management, assistant, financial manager, etc (in circumstances whereby the Lead Partner or the partner's organisation does not have the adequate professionals to perform the tasks related to the project or for shared activities as specified in section 3.4.5);

c. costs of technical and financial experts, accountancy and audit costs, if they are directly linked to the project and are necessary for its implementation, etc.

b) Organisation of meetings and events

a. expenses for organisation of conferences, seminars, meetings, workshops, project events directly related to the project and traceable from the approved Application Form;

b. documentation of the participants (participant list) shall be provided in each cases of "catering expenses";

c. renting of premises and equipment for events;

d. interpretation at events;

e. printing of materials directly related to events, etc.

c) Promotion costs

a. costs of brochures and leaflets;

b. press releases, inserts in newspapers;

c. newsletters;

d. the design and maintenance of web page for the project;

e. other publication costs related to the project but not linked to specific events or seminars; etc.

d) Other services

Other services concerning costs not linked to specific budget lines, but necessary for the implementation of the project. Examples of eligible costs:

- translations of project documents not linked to specific budget lines;
- reproduction of project documents not linked to specific budget lines, etc;

5. Equipment

Purchase of equipment is eligible under the following conditions:

- equipment is necessary for the project implementation and is foreseen in the approved Application Form;
- equipment should be exclusively used for the project implementation;
- suppliers should be selected according to the rules of the relevant National Public Procurement Law;

- the full purchase price is only eligible in case that the total economic life and depreciation period are shorter than or equal to the project duration. In all other cases only depreciation costs shall be eligible.

The following costs can be eligible:

- special equipment necessary for the project implementation and foreseen in the Application Form ("content related equipment"), like laboratory equipment and special measurement equipment;

- office equipment (e.g. computers, laptops, office furniture, etc.) related to the project management can be eligible in duly justified cases and only if clearly indicated in the approved Application Form.

Depreciation costs:

According to art. 53 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, the depreciation expenditure of depreciable assets directly used for an project, and incurred during the period of its co-financing, shall be eligible, provided that the acquisition of the assets is not declared as eligible expenditure.

The invoice shall be submitted to and checked by the designated controller of the project partner and shall be validated appropriately in order to avoid double financing. The relevant national rules for the depreciation of assets shall be applied and the calculation of depreciation costs shall be submitted to the controllers to verify the eligible depreciation cost.

Second hand equipment:

The purchase cost/depreciation cost of second hand equipment is eligible if:

- it can be certified that the equipment has not been previously purchased with the co-financing of public funds;

- the price of the equipment is in line with its market value and less than the price of similar new equipment;

- the equipment has the technical characteristics necessary for the project.

6. Small scale investments

The SEE Transnational Programme, as well as the other transnational cooperation programmes, is not intended as an investment programme. This is largely due to its limited budget and its cooperative nature.

Small scale investments are eligible where the transnational impact of the investment is demonstrated and the activity is approved in the Application Form.

Eligible investments either follow a transnational physical or functional link over the national border (i.e. technical infrastructure improving innovation performance of a transnational network for development of entrepreneurship and research; technical infrastructure improving the diffusion of knowledge across the SEE; infrastructure and technical investments in ports, railway routes, inland waterways and road junctions improving the operability of a transnational transport corridor, etc.) or create a transferable practical solution through a case study in one area, which is jointly evaluated by the project partners and transferred for testing in at least two other participating countries (new

broadly applicable technologies for the development of entrepreneurship; ICT solutions unlocking accessibility of peripheral areas; solutions reducing land-based river pollution; solutions for efficient production and using of bio-mass; solutions for energy saving in buildings; technical solutions increasing the share of public transportation).

The programme does not finance investments that do not have transnational relevance.

The contractors of investments should be selected according to the rules of the National Public Procurement Law in force.

The contractor cannot be a partner in the project.

The purchase of land is eligible in duly justified cases if it does not exceed 10 % of the total eligible costs for the project concerned, in line with article 7 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006.

7. Financial charges and guarantee costs

Financial charges and guarantee costs are eligible costs according to article 49 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006. The following charges and costs shall be eligible for a contribution from the ERDF:

- charges for transnational financial transactions;
- bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of a project requires a separate account or accounts to be opened;
- the cost of guarantees provided by a bank or other financial institution to the extent to which the guarantees are required by national or Community legislation;
- legal consultancy fees, notarial fees if they are directly linked to the project and are necessary for its implementation.

Any other types of financial charges are ineligible.

3.4.8 Special eligibility rules

Special eligibility rules apply additionally to the general rules for project expenditures for the preparation costs, the expenditures incurred outside the programme area and the in-kind contribution.

a) **Preparation costs**

Costs that have been incurred for the preparation of the project are eligible costs for ERDF Partners only in accordance with the following conditions:

- preparation costs can only be eligible if they were incurred on or after the 1st of January 2007 and before the date of approval of the Application Form. Preparation costs shall be paid before the submission of the first progress report;
- preparation costs should show direct connection to the approved project and should be included in the approved Application Form;
- costs for the preparation of the approved project cannot exceed **2%** of the total eligible expenditures of the project or **40.000 EUR** whichever is reached earlier.

Eligible costs for preparation are:

- external expertise costs and/ or staff costs for the preparation of the application documents;
- joint meetings for the preparation of the project;
- travels directly related to the joint meetings, including participation at the Lead Applicant's seminar;
- preparatory studies, analysis and researches for activities to be carried on within the project.

Overheads are not eligible under preparation costs.

Preparation costs are not eligible under IPA.

b) **Expenditures according to the "10% ERDF flexibility rule"**

Reg. (EC) 1080/2006, article 21, commas 3 and 4, states:

ERDF Regulation Article 21

3. In the context of cross border, transnational and interregional co-operation, the ERDF may finance expenditure incurred in implementing operations or parts of operations on the territory of countries outside the European Community up to a limit of 10% of the amount of its contribution to the operational programme concerned, where they are for the benefit of the regions of the Community.

4. Member States shall ensure the legality and regularity of these expenditures. The managing authority shall confirm the selection of operations outside the eligible areas as referred to under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

According to the aforementioned article, the "10% ERDF flexibility rule" can be considered for the benefit of two types of partners:

a) ERDF LP or ERDF PP: in case of expenditure incurred for the implementation of specific activities within one or more work packages of the project in countries outside the EU but part of the programme area[7];

b) non EU PP of the programme area: for the implementation of specific activities within one or more work packages of the project, not financed by IPA, ENPI or other public funds. (sponsoring of a non-EU partner of the programme area, so called *10% project partner*).

Special conditions and eligible expenditures under the 10% flexibility rule:

- costs to be spent according to the 10% flexibility rule must be traceable from the approved Application Form;
- costs shall be clearly planned in the budget of the ERDF LP or ERDF PP and shall be directly paid by the ERDF LP or ERDF PP;

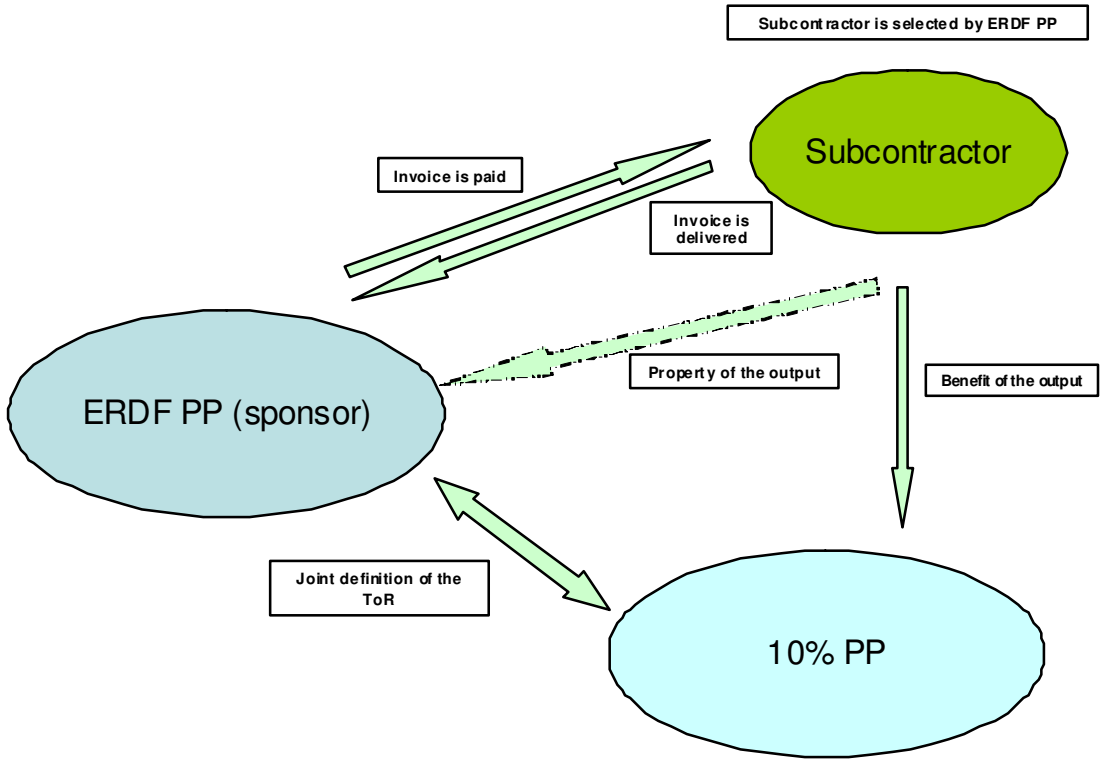
[7] Travel and accommodation costs can be considered eligible also outside the EU and outside the Programme area if clearly indicated in the application form and fulfil all the mentioned special conditions.

- the need for the activities outside the EU or the involvement of non-EU PPs for the implementation of the project and the achievements of its objectives has to be clearly demonstrated;
- the benefit of the EU territory has to be always demonstrated, in the description of the project proposal and during the implementation.

In particular, for the 10% ERDF costs for the benefit of the non EU PP of the programme area (case b) some further conditions apply:

- under the 10% flexibility rule, each ERDF LP or ERDF PP can sponsor the participation of non EU PPs of the programme area;
- all non EU PPs, not financed by IPA funds for the project concerned can benefit form the 10% flexibility rule;
- costs shall be included in the budget of the ERDP LP or ERDF PP that provides the co-financing and is responsible for the validation of these costs;
- only expenditure related to cost categories *travel and accommodation*, *external expertise and services*, *equipment* and *small scale investments* are allowed;
- the overall financial responsibility lies within the ERDF LP; it is its responsibility to regulate the obligations of the “sponsoring” ERDF PP that has to provide the needed co-financing and to account and validate the costs incurred;
- responsibility of the ERDF “sponsoring” and the non EU “sponsored” PP towards the project and the programme are detailed in the Partnership Agreement;
- when subcontracting the procedure shall follow the rules of the ERDF “sponsoring” PP but contents of the Terms of Reference should be agreed with the non EU “sponsored” PP. Controller of the ERDF “sponsoring” PP shall be informed in advance;
- eligible expenditures are only those supported by an invoice clearly addressed to the ERDF project partner;

- the ownership of the outputs such as products delivered by the external expertise and services, the ownership of the equipment and the small scale investment shall remain at the property of the responsible ERDF "sponsoring" partner;



EI Figure 2 Subcontracting with the 10% ERDF PP

- travel and accommodation costs for EU and non-EU PPs outside the programme area and outside the EU (i.e. participation to a relevant international thematic conference in Japan);
- travel and accommodation costs of the non-EU PPs, not financed by IPA, ENPI or other public funds, within the programme area (i.e. participation of Serbian PP to project meetings in Austria);
- costs of the organisation of joint meetings in non-EU countries within the programme area (i.e. organisation of a workshop in the Ukraine);
- costs for the implementation of specific activities within one or more work packages of the project in non EU countries within the programme area (i.e. organisation and implementation of training activities in Montenegro).

Other eligibility rules not specified have to be applied according to the general rules for project expenditures.

Travels and accommodation costs for EU PPs within the programme area have to be considered within the regular budget.

As a general rule, the 10% flexibility rule is available for all projects and is limited to 10% of the ERDF budget of the project.

c) **In kind contribution**

In line with article 51 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, in-kind contributions shall be eligible expenditure if they fulfil the following conditions:

a) they consist of the provision of land or real estate, equipment or raw materials, research or professional work or unpaid voluntary work;

b) their value can be independently assessed and audited

- In the case of the provision of land or real estate, the value shall be certified by an independent qualified valuer or duly authorised official body;
- In the case of unpaid voluntary work, the value of that work shall be determined taking into account the time spent and the hourly and daily rates of remuneration for equivalent work.

Only public bodies and bodies governed by public law are eligible for in kind contributions.

The in kind contribution can not be reimbursed from ERDF funds and state contributions, therefore the amount of in kind contribution can not be higher that the sum of regional, local and other public contribution given in the sources of funding table of the Application Form. This rule has to be applied at project partner level.

In any case, the rules of eligibility can be different in each Member State. In cases of uncertainty, the partners will have to ask their national Controllers for clarification in the respect of national eligibility rules.

In kind contributions are not eligible for IPA Project Partners.

3.4.9 EC regulations relevant for the eligibility of expenditures

Article 56 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Article 48-53 of Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006

Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

The following EC regulations should also be applied during the verification of expenditures:

Article 2 (5) Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, and Directive 2004/18/EC (Public procurement)

Article 54 Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, (State Aid)

Article 9 Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, (Publicity)

Article 48 (2) Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, (Sound financial management)

Article 16 Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, (Equality between men and women and non-discrimination)

Article 17 Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, (Sustainable development)

Article 54 Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, (Double financing)

Article 55 Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, (Generation of revenue)

Article 24 (d) Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, (Legality and regularity of expenditure paid outside the Community)

All expenditure has to be in line with the EC regulations and the relevant national rules and legislation. Please note that the list of regulations is not exhaustive and rules and regulations may be amended during the programme implementation period.

3.4.10 Decommitment Rule

According to the Structural Funds Regulation, programmes may have funds decommitted by the European Commission in case where the allocations set in the financial tables of the Operational Programme are not translated into effective requests for payment within the set timeframe[8]. Should this loss of funds result from operations lagging behind their payment targets (based on the spending forecast included in the final version of the approved Application Form), the programme will be obliged to reduce the budget of these projects.

In order to avoid losing funds both at the project and at the programme level, it is important that:

- applicants carefully prepare a realistic spending forecast;
- approved operations are ready to start implementation quickly after approval;
- financial aspects are effectively monitored during implementation;
- partners ensure regular, timely and full reporting.

[8] Four years for the allocations of the years 2007 to 2010 (n+3, being 'n' the year of commitment) and three years (n+2) for the allocations of the years 2011 to 2013.

3.5 Information and publicity requirements for projects

In order to complement and strengthen the measures set up in the programme's general Communication Plan, an important role will be played by the projects themselves. Newsworthy stories about projects need to reach a wide range of media and stakeholders, including representatives from all levels of government, as well as the public. In order to achieve efficient communication, commitment from all projects is necessary.

Project beneficiaries are asked to follow the Information and Publicity Measures for the beneficiaries of ERDF funds mentioned in article 7, 8 and 9 of the Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006. Projects shall inform the public about the assistance obtained from the ERDF and ensure that those who take part in the operation have been informed of the funding source. These requirements will be further explained in seminars for Lead Partners of approved projects, and backed up by information on the programme website.

The regulations require that appropriate information and publicity (I&P) measures at a project and programme level are enacted, as laid down in section 7.4 "Information and publicity" in the Operational Programme.

Projects will be encouraged and supported by the JTS in setting up their own communication plans and delivering their own publicity activities, in order to be able to act as true ambassadors of the programme throughout the region and contribute to the strengthening of management and knowledge within each project.

Projects should ensure that information is tailored to the needs of their specific target groups. Communication measures envisaged at project level should take into account the nature, the size and the capacity of the relevant project. Project teams are advised to appoint a member to be in charge of communication and information activities which should assist in giving more impetus to their communication measures. Projects are recommended to unite their forces and collaborate whenever it is possible in organising their communication activities and thereby benefit from economies of scale. Each Programme can set its own information and publicity requirements, in addition to the ones included in the Regulation (EC) no. 1828/2006. These additional requirements are included in the Subsidy Contract (SC) and in the Partnership Agreement (PA). They are not meant as an additional burden for the projects, but as a means to enhance projects communication, visibility and value. Good communication will work for the benefit of all the parties involved. This will help the promotion of important results and outcomes, which will facilitate further the sharing of knowledge and experience and future collaboration between projects. Thus, the LP shall develop and implement a communication plan which includes the realisation of at least the following mandatory outputs:

- creation and use a project logo;
- setting up of a project website (whereby the respective activities shall start before the submission of the first progress report) and keeping it online for a period of at least two years after project closure;
- publication and dissemination of at least one brochure presenting the project results;
- organisation of a public final event.

More information about information and publicity at both a programme and project level is available in the Communication Guidelines for Projects (available for the implementation phase) as well as in the Communication Plan of the SEE Programme.

4 Development and application

4.1 Project application: competitive and strategic calls

As mentioned in section 7.2 of the Operational Programme, different types of calls for project proposals are envisaged for the implementation of the programme:

- **Competitive calls** (bottom-up two step procedure), which are applied as standard procedure for the majority of projects, and
- **Strategic calls** (top-down one step procedure), which are applied only in certain cases.

Different application and selection provisions apply for each type of call, namely:

- Competitive open call for proposals: transnational partnerships from all eligible potential beneficiaries can submit proposals in line with one of the four Priority Axes of the programme. It should be noted that the support of the programme managing and coordinating bodies in the project generation process is limited;
- Targeted call for "strategic projects": a top-down approach is foreseen in order to strengthen and steer the integration process of the SEE territories and structures. This procedure should increase the support for the "strategic projects" generation and development processes.

The proposal application procedures are illustrated in the table below:

Table 1: Type of Calls and Application Steps

Types of calls		**Application Steps**	
Competitive Calls	Open calls (periodical)	Two step procedure	1st step Expression of Interest
			2nd step Full Application
Strategic Calls	Targeted calls for "strategic projects"	One step procedure	Full Application

4.1.1 Competitive calls

The open competitive call for proposals, according to chapter 7.2 of the Operational Programme, follows a two step application procedure:

- Step 1 is the submission of the Expression of Interest (EoI);
- Step 2 is the submission of the completed Application Form (AF).

In the first step, applicants are requested to submit an Expression of Interest based on a short form. The EoI presents the objectives of the project, the anticipated budget, the type of activities,

their location and the cooperation area covered as well as the planned outputs and results and the structure of the partnership.

Once filled in completely and accurately, the EoI can be uploaded onto the dedicated section of the website. Only electronic submission is allowed and only the first version submitted will be taken in to account; any further version of the same project proposal will not be considered as valid and will not be assessed. Once the e-version of the document is submitted no changes are possible.

Once the deadline for submission has expired, the technical evaluation of the EoI is carried out by the JTS with the support of the SCPs, as indicated in chapter 5. The evaluation results are then presented to the Monitoring Committee who decides which EoIs are to be invited to submit a full application.

In very limited and specific cases, the applicants are provided with comments on their proposal and furthermore might be asked to amend their proposal (e.g. extending the partnership, merging with other project proposals, changing the geographical scope of the project, etc.). Applicants of rejected proposals will be informed about the reason for rejection upon request.

By way of general guidance, the programme recommends that project proposals are already at an advanced stage on EoI submission: project partners already contacted and involved and the overall structure well defined. Only project proposals matching a certain readiness, quality level and responding to the selection criteria can be invited to enter the 2nd step of the application procedure. As meetings are inevitable tools for project preparation, costs of such preparatory events are eligible in case of approval. For details on eligible preparatory costs please check section 3.4.8.

At the opening of the 2nd step of the call, the AF will be available for download on the programme website. Once completed, the form will have to be uploaded online before the submission deadline. Together with the AF, the applicant shall submit the following documents, both in the electronic and paper version:

- the Declaration and co-financing statement signed and stamped by each ERDF partner (including the LP) in original;
- the Partnership Agreement signed and stamped by each partner in original;
- the Lead Partner Confirmation sheet included in the section 8 of the AF, signed and stamped by the LP in original;
- the IPA documentation stamped and signed whenever requested, in original, only in case of proposals including IPA partners;
- the State Aid declaration signed and stamped by each ERDF partner (including the LP) in original;
- the Observer Declaration signed and stamped by each observer partner in original, if applicable;
- the IPA alternative funding availability, signed and stamped by the Lead Partner (not compulsory).

In addition, one original paper copy stamped and signed by the legal responsible of the Lead Partner and two copies have to be sent to the JTS following the indication of the **Applicants' Guidelines**. Submission must be before the submission deadline (date of the postmark) and it has

to arrive until 10 working days after the deadline (registration date upon arrival). In the event of differences, the paper copy will be considered the original application.

The address is:

SEE Joint Technical Secretariat

in VÁTI Kht.

Gellérthegy u. 30-32

H-1016 Budapest, Hungary

During the 2nd step of the application procedure, project applicants may receive technical support by the JTS and SCPs. The application of the second step will be evaluated by the JTS with the support of SCPs and, if necessary, external experts.

Proposals that in the second step present radically changed information in the partnership composition and indicated activities will be rejected (see the eligibility criteria).

The proposed budget given on the EoI, if the project proposal is invited to the 2nd step, needs to be maintained – or reduced – on the subsequent Application Form. Increases in the requested budget can be taken into consideration only in duly justified and approved cases, such as:

- further improvement of the project proposal carried out between the first and the second step (i.e. extension of activities and/or partnership);

- new costs to be taken into consideration due to change of national rules at programme level (i.e. audit costs).

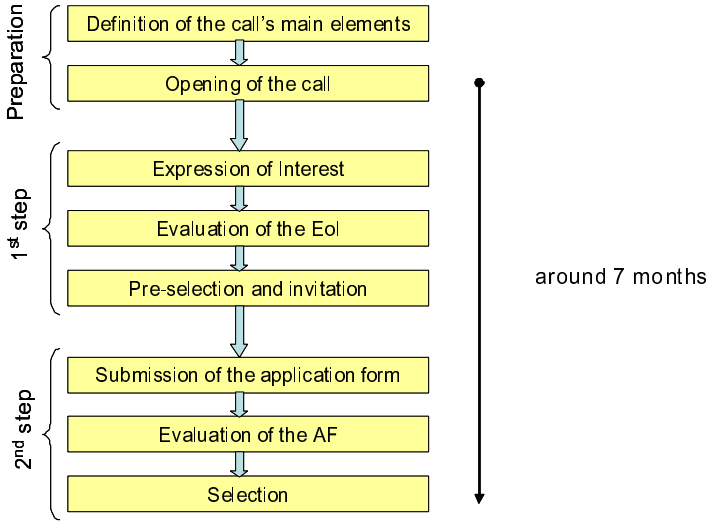
Increases have to be limited up to 3% of the project budget indicated in the EoI, for a maximum of 60,000 EUR – whichever amount is reached first (see the eligibility criteria).

A shortlist ranking the proposals will be prepared which will serve as a basis for considering the project decision by the Monitoring Committee. Rejected projects will be informed about the reasons for rejections upon request. Applicants are free to resubmit their application in the following calls as appropriate.

Applicants should invest extra care in preparing the budget allocation per work package, per budget line and above all per period allocation, as any request for project changes during the duration of the project should be duly justified.

Approved projects are expected to be ready-to-start after the approval.

Figure 2: Application Steps



Please note that both the Expression of Interest and the Application Form should be submitted in English and that the **Applicants' Guidelines** provide detailed information for completing the EoI form and the AF. To better align the contents of the proposal and to check the compliance with the relevant national and regional regulations, it is highly recommended that the applicants get in contact with the SCP of their country.

Development of both the EoI and subsequently the AF is normally coordinated by the applicant. Nevertheless, the proper involvement of project partners should be included and valued. A good understanding of the content and project management arrangements included in the EoI by all Project Partners is a key factor in a successful transnational project. Indeed this level of cooperation is already expected at this stage.

5 Assessment and selection

5.1 Selection procedures and selection criteria in general

This paragraph illustrates clearly and transparently the project selection system. This system is made public in order to make all stakeholders and project partners aware of the selection procedures and criteria before preparing their applications. Hence they can develop high quality proposals and assist the programme to reach its aims of realising high quality, result-oriented transnational projects relevant to the programme area.

The two types of calls need different selection provisions.

The following table illustrates the basic elements of the aforementioned project assessment types:

Table 2: Project assessment types

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2" rowspan="2">Types of calls</th><th colspan="2" rowspan="2">Steps of implementation</th><th colspan="3">Selection criteria</th></tr>
<tr><th>Formal Check</th><th>Eligibility Check</th><th>Quality Check</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Competitive</td><td rowspan="2">Open calls (periodical)</td><td rowspan="2">Two step procedure</td><td>1st step
Expression of Interest</td><td colspan="3">“Light assessment”</td></tr>
<tr><td>2nd step
Full Application</td><td colspan="3">Full assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategic</td><td>Targeted restricted calls for “strategic projects” (continuous)</td><td>One step procedure</td><td>1 step
Full Application</td><td colspan="3">Full assessment</td></tr>
</table>

Regulation (EC) 1080/2006, article 19 provides a basic set of project selection criteria for all ERDF funded territorial cooperation programmes. The SEE Operational Programme further specifies project implementation principles (section 4.2) and project development and selection standards (section 7.2). Hence the present SEE PM project selection criteria follow the same logic and visualise to the applicant the principles they should take into account when developing their project idea.

In course of the selection process, three different sets of criteria are applied to come to the decision of approving an application:

- a first set consists of the **formal criteria** – it confirms that a proposal has arrived within the set deadline and that the EoI or Application Form, depending on the step, is complete and conforms to the requirements. Project proposals that do not meet the formal criteria are sorted out;

- a second set consists of the **eligibility criteria** – it outlines the minimum requirements that an application has to meet. These criteria examine whether the proposal fulfils the minimum requirements on e.g. the structure of the transnational partnership, the general compatibility with the programme objectives and principles, the grant requested etc. Eligibility criteria can be answered with a “Yes” or “No” and are not open to interpretation. Proposals, which do not fulfil the eligibility criteria, are identified and, if necessary, additional information is requested from the applicant;

- the third and final set consists of **quality criteria** – these criteria form the basis for an assessment of the application with the aim of bringing the projects into a certain ranking for selection. Quality criteria are supplementary grouped into two categories: 1) Quality of the transnational partnership and 2) Quality of the content.

All applicants will be informed about the result of the assessment only after the Monitoring Committee decision.

Hence three phases of project selection will be applied:

- Phase 1: **Formal Check** (checked by JTS's staff without requiring specific content related knowledge)
- Phase 2: **Eligibility Check** (checked by JTS's staff without requiring specific content related knowledge)
- Phase 3: **Quality Check** (checked by the JTS and, if required, with involvement of external experts and National Coordination of partner states or corresponding national procedures, for the 2nd step)

The criteria for each step are outlined in the table below. Whilst for the 1st step only some criteria are verified in each check phase (light assessment), for the 2nd step all the listed criteria will be checked (full assessment).

The table below gives you a general overview on the use of the criteria for the *light* and for the *full assessment*.

Figure 3: Two step procedure and relevant selection criteria in competitive open and targeted calls

	1. Step Light Assessment	2. Step Full Assessment
1. Formal Check		
Timely submission	**X**	**X**
Completeness of submitted application	**X**	**X**
The Application Pack includes:		
1) The **Declaration and co-financing statement** from each partner (standardised .doc document)	**-**	**X**
2) The **Partnership Agreement** (standardised .doc document)	**-**	**X**
3) The **Application Form** including the **Lead Partner Confirmation** – in original (sheet 8 of the AF)	**-**	**X**
4) The **IPA documentation** (specific .zip file pack)	**-**	**X**
5) **State Aid declaration** from each partner (standardised .doc document)	**-**	**X**
2. Eligibility Check		
1) Project fulfils minimum requirements for transnational partnerships	**X**	**X**
2) Project complies in general with the operational programme and has an impact in the programme area	**X**	**X**
3) Requested grant is within the fixed thresholds for IPA funds	**-**	**X**
4) Beneficiaries have secured public co-financing.	**X (only indication of type of sources)**	**X**
5) Beneficiaries are eligible	**X**	**X**
6) The proposed types of activities are eligible	**X**	**X**
7) Project implementation has not started and it won't start prior to the approval of the Application Form and can be finalised within the programme period (before 31 December 2014)	**X**	**X**

8) Beneficiaries shall cooperate in at least two of the following ways: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing (according Art. 19 ERDF Regulation)	**X**	**X**
9) ERDF and IPA co-financing rates are up to the maximum grant rate of the Programme.	**-**	**X**
10) Max. 10% of the ERDF funds is allocated to Non-EU activities	**-**	**X**
11) The threshold for preparation costs is not exceeded	**-**	**X**
12) The amount of in kind contribution per partners is not covered by ERDF and state contribution	**-**	**X**
13) The threshold for overheads is not exceeded per partners	**-**	**X**
14) The threshold for purchase of land is not exceeded	**-**	**X**
15) The activities described in the AF are not radically changed compared to the EoI	**-**	**X**
16) The partnership is not radically changed between the 2 steps	**-**	**X**
17) The budget is not radically changed between the 2 steps	**-**	**X**
3. Quality Check		
Quality of Partnership		
1.1 Composition of transnational partnership	**X**	**X**
1.2 Quality of transnational co-operation	**X**	**X**
1.3 Project management and coordination	**-**	**X**
1.4 Internal and external communication / dissemination, knowledge management	**-**	**X**
Quality of Content		
2.1 Project's contribution to the overall objectives of the programme and to EU principles	**X**	**X**
2.2 Project's specific contribution to the Priority Axes and Areas of Intervention of the programme	**X**	**X**
2.3 Quality of work plan and description of types of activities	**-**	**X**
2.4 Concreteness and usability of the projects deliverables	**X**	**X**
2.5 Value for money	**X (only overall coherence)**	**X**
2.6 Synergies with other policies, programmes and projects	**X**	**X**

5.2 Project selection criteria for competitive calls in detail

5.2.1 Phase 1: Formal Check

The Formal Check aims at confirming to the applicant that their proposal has arrived within the set deadline and that the EoI or Application Form is complete and conforms to the requirements. This check will be carried out entirely by the JTS.

Tab. 1: 1. Phase Formal Check

Formal criteria	How to assess? Method	Result of Assessment
Timely submission	Submission within deadline: - electronic version submitted by the deadline; - arrival until 10 working days after the deadline (paper version); - post mark stamped the day of the deadline at the latest (paper version).	Yes or No

Completeness of submitted application	Project must fulfil all criteria set out in the EoI and AF: - written in English; - all required parts and annexes are included and fully filled in; - official form used; - signed by authorized person – in original.	Yes or No
The Application Pack includes: 1) The **Declaration and co-financing statement** from each ERDF partner (standardised document) – in original 2) The **Partnership Agreement –** signed by all partners in original 3) The **Application Form** including the **Lead Partner Confirmation** – in original (sheet 8 of the AF) 4) The **IPA documentation** – in original (when signature is requested) 5) The **State Aid declaration** from each ERDF partner (standardised document) – in original		
1.a) Beneficiaries are financially reliable, not bankrupt and conform to all relevant clauses and rules of their countries	Part of the signed declaration from each ERDF partner and IPA Financial Lead Partner	Yes or No
1.b) Beneficiaries have secured public co-financing	Part of the signed declaration from each ERDF partner	Yes or No
2) Partnership Agreement undersigned by all partners	Partnership Agreement undersigned by all partners	Yes or No
3.a) The project respects equal opportunities and non-discrimination	In the Lead Partner's Confirmation	Yes or No
3.b) The project has no harmful impact on the environment	In the Lead Partner's Confirmation	Yes or No
3.c) The project respects the Information and Publicity rules	In the Lead Partner's Confirmation	Yes or No
3.d) The project excludes double financing	In the Lead Partner's Confirmation	Yes or No
3.e) A statement that all contents of the submitted application are true	In the Lead Partner's Confirmation	Yes or No
4.a) The signed and stamped Legal Entity Sheet	Declaration from IPA Partners	Yes or No
4.b) The signed and stamped Financial Identification Sheet	Declaration from IPA Partners	Yes or No
4.c) Co-financing Sheet	Declaration from IPA Partners	Yes or No
4.d) The signed and stamped total budget	Declaration from IPA Financial Lead Partner from each country	Yes or No
5) Partners declaration on state aid status	Signed and stamped declaration from each ERDF partner	Yes or No

5.2.2 Phase 2: Eligibility Check

Eligibility criteria are of "knock-out nature" and should be clearly answered with a **YES or NO** as to a large extent they are not subject to interpretation. A proposal has to positively address the entire set of eligibility criteria in order to proceed to the 3rd phase of Quality Check.

In cases where clarifications are necessary, the applicant may be required to supply additional information, e.g. when the public or public-equivalent status of a partner is ambiguous.

This phase will be carried out by the JTS and assisted by the SCPs.

Tab. 2: Eligibility Check

Eligibility criteria	Description	Result of Assessment
1) Project fulfils minimum requirements for transnational partnerships.	Partners from a minimum of three partner states, located in the eligible area, of which at **least one** shall be from a Member State[9]	Yes or No
2) Project complies in general with the operational programme and has impact in the programme area.	Project directly addresses clearly one of the Priority Axes of the Operational Programme. The project complies with the goals of the programme and the respective Area of Intervention	Yes or No
3) Requested grant is within the fixed thresholds (if and where applicable).	The requested grant is between the eligible minimum and maximum amounts as identified in the respective call for proposals (if and where applicable)	Yes or No
4) Beneficiaries have secured public co-financing.	Own/national financial means are available and secured from public sources by the beneficiaries in the appropriate forms (Signed declaration and co-financing Statement)	Yes or No
5) Beneficiaries are eligible.	Beneficiaries of the project are eligible according to the eligibility rules set out in the Operational Programme, the Programme Manual and the respective call for proposals	Yes or No
6) The proposed types of activities are eligible.	Activities and related expenditures are eligible according to the eligibility rules set out in the Operational Programme, the Programme Manual and the call for proposals[10]	Yes or No
7) Project implementation has not started and it won't start prior to the approval of the Application Form and can be finalised until 31 December 2014 and the timetable for the realisation and the finalization of the project is consistent with the timeframe required in the call.	The implementation of the project has not started and it won't start prior to the approval of the Application Form (prior the contract signing in case of IPA partners) and can be finalised until 31 December 2014. Except activities for the project preparation, as preparation costs can be eligible if they were incurred on or after the 1st of January 2007 and before the date of approval of the Application Form.	Yes or No

[9] The provision on the location within the programme area can be modified for strategic projects. The requirement for a minimum number of partners remains unaffected. However, Reg. 1080/2006, Art. 19 does not specify if the above mentioned criterion must be satisfied by partners located within the programme area.

[10] For countries, where costs for first level control are foreseen, the necessary funds must be included. The Monitoring Committee will inform applicants through the national Contact Points about this obligation.

8) Beneficiaries shall cooperate in at least two of the following ways: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing (according Art. 19 ERDF Regulation).	○ Joint development of the project: project and application should be jointly developed and agreed on by the partnership. ○ Joint implementation: every partner should play an active role in the project implementation, activities are carried out and coordinated by all beneficiaries (not just run parallel). ○ Joint staffing: there should be a joint core project staff to co-ordinate and manage activities and tasks. ○ Joint financing: the joint project budget should show the commitment by each beneficiary to the joint project.	Yes or No
9) ERDF and IPA co-financing rates are up to the maximum grant rate of the Programme.	ERDF and IPA co-financing rates per partners do not exceed 85%.	Yes or No
10) Max. 10% of the ERDF funds is allocated to Non-EU activities.	The budget allocated to ERDF partners sponsoring non EU partners within the programme area, or activities carried out by ERDF partners in the non EU partner states of the programme do not exceed the 10 % of the total budget for ERDF partners.	Yes or No
11) The threshold for preparation costs is not exceeded.	Costs for the preparation of the approved project cannot exceed 2% of the total eligible expenditures of the project or 40.000 EUR whichever is reached earlier.	Yes or No
12) The amount of in kind contribution per partners is not covered by ERDF and state contribution.	In the case of in-kind contributions, the ERDF Funds and state contribution per partners are not exceeding the total eligible expenditure per partners, excluding the value of such contributions.	Yes or No
13) The threshold for overheads is not exceeded.	Overhead costs are not exceeding 25 % of the staff costs of the project. This rule should be respected by project partners as well.	Yes or No
14) The threshold for purchase of land is not exceeded.	The purchase of land is justified and it does not exceed 10 % of the total eligible costs for the operation concerned.	Yes or No
15) The activities described in the AF are not radically changed comparing to the EoI.	Activities are consistent and clearly coherent with those indicated in the EoI.	Yes or No
16) The partnership is not radically changed between the 2 steps (reduction, enlargement or changement).	Not more than 1 partner (in case of partnership with less than 10 partners) or 2 (in all other cases) backed out or have been debarred, changed or added between the 2steps.	Yes or No
17) The budget is not radically changed between the 2 steps.	Increases in the requested budget are duly justified as follows: - further improvement of the project proposal carried out between the first and the second step (i.e. extension of activities and/or partnership); - new costs to be taken into consideration due to change of national rules at programme level (i.e. audit costs). Increases are limited up to 3% of the project budget indicated in the EoI, for a maximum of 60,000 EUR (whichever amount is reached first).	Yes or No

5.2.3 Phase 3: Quality Check

The purpose of the quality criteria is to assess the quality of the eligible project proposals. Quality criteria are closely linked to the nature and objectives of the SEE Operational Programme and are common to all Priority Axes or Areas of Intervention. This phase will be conducted by the JTS under the supervision of the Monitoring Committee according to the specifications of the SEE OP (Chapters 7.1.1 and 7.1.2). External expertise and support from the National Coordination bodies or corresponding national procedures can be acquired as and if required.

The assessment is based on an assessment matrix with the following criteria groups:

1. **Quality of Transnational Partnership**
2. **Quality of Content**

Each criteria group ("Partnership" and "Content") is assessed on basis of sub-criteria with each being scored from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Due to the high relevance of the budget, the weight of the score of sub-criteria 2.5 is doubled.

Tab. 3: Assessment scores

Score	Significance
1	Very poor
2	Poor
3	Fair
4	Good
5	Very Good

Sub-Criteria to assess Partnership and Content

In the following tables the sub-criteria to assess partnership and content are illustrated. The sub-criteria are defined using a set of questions to be answered by the evaluator. Due to the complex requirements of transnational projects, these questions cannot be answered with a yes or no response, as in the second phase on eligibility check. The evaluator must assess to what extent the questions are applicable to the specific proposal and if they are satisfactorily answered by the applicant and then give an overall assessment score.

Tab. 4: Sub-criteria to assess the **Quality of Transnational Partnerships** (four sub-criteria)

Sub-criteria	Questions with related guiding questions	Score
	PARTNERSHIP	
1.1 Composition of transnational partnership	**Is the partnership composition well justified and able to contribute in a balanced manner to the implementation of the transnational co-operation project?**	**5 points**
	Is the partnership representing the right mix of countries and regions according to the project topic?	
	Does the partnership promote the inclusion of partners from non-EU states, if relevant to the project content?	
	Is the size of the partnership appropriate for the project topic and for implementing the activities and achieving the objectives?	
	Is the partnership balanced and not overly dominated by one partner/country?	
1.2 Quality of transnational co-operation	**Do beneficiaries have the sufficient institutional and technical capacity to achieve the projects aims?**	**5 points**
	Does the partnership have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned (reference projects) to achieve the envisaged outputs and expected results?	
	Are key actors involved in the partnership or addressed in a meaningful way? The response should include vertical and horizontal linkages as appropriate.	
	Is the role of the partners detailed, balanced and adequate for achieving the aims of the proposal?	
	Are all partners involved in transnational activities in a balanced way according to the project topic?	
	In instances of observer partner participation, is there a clear relevance to their involvement vis a vis the project topic?	
1.3 Project management and coordination	**Is the transparency and efficiency of project management and coordination secured?**	**5 points**
	Are the project's operational and management structures well organised and controlled by the partnership?	
	Has the Lead Partner demonstrated that it will have sufficient resources to manage and deliver the project (human resources, equipment, premises etc.)?	
	Does the application include details of risk management provision and plans for change if required?	
	Is the Lead Partner experienced in complex project management and capable of managing the transnational partnership? Has the project team of the Lead Partner participated in at least one successful territorial cooperation project as a partner?	
	Is there evidence that partners have some experience in transnational partnership? (does not need to be all partners)	

1.4 Internal and external communication / dissemination, know-ledge management	**Are internal and external communication / dissemination and knowledge management clearly addressed?**	**5 points**
	Are the communication activities coherently integrated in the overall project strategy? (e.g. clear communication plan outlining the main objectives, etc.).	
	Does the partnership ensure proper dissemination of information and knowledge transfer between the partners?(e.g.: provides measures to consolidate, categorise, and disseminate existing research, expertise and best practices through peer-to-peer learning, transfers and cooperation; promotes and uses tools for knowledge transfer (intranets; common databases via the Internet)	
	Does the partnership plan to develop and consolidate networking resources? (e.g.: is the partnership sufficiently embedded in relevant networks and associations in the member states and internationally?)	
	Are the proposed information and dissemination activities able to achieve visibility among relevant target groups? (E.g. the target groups relevant clearly defined and cover the entire project area. The general approach towards each group is described through relevant channels, tailored activities, etc.)	
	Does the project makes provisions for feedback mechanisms and evaluation measures for the communication activities?	
	Maximum total score	**20 points**

Tab. 5: Sub-criteria to assess the **Quality of Content** (six sub-criteria)

Sub-criteria	Questions with related guiding questions	Score
	CONTENTS	
2.1 Project's contribution to the overall objectives of the programme and to EU principles	**To what extent is the project expected to provide a significant contribution to the overall objectives of the programme?**	**5 points**
	Has the project a clear transnational dimension and transnational impact (no mere addition of local actions)?	
	Is the project clearly contributing to the territorial and/or economic and/or social integration process in the programme area through facilitation innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge economy and information society and / or to improve the attractiveness of regions and cities taking into account physical and knowledge accessibility and environmental quality?	
	Is the project clearly contributing to the promotion of sustainable development?	
	Is the project clearly contributing to the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination?	
2.2 Project's specific contribution to the Priority Axes and Areas of Intervention of the programme	**To what extent is the project expected to provide a significant contribution to Priority Axes and Areas of Intervention of the programme?**	**5 points**
	Will the achievement of the project objectives (outcomes) clearly contribute to the selected Area of Intervention and therefore the related Priority Axis?	
	Has the present situation (status quo) related to the project context been thoroughly described and is the proposal addressing this situation? (status quo, should include analysis of the present with a consideration of relevant linked past activites along with planned future activities)	

2.3 Quality of work plan and description of activities	**Is the project's conceptual approach and work plan well designed and realistic?**	**5 points**
	Is there a clear and logical link between the problems, objectives, , resources, activities outputs and results?	
	Are the described activities detailed (how, where, when and by whom they will be undertaken) and relevant ?	
	Does the project include balanced activities at appropriate levels (national, regional and local), if relevant?	
	Is the time plan realistic and have any potential difficulties and delays been correctly assessed?	
2.4 Concreteness and usability of the projects deliverables	**Are the projects deliverables clearly defined and are the assumptions on their use realistic?**	**5 points**
	Do the outputs and the expected results are realistic, concrete, innovative and useful?	
	Are the target groups/stakeholders clearly defined?	
	Does the project show adequate and realistic provisions for the uptake of deliverables from the target groups/stakeholders and does it include follow-up activities after delivery?	
	Are the indicators proposed appropriate to assess the progress of the project	
	Are the transferability and the three dimensions of sustainability of the project's results clearly outlined and realistic?	
2.5 Value for money	**Does the amount of the grant being requested represent value for money?**	**10 points**
	Is the budget allocated to each project activities justified and correctly quantified in relation with the proposed project activities ?	
	Is the budget logically distributed between work packages and budget lines? Is there coherence between the budget allocated to budget lines and the activities of each WP?	
	Is the budget reasonable compared to the number of partners involved? Are the partner's budgets coherent with the role of partners in project activities for each WP?	
	Are spending forecasts realistic and appropriately timed for the project?	
	Is the budget allocated to management and coordination tasks reasonable?	
	Is the budget allocated to external expertise reasonable?	
	If investments are foreseen, are these costs justified and consistent with the overall aim of the proposal?	
	If equipment costs are budgeted, are these costs detailed in the application and consistent with the overall aim of the proposal?	
2.6 Synergies with other policies, programmes and projects	**Are there synergies and / or complementarities with other territorial cooperation projects or other EU funded policies and programmes?**	**5 points**
	Does the proposal take into consideration the capitalisation of the results of previous INTERREG projects? Is it described in detailed and not just a simple listing?	
	Does the proposal have synergies with ongoing projects (if relevant) carried out under this or other EU-funded programmes?	
	Does the project make reasonable provisions for interaction with relevant actors to ensure the coordination of activities with other EU funded programmes and initiatives?	
	Is there sufficient reference to the innovative character of the project avoiding duplication of existing work?	
	Are there any other EU programmes that will be more appropriate for funding proposals tackling the mentioned problem/challenge? Is there evidence that the SEE transnational cooperation programme is the most appropriate one?	
	Maximum total score	**35 points**

Annex 1: Presentation of the Priority Axes and corresponding Areas of Intervention

Summarized descriptions, based on the approved Operational Programme, are elaborated for every Area of Intervention of the four Priority Axes (Innovation, Environment, Accessibility, Sustainable Growth Areas) in the SEE Operational Programme.

The purpose of the summarized description is to provide potential applicants with details in a concise form about the respective Areas of Intervention, the Operational Objective pursued and indications and suggestions for developing their project idea into a full fledged proposal.

The summarized description is completed by a number of practical project examples, which illustrate the aforementioned elements of each Area of Intervention.

It should be noted that the EU co-financing rate for the four Priority Axes is 85%. Applicants should also be aware that State Aid Rules should be respected in all cases.

Tab. 6: Priority Axes and Areas of Intervention (AoI)

Priority Axis 1 **Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship**	**Priority Axis 2** **Protection and improvement of the environment**	**Priority Axis 3** **Improvement of the accessibility**	**Priority Axis 4** **Development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas**	**Priority Axis 5** **Technical assist-ance to support implementation and capacity building**
AoI 1.1 Develop technology & innovation networks in specific fields	**AoI 2.1** Improve integrated water management and flood risk prevention	**AoI 3.1** Improve co-ordina-tion in promoting, planning and oper-ation for primary & secondary trans-portation networks	**AoI 4.1** Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements	**AoI 5.1** Secure the core management for the implementation of the programme
AoI 1.2 Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship	**AoI 2.2** Improve prevention of environmental risks	**AoI 3.2** Develop strategies to tackle the "digital divide"	**AoI 4.2** Promote a balan-ced pattern of attractive and acc-essible growth areas	**AoI 5.2** Implement accompanying activities (…)
AoI 1.3 Enhance the framework conditions and pave the way for innovation	**AoI 2.3** Promote co-operation in management of natural assets and protected areas	**AoI 3.3** Improve framework conditions for multi-modal platforms	**AoI 4.3** Promote the use of cultural values for development	
	AoI 2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency			

Priority Axis 1: Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship

The specific objective of Priority Axis 1 is to facilitate innovation, entrepreneurship, the knowledge economy and to enhance integration and economic relations in the cooperation area. Priority Axis 1 shall contribute specifically to the future development of South East Europe as a place of innovation, contributing indirectly to the economic growth and employment in the technology sector.

This Priority Axis seeks in particular to achieve three operational objectives and will support transnational partnerships and action that contribute to:

1. **Develop technology and innovation networks in specific fields** (fostering networking and technological cooperation in specific technology fields e.g. advanced engineering, Information and Communication Technologies)

2. **Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship** (addressing structural deficits especially in the SME sector)

3. **Enhance the framework conditions and pave the way for innovation** (strengthening the enabling innovation environment at the governance level and promotion of public awareness for innovation).

Potential Project Partners and stakeholders in the facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship are all national, regional, local decision-makers and bodies in the fields of education, research, knowledge-transfer, technology, labour-market and regional development, such as local and regional public authorities, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce, SMEs, universities, tertiary education, associations, technology transfer institutions, R&TD facilities, research institutions, regional international centres of R&TD excellence; regional innovation agencies, incubator houses; education and training centres, labour market services, social partners, employers' associations, trade unions, as well as all population groups which are affected by the Areas of Intervention concerned.

The Areas of Intervention (AoI) are defined in detail in the following descriptions.

AoI 1.1: Develop technology and innovation networks in specific fields

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is primarily the preparation, creation or the restructuring of technology and innovation oriented networks in specific technology fields in the industrial and service sectors relevant for the programme area.

The programme area encompasses many research, technology & innovation facilities, educational infrastructures and potential poles with initial experience in cooperation, but in general sub-critical mass and lack of (international) visibility. Therefore, there is a need to foster the cooperation of networks, clusters and technology platforms to create critical mass and strengthen specific technology fields thereby gaining (international) visibility. This will enable research, technology and innovation actors to participate with European programmes more effectively, set up mechanism to allow sharing and dissemination of key technologies, and help to establish supply chains.

The cooperation should, in the ideal scenario, generate concrete projects in building up technology and innovation capacity for improved products, processes and services in specific technology fields (e.g. advanced engineering, automotive, ICT, plastics, life science and urban technologies) and should achieve in the longer term a more intensive use of technology and innovation in South East

Europe. Attention should also be given to the application of technology and innovation at the local and regional level, integrating cleaner technologies and supporting innovation in public services.

Activities should go beyond singular interests and show a real cooperative character and offer mutual benefits.

Networking should be directly linked to activity to develop skills and competencies. The exchange of skill at various levels should be fostered (innovators, researchers, professors and students) allowing the sharing of experience and knowledge.

In the framework of technology and innovation oriented networks the implementation of cooperative pilot projects connected with small scale investments is possible.

In the programme area the public sector is expected to be the main business contract generator especially through the utilization of Structural Funds. Networks fostering innovation and new technologies (e.g. clean and energy efficient technologies, information and communication technologies to manage mobility) shall promote the inclusion of innovative aspects in public procurement. This approach could be twofold: on the one hand innovative solutions will be introduced in public services; on the other hand innovation could acquire the necessary critical mass for market success. The introduction of innovation oriented public procurement requires the development of public procurement rules and the assessment of tender rules that allow for the accommodation of technical change and innovation risks (e.g. in the development of modern technologies for water treatment plants, innovative energy concepts for public buildings, software solutions for e-government and e-democracy).

Cooperation should also be sought with the Innovation Relay Centres (IRC) (now known as the Enterprise Europe Network) which are financed under the CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007 – 2013). One of the major tasks of these IRC offices is to assist in finding suitable cooperation partners from across Europe.

Eligible activities

The orientation on research, technology and innovation involves a significant entrepreneurial development aspect. Hence pure academic research activities cannot be supported under this programme.

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable.

It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/or indicative potential beneficiaries

Preference should be given to:

- Universities, research centres, scientific institutions, higher education institutions

- Regional and local development agencies focused on technology and innovation (e.g. regional innovation agencies, technology transfer institutions);
- National, regional and local authorities;
- The participation of the private sector, especially SMEs, is encouraged although it is not possible to directly support businesses.

It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate partnership, which will produce concrete and tangible results and to assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and thereby contribute to the programme objectives.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Preparing activities that support the development of technology and innovation oriented networks in specific technology fields (e.g. feasibility studies, set up of databases);
- Developing transnational partnerships around research, technology and innovation centres and agencies in sectors with a high technology content;
- Facilitating the formation or consolidation or restructuring of transnational networks of productive clusters;
- Creating or reinforcing cooperation networks between companies and research, technology and innovation facilities of different countries and promoting joint action regarding applied research;
- Creating transnational exchange teams (out of technology and innovation agencies, centres) specialised in measures building up technology and innovation capacity for improved products, processes and services;
- Transnational partnerships promoting the inclusion of innovative aspects in public procurement as regards the application of technologies of common interest;
- Strategic cooperation aimed at enhancing the use of innovative and cleaner new technologies and its application at the local and regional level;
- Establishing transnational networks between appropriate tertiary education and research, technology and innovation facilities;
- Establishing joint training courses in connecting with technology and innovation networks;
- Establishing science and technology park networks developing standards and locational requirements for successful technology oriented real estates (“integrated high tech campus”) to be situated in the programme area;
- Increasing the internationalisation level of research, technology and innovation facilities, especially in universities and in those areas where the international rating for high educational level and research offer is still inadequate;
- Facilitating the application of technological innovation in the programme area by enhancing the mobility of researchers which will support the exchange of knowledge;

- Fostering policies to support access to and link between research, technology and innovation facilities

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Research and technological development (R&TD), innovation and entrepreneurship	3	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks between small businesses (SMEs), between these and other businesses and universities, post-secondary education establishments of all kinds, regional authorities, research centres and scientific and technological poles (scientific and technological parks, technopoles, etc.)
Improving human capital	74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

AoI 1.2: Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is primarily the preparation and/or creation (or the restructuring) of networks for better utilization of the possibilities of the SEE economic area and for a more effective provision of collective business and innovation support services especially for SMEs.

The need in the programme area seems to be obvious: An SME based economy with some leading companies as driving forces in innovation and internationalisation, but structural deficits in the SME sector, such as missing access to knowledge, “bad roads” to markets, low levels of cooperation, low level of internationalisation, lacking openness for new technologies and big disparities in economic development throughout the programme area.

This Area of Intervention promotes “second level” clustering, that means networking of existing SME support facilities in the programme area to set up mechanisms to allow sharing and dissemination of effective approaches in supporting SME.

Networks should exchange, develop, promote and apply (in pilot projects) appropriate “soft measures", e.g. for better exploitation of the market opportunities in the area, ensuring SMEs have access to relevant information, support technology transfer, encouraging micro and family firms to develop entrepreneurial spirit, mobilise start ups, manage intellectual and industrial property rights and patent rights, ease the access to appropriate forms of finance and promote the skills and knowledge necessary for innovation.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to

present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and thereby contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

Preference should be given to:

- Business support actors and facilities who address the needs of SMEs (e.g. chambers of commerce, collective business support actors);
- Universities, research centres, scientific institutions, higher education institutions, tertiary education institutions;
- Regional and local development agencies focused on technology and innovation;
- National, regional and local authorities;
- The participation of the private sector, especially SMEs, is encouraged, although it is not possible to directly support businesses

It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate partnership, which will produce concrete and tangible results, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Networking of SME support facilities to set up mechanisms for developing, sharing and dissemination of effective approaches in supporting innovative entrepreneurship;
- Pooling expertise in networks to help SMEs diagnose and solve legal, organisational and human issues associated with innovation processes;
- Cooperation activities for the support and promotion of female entrepreneurship;
- Exchanging of practice and experience among innovative SME (managed by SME-support facility);
- Increasing the SMEs' awareness of innovation and technology and how to develop better roads to market;
- Developing standards and location requirements for successful innovation oriented real estates ("innovative business parks") to be situated in the programme area;
- Developing regional business support structures within transnational partnerships;
- Cooperation in the field of innovation financing, making SMEs more familiar with various financial engineering techniques or setting up of transnational innovation trusts

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Research and technological development (R&TD), innovation and entrepreneurship	5	Advanced support services for firms and groups of firms
Research and technological development (R&TD), innovation and entrepreneurship	9	Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs
Improving human capital	74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

AoI 1.3: Enhance the framework conditions and pave the way for innovation

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is primarily to set up exchange and coordination mechanisms for research, technology and innovation approaches and policies (governance aspect) and to increase public awareness on the importance of technological progress by transnational actions in the area (awareness aspect).

Strengthening the capacity of institutions and of the society for innovation is a critical component of overall innovation performance. Missing or lacking (national) innovation strategies are a main characteristic of the programme area's innovation capacity. Whilst there has been in the best case attention focused on national and regional level of innovation systems, the programme is also seeking to encourage a "transnational innovation system" for South East Europe. Transnational cooperation is considered to be a suitable means to develop the institutional framework to facilitate and foster innovation and to create an innovation friendly environment by coordinated action in the programme area (innovative milieu, new forms of institutional governance). This could be developed by taking into account the experiences from existing good practice in "Regional Innovation Strategies" from the EU's Innovative Action Programmes.

A modern system of promoting innovation requires the understanding of a majority of citizens. The image and success of technology locations also depends on the extent that the general social climate for new developments is open minded. In a society, which positively faces the "new", innovative ideas will more easily become generally accepted; this will be attractive for researchers and enterprises. As regards the long term impact of interventions, special attention should be paid to young people, especially in conjunction with educational schemes.

Activities should support the image formation of South East Europe as a place of innovation and growth, encourage young people to develop entrepreneurial spirit, mobilise existing institutions in contacting and communicating with the population, wake enthusiasm for scientific education, tackle information lacks in the area of technology and innovation, diminish fears concerning new technologies. Special attention should be paid to gender issues to increase the participation of women in technology and innovation.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

Preference should be given to:

- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions, colleges, tertiary education institutions
- Regional and local development agencies focused on technology and innovation;
- National, regional and local authorities;
- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations

It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate partnership, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Setting up exchange and coordination mechanisms for research, technology and innovation approaches and policies across South East Europe between key players of the innovation system (including exchange schemes);
- Improving the common governance at regional and local level with respect to innovative entrepreneurship. Activities can support the development of “innovation management”, “innovation support” and “innovation governance” through analysis and monitoring of innovation performance and the development and coordination of innovation policy
- Networking between regions sharing an interest in a specific economic field /sector, aimed at strengthening the economic profile of respective regions
- Promoting the image formation of South East Europe as a place of innovation and growth through ICT
- Mobilising existing institutions (e.g. research institutes, education centres, media) in contacting and communicating via ICT with citizen to promote innovation
- Using ICT tools of the evolving information society to encouraging young people to develop entrepreneurial spirit and wake enthusiasm for scientific education (e.g. open labs for pupils accessible by ICT)

- Taking the chance to explain and experiment the potential of Environmental Technologies Innovation.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Improving human capital	74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.
Information society	11	Information and communication technologies (access, security, interoperability, risk-prevention, research, innovation, e-content, etc.)
Information society	13	Services and applications for the citizen (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.)

Priority Axis 2: Protection and improvement of the environment

The specific objective of Priority Axis 2 is to override the constraints imposed by national barriers, to foresee future environmental threats and opportunities and to develop common transnational action for the protection of nature and humans.

This Priority Axis seeks in particular to achieve four operational objectives and will support transnational partnerships and action that:

1. **Improve integrated water management and flood risk prevention** (development of transnational structures and systems/tools for an integrated management of water resources and flood risk prevention)

2. **Improve prevention of environmental and technological risks** (development of transnational structures and systems/tools for environmental risk protection, and comprehensive policy development to reduce risks and impacts on human health, biodiversity and other environmental issues)

3. **Promote cooperation in the management of natural assets and protected areas** (cooperation and know-how transfer in managing natural assets – e.g. vulnerable ecosystems, natural/semi natural areas, protected areas – and support of transnational awareness building on the importance of natural assets as a development factor)

4. **Promote energy and resource efficiency** (establish coordination and transfer of know-how on energy and resource efficiency policies, to cooperate in the adoption and adaptation of EU policies and directives in the relevant fields and the preparation of the area to cover the expected rise in energy demand and resources consumption through environmental friendly approaches).

For the programme area, the 6th Environment Action Programme[11] of the European Community 2002-2012 (6. EAP) and the derived seven thematic strategies (e.g. Thematic Strategy on Air, Waste prevention and recycling, Marine Environment, Soil, Pesticides, Natural resources and Urban Environment) offer a usable guideline for transnational action. Transnational action could primarily serve to overcome the area fragmentation and to provide the framework for the adoption and development of the required methods and structures.

Potential Project Partners and stakeholders in the protection and improvement of the environment are national, regional, local decision makers and bodies in the field of the environment, natural resources management, water management, environmental risk management and energy efficiency. Such Project Partners and stakeholders could be local and regional authorities, environmental interest groups, regional associations, regional innovation agencies, applied environmental research institutes, associations, energy suppliers, SMEs, interest groups as well as all population groups, which are affected by the Areas of Intervention concerned.

The corresponding Areas of Intervention (AoI) are defined in detail in the following description.

[11] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/

AoI 2.1: Improve integrated water management and transnational flood risk prevention

Purpose

The purpose of this Area of Intervention is the development of transnational structures and systems/tools for an integrated management of water resources and flood risk prevention.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects, which will address the need for common actions in the management of river basins coastal areas, seas, lakes and fresh water resources. The promotion of networking and skills for successful transnational operations, accompanied with infrastructure investment where appropriate will give the regions the necessary tools.

Integrated water management and transnational flood risk prevention should contribute to addressing climate change. Moreover, it is important that flood protection is developed in a way that is coherent with the Water Framework Directive and the Directive on the Assessment and Management of Floods (e.g. integrated management plan covering the two Directives).

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Universities, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- International organisations and bodies

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Elaborating integrated development and management plans of river basins, catchments areas and coastal areas, seas, lakes and fresh water resources including sustainable land use policies, agriculture and forest development supporting and intensifying an integrated approach of landscape and land use management;
- Integrated flood risk management including management plans, harmonisation of different standards; improved institutional cooperation and better integration of national and regional administrative structures;
- Elaborating foresight studies and analyses about impacts of climate change on meteorology, hydrology, erosion etc;

- Coordinating, harmonising and developing joint water management activities;
- Coordinating, harmonising and developing monitoring systems and alert mechanisms;
- Coordinating, harmonising and developing integrated reaction systems for flood protection;
- Coordinating, harmonising and developing common civil protection systems;
- Developing alternative methods and systems of water quality protection and wastewater treatment;
- Strengthening the institutional capacity and human resources at national, regional and local level for the development of integrated water management and transnational flood risk prevention especially in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and other related acts.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Environmental protection and risk prevention	53	Risk prevention (including the drafting and implementation of plans and measures to prevent and manage natural and technological risks)
Improving human capital	74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

AoI 2.2: Improve prevention of environmental risks

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is the development of transnational structures and systems/tools for environmental risk protection, and comprehensive policy development to reduce risks and impacts on human health, biodiversity and other environmental issues.

South East Europe is an area affected by a large number of environmental risks. Some of them are endemic (e.g. earthquakes, droughts, floods and forest fires), others are imposed or accelerated by human activities (e.g. contamination, landslides, erosion) and others are inflicted by global factors such as the climate change. In the programme area environmental risks take a variety of forms ranging from droughts, earthquakes and fires in the Southern part to chemical spills and landslides in the Northern part. Risks are expected to increase due to intensification of human activities and due to accelerated global climate change.

Transnational action is considered to be necessary since even single environmental hot spots can have a clear impact on a huge area and population.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects, which will develop policies, plans and systems for the joint prevention of environmental risks while facilitating the exchange of

information and coordination of activities in cases of emergency along with the rehabilitation of affected areas and risk sources.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- Voluntary sector organisations;
- International organisations and bodies.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Developing integrated policies for coordinated risk prevention and reaction to environmental risks;
- Developing plans, measures and systems, including spatial and land use planning to prevent and cope with natural risks (especially fires, floods, desertification, droughts, earthquakes) and technological risks;
- Developing monitoring systems (e.g. emission control, dataset about potential sources of pollution, emission monitoring systems for air quality, pollutants etc.) and alert mechanisms on potential natural and industrial hazards, forest fires as well as chemical and biological contamination of water, soil and air;
- Applying alert mechanisms on potential hazards (floods, coastal hazards, forest fires; chemical and biological contamination of water, soil and air; industrial accidents, safety control of nuclear power plants etc.);
- Developing information systems concerning the transport of dangerous goods and identification of relevant actions to inform the relevant groups;
- Developing regional “risks foresights” including future risk potentials, e.g. along transport corridors, economic activity zones etc;
- Identifying and managing risk sources (information policies, exchange of data and reports etc.);

- Promoting transnational actions on environmental objectives like reducing air emissions, protection of soil etc;
- Implementing awareness raising and emergency planning for the population located in very sensitive areas;
- Implementing strategies for rehabilitation of brownfields;
- Facilitating common procurement and/or operation of risk prevention infrastructure.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Environmental protection and risk prevention	44	Management of household and industrial waste
Environmental protection and risk prevention	53	Risk prevention (including the drafting and implementation of plans and measures to prevent and manage natural and technological risks)
Environmental protection and risk prevention	54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks
Improving human capital	74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through postgraduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

AoI 2.3: Promote cooperation in management of natural assets and protected areas

Purpose

The purpose of this Area of Intervention is the cooperation and know-how transfer in managing natural assets (e.g. vulnerable ecosystems, natural/semi-natural areas, protected areas) and support of transnational awareness building on the importance of natural assets as a development factor.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects, which will address the need for the implementation of EU legislation and will facilitate the coordinated management of the designated areas. The projects should also respect the demand for know-how transfer and the development of skills for the useful management of natural assets and protected areas.

The EU offers an extensive framework of directives, guidelines and tools for the management of natural assets and protected areas. In most of the cases this framework underlines the importance for transboundary and transnational action. In the “congested” programme area, with the expected rise in economic activity and correlated land use changes, this importance becomes a necessity.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed

intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Universities, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations (e.g. environmental interest groups);
- International organisations and bodies.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Developing common strategies in managing natural assets and protected areas;
- Enhancing know-how transfer about comprehensive implementation of relevant EU Directives (Fauna-Flora-Habitat Directive, Bird Directive, Water Frame Directive, etc.);
- Enhancing public information and public participation with respect to the management of natural assets and protected areas;
- Developing and coordinating management plans and structures for areas of transnational interest designated as protected areas at the national level;
- Developing corporate identity for transnational networks of protected areas (e.g. Natura 2000);
- Promoting the development of actions linked to biodiversity and the preservation of natural heritage, especially in Natura 2000 sites;
- Developing and exchanging management practices (especially within Natura 2000), to ensure the overall coherence and complementarity of the protected areas and also addressing the problems of fragmentation and connectivity between Natura sites in the area;
- Implementing transnational strategies for sustainable rural/maritime tourism in sensitive areas;
- Building awareness on the importance of natural assets as a development factor for economic sectors like agriculture, tourism and health services.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the Area of Intervention

Environmental protection and risk prevention	51	Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection
Tourism	55	Promotion of natural assets
Tourism	56	Protection and development of natural heritage

Improving human capital	74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through postgraduate studies and training of researchers, and networking activities between universities, research centres and businesses
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

AoI 2.4: Promote energy and resource efficiency

Purpose

The purpose of this Area of Intervention is to establish coordination and transfer of know-how on energy and resource efficiency policies, to cooperate in the adoption and adaptation of EU policies and directives in the relevant fields and the preparation of the area to cover the expected rise in energy demand and resource consumption through environmental friendly approaches. Interventions should be accompanied by impact assessments, taking into account possible negative impacts on agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, soil, water, air and landscape development at a transnational level.

The EU Environmental Policies set clear objectives e.g. regarding climate change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Other initiatives and in particular the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) 2007-2013 and its sub programme “Intelligent Energy for Europe” emphasize the promotion of energy and resources efficiency. Transnational action in this area contains a significant element of the transfer of know-how from the most experienced zones to those with still unutilised resources.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects, which will support the adoption of energy and resource efficiency policies and technologies. Projects should also facilitate the coordination among relevant stakeholders and raise the awareness for resource efficiency policies and technologies in the programme area.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Energy agencies;
- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors;
- Transport authorities, (public) transport operators;

- Universities, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- Voluntary sector organisations;
- Associations for renewable energies.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Developing policies for sustainable energy supply and resource efficiency at a national or regional level, which help to implement the relevant EU guidelines and directives;
- Setting up joint strategies for energy saving and energy efficiency;
- Developing "resources consumption foresights" including future bottlenecks and problem areas;
- Facilitating the coordination of energy providers, especially among renewable energy sources associations and regional and local authorities;
- Coordinating the development of infrastructure for the utilisation of renewable energy sources and especially hydropower at a transnational level;
- Supporting the development and use of fuel from renewable sources;
- Supporting the awarding and promotion of energy and resource efficient technologies and actions;
- Developing transnational policies for emission reduction to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Developing transnational strategies which support and co-ordinate sustainable exploitation schemes of renewable energy sources (hydropower, biomass, geothermic energy etc.);
- Enhancing know-how transfer about comprehensive national strategies for sustainable waste management (avoiding – re-using – recycling);
- Enhancing know-how transfer about comprehensive national strategies for sustainable fresh water management (efficient water use strategies and technologies);
- Developing transnational networks on "green industries", energy agencies, regional and local authorities;
- Developing measures for reducing the volume of traffic and/or support environmentally friendlier means of transportation, especially public transport;
- Promoting the development of sustainable waste management activities and the movement to a recycling society;
- Stimulating energy efficiency and the development of renewable energies as well as better co-ordinated efficient energy management systems and promoting sustainable transport including information to industrial customers, service providers and citizens on issues such as how to reduce energy consumption.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the Area of intervention

Research and technological development (R&TD), innovation and entrepreneurship	6	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes (introduction of effective environment managing system, adoption and use of pollution prevention technologies, integration of clean technologies into firm)
Energy	39	Renewable energy: wind
Energy	40	Renewable energy: solar
Energy	41	Renewable energy: biomass
Energy	42	Renewable energy: hydroelectric, geothermal and other
Energy	43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management
Environmental protection and risk prevention	44	Management of household and industrial waste
Environmental protection and risk prevention	45	Management and distribution of water (drinking water)
Environmental protection and risk prevention	46	Water treatment (waste water)
Environmental protection and risk prevention	47	Air quality
Environmental protection and risk prevention	48	Integrated prevention and pollution control
Environmental protection and risk prevention	49	Mitigation and adaptation to climate change
Environmental protection and risk prevention	50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land
Environmental protection and risk prevention	52	Promotion of clean urban transport
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

Priority Axis 3: Improvement of the accessibility

The specific objective of Priority Axis 3 is to promote coordinated preparation for the development of accessibility networks and the support of multi-modality.

This Priority Axis seeks in particular to achieve three operational objectives and will support transnational partnerships and activity that contribute to:

1. **Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks** (physical accessibility - provision of tools and space for coordinated promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks);

2. **Develop strategies to tackle the "digital divide"** (virtual accessibility - access to ICT networks and services - joint initiatives to lessen the "digital divide" among states and regions especially where market failure is evident or expected);

3. **Improve framework conditions for multi-modal platforms** (support of multi-modal platforms and the promotion of alternative transport means, e.g. rail and or sea compared to road – from the view of the public interest).

The programme is challenged with a large number of issues and areas and limited funds. The transnational cooperation programme cannot substitute the existing programmes and plans. However, it can provide a platform for co-ordination and agreement among states, as well as a forum for negotiations with international financing institutions, donors etc.

Potential Project Partners and stakeholders in the improvement of the accessibility are national, regional, local decision makers and bodies in the field of transport, logistics, transport safety and ICT. Project Partners and stakeholders such as national, regional and local authorities; public transport associations; transport operators; infrastructure operators; logistic centres; logistics platforms; institutes for applied research in transport and mobility; regional associations; regional innovation agencies; transport alliances; SMEs; interest groups; all population groups, which are affected by the Priorities concerned.

The corresponding Areas of Intervention (AoI) are defined in detail in the following description.

AoI 3.1: Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is the provision of tools and space for coordinated promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks. Interventions can be either for regional and local bodies pushing their agenda in the central states or for a number of South East European States towards the EU and other international institutions.

The programme cannot finance large infrastructure investments. However, significant financing cud be expected towards mobilising stakeholders, conducting feasibility studies and action plans and coordinating operations that are financed on other budgets.

Transnational action can support policy coordination among competent partners and transnational networking of regionally anchored pilot projects.

Regional interests and needs should be taken into consideration when planning high ranked and secondary transportation networks. This is to ensure that the regions are actually profiting from the transportation networks.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects, which will contribute to the creation and strengthening of networks for the coordinated development of transport connections and corridors and the elaboration of concrete action and financing plans for network development. The projects should also offer room for environmentally friendly transportation and the joint management of networks.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Transport authorities, (public) transport operator, infrastructure operator;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- International organisations and bodies.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Promoting policy coordination among competent partners and elaborating coordinated strategies for infrastructure investments, promoting complementarities between various types of investments and mobilising various financial instruments;
- Developing joint action plans for the realisation of physical infrastructure financed by other programmes;
- Promoting transnational environmental assessment (EIA-SEA) and transnational territorial impact assessments (TIA) in co-ordination with the realisation of physical infrastructure financed by other programmes;
- Increasing the transparency of ongoing corridor related programmes and projects;
- Elaborating public private partnership (PPP) schemes for parts of the transportation infrastructure;
- Establishing joint transportation networks management bodies;

- Creating transnational facilities for maintenance and road pricing of physical infrastructure;
- Fostering transnational public participation in consultations over infrastructure network development;
- Strengthening coordinated development of regional airports;
- Creating intelligent traffic information systems for agglomerations;
- Developing solutions for the flexible public transport tackling the mobility needs;
- Analysing and maximising the effects of changed/improved accessibility on regional/location development opportunities;
- Tackling specific problems of peripheral and sensible regions (e.g. traffic in mountainous regions);
- Improving access to international maritime and river ports to achieve future strategic advantage in global freight competition;
- Joint promotional campaigns for maritime and river transport and raising awareness about its environmental and economic advantages.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Transport	16	Railways
Transport	17	Railways (TEN-T)
Transport	19	Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)
Transport	20	Motorways
Transport	21	Motorways (TEN-T)
Transport	24	Cycle tracks
Transport	25	Urban transport
Transport	29	Airports
Transport	30	Ports
Transport	32	Inland waterways (TEN-T)

AoI 3.2: Develop strategies to tackle the "digital divide"

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is the support of joint initiatives to lessen the "digital divide" among states and regions especially where market failure is evident or expected. The "digital divide" is the gap between those with regular, effective access to information and knowledge via ICT (information and communication infrastructure) and those without.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects which will contribute to the development of concepts of public private partnerships for ICT accessibility, the development of concepts and implementation of ICT solutions for local and regional authorities and public services, the collaboration of public authorities and scientific institutions in the development of public services, the interoperability of information systems and the harmonisation of ICT training.

Preparatory activities are also envisaged for the development of regional ICT infrastructure and service providers as alternatives to costly earthbound broadband connections on a transnational basis. The programme is not designed to directly finance broadband infrastructure.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors;
- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- Voluntary sector organisations.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Raising awareness of ICT opportunities in regions where development of the information society is lagging behind;
- Supporting SMEs especially in remote areas to develop their business activities through the application of ICT platforms to foster the economic and social development;
- Developing public private partnerships for ICT accessibility;
- Enhancing the role of regional and local administration in the implementation of the information society especially in remote areas;
- Developing public services using e-government solutions and tools with the collaboration of public authorities and scientific institutions;
- Establishing common standards in ICT development in relation to support services and training courses;
- Promoting the interoperability of information systems e.g. in business support or education;
- Developing databases of transnational interest;
- Fostering the use of advanced ICT to reduce the need to travel and to replace physical mobility through virtual exchanges.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Information society	11	Information and communication technologies (access, security, interoperability, risk-prevention, research, innovation, e-content, etc.)
Information society	12	Information and communication technologies (TEN-ICT)
Information society	13	Services and applications for the citizen (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.)
Information society	14	Services and applications for SMEs (e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc.)
Information society	15	Other measures for improving access to and efficient use of ICT by SMEs

AoI 3.3: Improve framework conditions for multi-modal platforms

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is the support of multi-modal platforms and the promotion of alternative transport means (e.g. rail and or sea compared to road) from the view of public interest point of view. Multi-modal platforms can make existing transport more efficient and also stimulate the shift to environmentally friendly systems. Activities should go beyond singular interests and show a real cooperative character and offer mutual benefits.

The completion of the transportation networks, integration in the global market and rising consumption patterns in the area place a heavy burden on the transportation network, which is currently monopolised by road transport. Matters of operational efficiency, exploitation of the available alternative routes and last but not least environmental concerns underline the need for the promotion of multi-modal platforms. Transnational action is obviously an important issue due to the economic interrelations and transport patterns between the regions and the impact of multi-modality or lack thereof in large areas.

The transnational cooperation should generate concrete projects, which will contribute to the development of multi-modal concepts and action plans, foster agreements for the promotion of multi-modality and support the development of tools and systems for the facilitation of multi-modal platforms.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors;

- Transport authorities, infrastructure operators;
- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- Voluntary sector organisations;
- International organisations and bodies.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Increasing the potential of inland waterway and maritime transport (short sea shipping and long distance maritime transport) by concepts and action plans for the development of multi-modal terminals and hubs and improved hinterland connections,
- Supporting platforms for communication and coordination between regional and city authorities and private service providers and investors and their collective associations;
- Developing concepts and agreements on multi-modal connections especially among agglomerations;
- Developing multi-modal transport solutions and action plans (mainly over waterways and sea) aimed at relieving or bypassing bottlenecks and missing links along transnational land transport;
- Improving interoperability and intermodality of passenger and freight transport on land, inland waterways, sea and air, including harmonisation of all forms of public transport across national borders and on transnational East-West and North-South corridors;
- Creating research and innovation networks focusing on multi-modal transport solutions including new equipment, technological developments and management of logistic chains etc;
- Developing transnational supply chain management structures including measures to improve the efficiency of multi-modal logistic chains (introduction of smart technologies, simplification of administration etc.);
- Developing ICT tools and structures for better connection with multi-modal platforms including optimisation of train capacities, road haulage pricing, one-stop shops for transport transactions;
- Developing networks of logistic centres and encouraging the exchange of experience in the field of management, provision of services, cooperation within and outside the programme area;
- Supporting joint planning efforts to harmonise transport and logistical investments as well as coordinated logistical capacities and services;
- Developing solutions to improve logistics of renewable energies.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the Area of Intervention

Transport	27	Multimodal transport (TEN-T)
Transport	28	Intelligent transport systems

Priority Axis 4: Development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas

The specific objective of Priority Axis 4 is to develop and implement integrated strategies for metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements, work towards optimal polycentric structures in the programme area and use cultural values for sustainable development. The Priority Axis 4 shall contribute specifically to the future development of South East Europe as a place of sustainable and polycentric development of metropolitan areas and regional settlement systems.

As the objective indicates, the priority of sustainable urban and regional settlement development takes different forms of preventive measures AND development factors, showing a specific cross-sectoral character strongly interlinking economic, environmental, social and governance issues.

This Priority Axis seeks in particular to achieve three operational objectives and will support transnational partnerships and activities that:

- **Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements** (tackling the high concentration of economic, environmental, social and governance[12] problems such as social segregation, growing poverty, lack of investments in certain areas, insufficient provision of public services, overburdening traffic capacities);
- **Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas** (further increase of coordinated strategic planning, co-ordinated marketing and lobbying, and functional division and complementarity to achieve competitiveness, (international) visibility and ensure a sufficient level of public services);
- **Promote the use of cultural values for development** (further utilisation of the wide cultural diversity as a development factor and as an asset in global competition and to promote creativity, cultural identity and generate income and employment).

Transnational cooperation projects are tools to develop and in that sense apply integrated strategies, sharing knowledge and best practices and implementing pilot projects. The transnational level is the arena where more creative patterns and cooperation experiences can interact.

Transnational cooperation projects shall complement the (small) URBACT programme, as an instrument for exchange of experience and networking among cities.

Potential Project Partners and stakeholders in the development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas are national, regional, local decision makers and bodies in the field of urban and regional development, transport, housing, culture, tourism. Project Partners and stakeholders such as local and regional authorities, SMEs, planning and applied research institutions, development agencies, regional innovation agencies, interest groups, public transport operators, housing cooperatives and housing corporations, cultural initiative groups, institutions connected with health services sector, transnational organisations in the field of culture, as well as all population groups which are affected by the Areas of Intervention concerned.

The corresponding Areas of Intervention (AoI) are defined in detail in the following description.

[12] The planning, influencing and conducting of the policy and affairs of an organisation

AoI 4.1: Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is the development, implementation and dissemination of concrete strategies and action plans and the utilisation of transnational skills and knowledge to tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements.

Crucial problems could be of interrelated economic, environmental, social and governance nature. Multilevel activities within transnational partnerships should seek to improve these kind of crucial problems.

Joint expertise and pilot cooperation projects could be developed on a wide spectrum of issues of common interest. Transnational cooperation should combine the exchange of experience with appropriate pilot projects in urban and settlement areas to apply strategies, skills and knowledge. The cooperation programme supports joint action which serves as a booster for national or regional strategies. Cooperation partners, who work on similar or complementary problems, can use a transnational partnership within the cooperation area as boosters for local action. Cooperation partners can also use a transnational partnership in terms of „agenda setting“, in order to receive external support for innovative ideas and approaches. Cooperation partners could pool their resources to implement trainings and pilot action. Partnership projects implemented at a local and regional level can achieve a pronounced visibility for citizens.

In contrast to interregional cooperation, which deals in principle with similar issues, territorial cooperation aims at developing durable partnerships in the defined cooperation area. Only a territorial cooperation programme can facilitate this. The intensification of interregional exchange may contribute to a more cohesive and balanced territorial development of the South East Europe area.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors;
- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions;
- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations;
- Voluntary sector organisations.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

Developing transnational synergies in the field of public infrastructure and public services, e.g.:

- Developing common pilot cooperation projects to improve the urban infrastructure (e.g. waste water treatment, drinking water improvement, energy efficiency refurbishment) and to improve useful inter-connections;
- Developing new ways for public infrastructure financing;
- Improving public procurement for urban infrastructure according to EU standards;
- Improving management and monitoring systems for green areas;
- Developing effective ways for housing restructuring and improvement of residential areas;
- Tackling the needs of settlement areas that are suffering from economic and population decline.

Developing transnational synergies in planning and governance, e.g.:

- Developing integrative tools such as city development strategies in order to cover poverty, economic development, the environment (e.g. Environmental Urban Management Plans), city management, sustainable tourism development and finance;
- Development and action plans for cooperative solutions for urban renewal and revitalisation;
- Developing plans for the restructuring of former military camps;
- Developing GIS-networks (geographic information systems) to tackle specific needs (e.g. soil pollution monitoring);
- Tackling land registration as a serious problem especially concerning urban areas;
- Enhancing the management, registration and regulation of real estates along with the development and rehabilitation of urban brownfields;
- Promoting governance and development of accountability and transparency in local authorities could also be addressed. The key partners, the private sector, the community and NGOs, as well as local, regional and national government, should be mobilised in the planning, implementation and evaluation of urban development (e.g. city-district/quarter-management).

Developing transnational synergies in social issues[13] (in the context of integrated projects for urban and regional regeneration), e.g.:

- Developing pathways to integration for disadvantaged people, migrants and groups with specific needs.

Developing transnational synergies in economic issues (in the context of integrated projects for urban and regional regeneration), e.g.

[13] Special care should be taken for project activities related to social problems (e.g. migration, integration of disadvantaged people etc.) and ESF Operational Programmes in order to exploit potential complementarities.

- Developing measures to stimulate business opportunities, innovation and entrepreneurship in crisis areas;
- Developing technological and management standards for economic infrastructures (such as SME business incubators) serving to improve areas with a lack of investments.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Urban and rural regeneration	61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration
Improving access to employment and sustainability	70	Specific action to increase migrants' participation in employment and thereby strengthen their social integration
Improving the social inclusion of less-favoured persons	71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; combating discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market and promoting acceptance of diversity at the workplace
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

AoI 4.2: Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is to elaborate integrated spatial and development strategies for strengthening functional regions as carriers of growth and competitiveness and providing partners with the tools for the formulation of their role and for the formation of new partnerships within the relevant areas.

Transnational action can contribute to overcome the dilemma between a high ranking goal *promoting viable polycentrism* and the restricted availability of common awareness, joint strategies and pooled resources to achieve that demanding goal. Transnational action can serve as the framework and protecting shell for the development of the partnership for local/regional activities in advanced and experimental development strategies to develop viable polycentrism and consequently strengthen territorial cohesion in South East Europe against the emerging divides.

In the prevailing context, it is considered to be crucial to promote a balanced distribution of competitive growth areas in the cooperation area in combination with strong internal and external functional relations.

This intervention addresses multifaceted issues. They can be categorised as follows:

Joint action to formulate and manage "functional polycentricity"

The purpose is the development, implementation and dissemination of concrete strategies and action plans and the utilisation of transnational skills and knowledge in order to contribute to the optimisation of the existing extensive polycentric structure in the sense of "functional polycentricity". This linking smaller centres to attractive growth areas, capitalizing on their potential complementarities and so achieving competitiveness and ensuring a sufficient level of public services.

In the existing polycentric structure all the elements needed for the development of growth areas with “critical mass” are present. The challenge of formulating and implementing a strategy for functional cooperation means to capitalise on potential complementarities and the overcoming of geographic distances between different sized cities through enhanced cooperation links. This should be based on the analysis of the different functions and specialisations and the definition of “who will specialise in what?” Functional potentials should complement each other. Allocation of public money to the “wrong spots” should be avoided. This will require the development of strategic choices in identifying and strengthening “growth areas” and putting in place the networks that link them in both physical (infrastructure) and human terms (building up capacities, skill, knowledge). The map of South East Europe should show several interconnected zones of major growth, each carving its own niche in the European (and global) space economies. However, functional polycentricity implies the creation of “regional compensation mechanisms” and the renouncement of “militant” competition.

Joint action to support governance as a new partnership of functional areas

This purpose is the development of structures and capacities for the development of consistent policies, plans and pilot projects for all the different factors promoting sustainable growth and jobs in functional areas.

Public bodies are increasingly aware of the question: what is happening outside the traditional administrative borders (jurisdictional boundaries), but within the functional linkages. Governance can be seen as the participatory process to engage relevant stakeholders for the identification and development of functional areas. Cooperation is an option for retaining control of development processes and regaining power in development planning. In fact there is a large number of practical constraints for effective institutionalised or informal co-operation to be tackled such as indistinct legal framework for cooperation, a low degree of cooperation between economic development agencies and regional development agencies; not fully developed mechanisms of inter-communal financial compensations and contracting mechanisms, and lack of common land use management. The governance aspect could be an additional asset for rural and suburban communities, which usually lack the possibility to express and defend their interests towards metropolitan zones.

Urban-rural relations should receive attention, as for example services of general interest for rapidly shrinking and ageing rural areas.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;

- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors;
- Universities, research centres, scientific institutions.

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Developing Joint Action Plans for functional regions, e.g. in combination with extensive and participative planning processes, for better coordination between municipal authorities (both central and suburban) and rural and regional authorities, which are encouraged to pool their resources. “Hard core issues” of regional development (like transport and business location development) should be complemented by quality of life interventions such as in the field of culture, tourism and leisure. Attention should be paid to the knowledge based economy and qualification issues;
- Strengthening cooperative marketing activities to support economic and regional development, attracting investments in a transnational network of regions;
- Integrated business location concept for functional economic regions: presenting and coordinating dispersed business location offers that cover a functional region of small communes, development of business zones located at the best suitable and accessible locations;
- Developing better administrative procedures for business location development;

  Optimise and standardise public decision-making procedures within an economic calculable time frame; transparency of the obligations and conditions for private investors (e.g. binding handbook of the administration addressing investors explaining clearly defined, reliable requirements for development); define “key area programmes” as a basis for the implementation of project management methods; introduce “action planning” which means the elaboration of “regional business plans”;
- Creating public funds or other relevant tools for interventions in the land market and as an instrument of public land policy, to “protect” areas for the intended use;
- Intensifying the involvement of private money in the implementation process of urban and regional development projects by using appropriate forms of PPP; development of bodies for the management of renewal funds and development of resource centres;
- Developing networks and other forms of cooperation between public bodies to save investment costs (e.g. inter-communal industrial parks);
- Promoting public participation and empowerment, establishment of ombudsmen and facilitators of polycentricity, development of decentralisation capacities (financial, managerial, political), and establishment of “suburbs management” as urban-rural interfaces;
- Creating networks of regional development agencies promoting integrated approaches for improving the partners capabilities;
- Taking full advantage of modern information and communications technologies to support good urban governance and sustainable urban development;
- Developing cooperation focused not only on economic and infrastructure issues but on all urban functions, such as culture, education, knowledge and social infrastructure.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Urban and rural regeneration	61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.
Information society	13	Services and applications for the citizen (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.)

AoI 4.3: Promote the use of cultural values for development

Purpose

The purpose of this AoI is the inclusion of cultural values as an integral part of the programme area in the planning and development processes of urban centres, systems of settlements and surrounding rural areas.

The programme area is rich in cultural values (from prehistoric times and beyond to the ancient Greek civilization, Hellenistic times, the Roman and Byzantine Empires, the Ottoman Empire, Habsburg Monarchy and Communist period) and tourism potential. Urban development cannot take place in a "cultural vacuum" but should respect the cultural landscapes in which it is embedded. Hence the mobilisation of cultural values in the urban development context presents an opportunity for promoting local identities, bridging urban centres and rural periphery and making South East European cities an attractive place to live and work.

Transnational action should support joint conservation and the utilisation of cultural values as a development factor and a resource for sustainable tourisms.

Projects should make sure that the action undertaken contributes to developing the endogenous potential and generates directly or indirectly income and jobs.

Eligible activities

Projects could include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities (not stand alone purely networking activities, as these will NOT be supported), studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, set-up of services, preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce visible outputs, assure the fulfilment of the proposed project objectives and contribute to the programme objectives.

Target groups and/ or indicative potential beneficiaries

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and local development agencies;
- Chambers of commerce, collective business support actors, tourist associations;
- Universities, higher education institutions, research centres, scientific institutions

- Non governmental organisations / public like organisations (e.g. cultural initiative group).

Examples of (multilevel) activities within transnational partnerships that can be supported under this Area of Intervention:

- Improving good policy, programme design and capacity building with respect to joint conservation and the utilisation of cultural values;
- Enhancing joint promotion of historic places, joint labelling and communication strategies, development of transnational city marketing concepts for historical centres;
- Transnational pooling of specific expertise, e.g. for better management of archaeological sites;
- Coordinated approaches in cultural heritage conservation in combination with common professional training (database creation, mapping and monitoring the sites of cultural interest, restoring techniques, also utilizing ICT tools);
- Promoting cultural tourism, e.g. through the developing of cultural routes;
- Supporting education both in the field of traditional materials and cultural resources management;
- Developing public private civil society partnerships for the restoration of prominent sites;
- Improving the perception of heritage with the help of new media tools.

Categories (codes for the priority theme dimension) according to Annex II Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, matching the AoI

Culture	58	Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage
Culture	59	Development of cultural infrastructure
Culture	60	Other assistance to improve cultural services
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level	81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.
Tourism	57	Other assistance to improve tourist services

Annex 2: Common indicator set for monitoring and evaluation

The legal bases to set out programme indicators include Article 38, 66 and 67, General Regulation No 1083/2006; Article 12(4), ERDF Regulation No 1080/2006; and Article 11, Annex II and III, Implementation Regulation No 1080/2006.

We can differentiate basically between three sets of indicators:

1. Specific Project Indicators defined by each individual project (e.g. monitored by individual activity reports) and
2. The set of Common Programme Indicators, which is individually defined by each programme serving as the common framework to progress control especially at output and result level
3. Obligatory data on operations according to Annex II and III of the Implementation Regulation No 1828/2006 (see the detailed list in Annex II: Categorisation of Funds assistance for 2007-2013 (including various codes) and Annex III: List of data on operations). These input indicators are mandatory, must be collected for each project and are a core part of the monitoring system providing information on the financial means and on the characteristics of projects. They shall not be further analysed within the Programme Manual.

Description of Common Programme Indicators

The common programme indicator system described herein consists of two sets: the output and result indicator included in the Operational Programme (OP) and an additional set of indicators developed in the Programme Manual to serve the needs for the programme's visibility, management and information.

The indicator set should help to answer the following questions:

- Performance of the programme
- Management and delivery of the programme
- Approaching the impact of the programme

For each of these three focus levels (performance, management, impact) indicators are defined as outlined in the following table.

Tab. 1: Definition of indicators to monitor the implementation of the SEE Operational Programme

Focus level	Indicator type and scope	Reference
Impact of the programme	*Impact-indicators* *Information on the (long term) achievement of the global programme objective*	*Not included in the Operational Programme.* *It is recommended to apply in-depth methods such as inquiries and case studies to fill this gap*
Approaching the impact of the programme	**Result indicators – summarizing the projects results in view of the programmes objectives** Information on the contribution of each project in achieving the programme objectives	▪ Result indicators on the project's specific contribution to the Priority Axes and Areas of Intervention of the programme (ex-ante quantified) ▪ Specific result indicators for the Environmental Monitoring ▪ Result indicators on the project's contribution to cross-cutting objectives of the programme
Management and delivery of the programme	**Output and result indicators related to Technical Assistance** Information on physical output and direct products generated by TA	▪ Output and result indicators related to types of activity to reflect the implementation of the Technical Assistance
Performance of the programme	**Output and result indicators at project level** Information on physical output and direct products generated by specific project activities	▪ General output and result indicators at project level related to types of activity (can be aggregated to show the programme's performance)
	Input indicators (or Resource indicators) Information on means and resources collected at project level for each component of a project)	▪ Obligatory data on operations according to Annex II and III, Regulation No 1828/2006 ▪ Profile of partners/partnerships involved ▪ Profile of types of activities and costs

The Common Programme Indicator set shall be recorded at the project level related to types of activity in order to be able to flexibly connect and aggregate/cluster the entire set of indicators at the programme level.

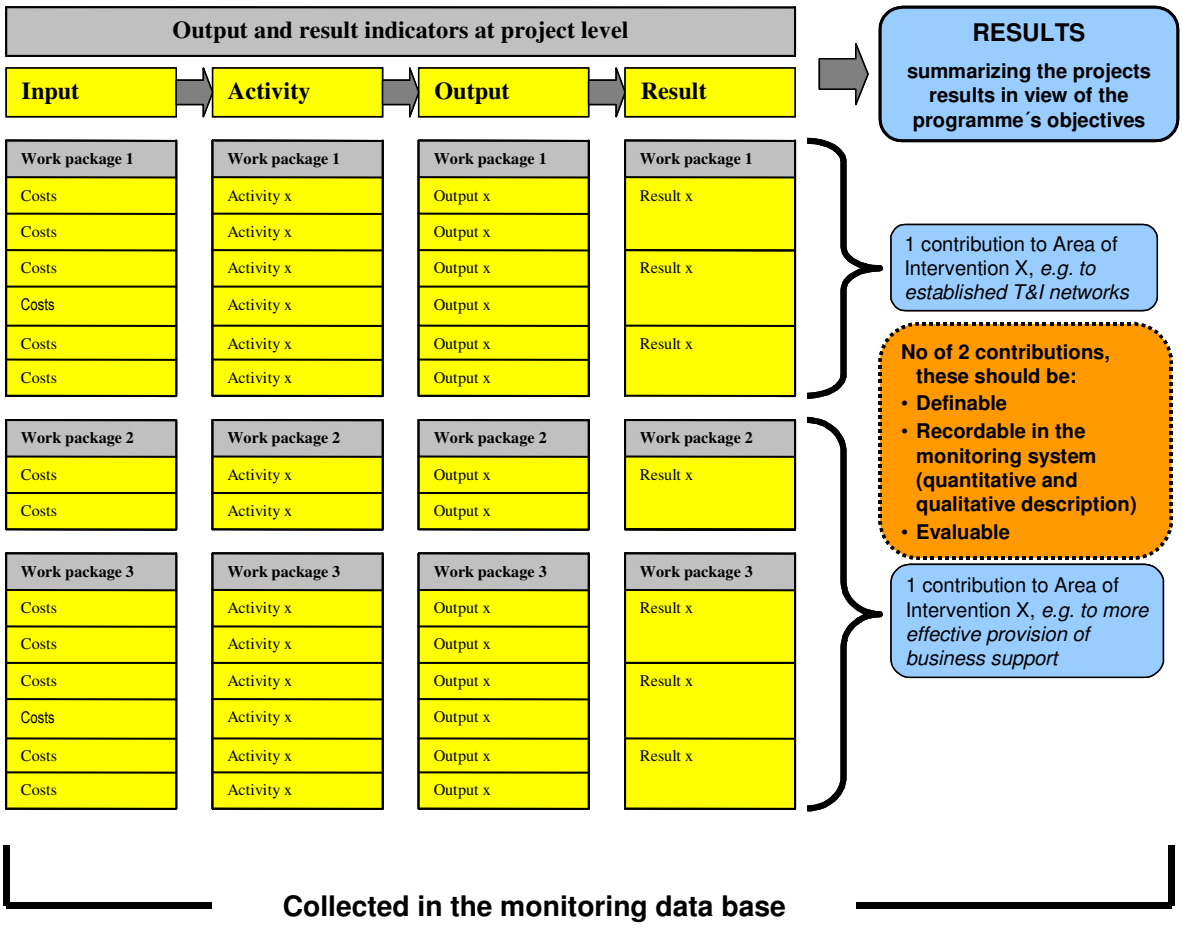
Therefore, all relevant indicators shall be included into the Application Form and into the reporting system in order to monitor planned contributions and effectively delivered contributions.

Specific Project Indicators and Common Programme Indicators should form a "Monitoring Sheet" following the Logical Framework principles. This "Monitoring Sheet" shall accompany projects, from the ex-ante application to the ex-post final report, through the entire project lifetime. The JTS shall be responsible for the maintenance of the "Monitoring Sheets".

The common programme indicators may overlap with the specific project indicators, if applied by the individual project to a feasible extent, e.g. the output indicators related to project activities.

In the following figure the systematic of the common programme indicators is outlined.

Fig. 1: Systematic of indicators



Three basic groups of indicators are defined based on the Working Papers of the European Commission:

1. **Input indicators** (or Resource indicators) provide information on the financial, human, material, organisational means used to implement the programme. It is very useful to collect data on the characteristics of projects for evaluation use. They classify each project by selected categories/codes. The categorisation allows the establishing of a link between resources and types of projects (clustering). Input indicators deliver a major part of the information necessary to administrate operations and are very useful for collecting data on the characteristics of partnerships for evaluation use. Input indicators should be continuously updated according to the project progress.

2. **Output indicators** represent the physical output of the projects activity and serve at project level for monitoring the implementation of activities (types of activity), which are related to various work packages of projects.

3. **Result indicators** represent at the project level direct products generated (by a bundle) of outputs. These results at project level can be summarised in view of the programme objectives in order to reflect the contribution of the projects to the specific objectives of the

programme. It is important to record the contributions in terms of valuable qualitative descriptions, because pure numbers of contributions are very limited in their value in explaining the impact of the programme. The Commission's Working Paper 2 (page 10) encourages the Member States to concentrate their efforts on the improvement of result indicators.

Tab. 2: Input indicators

Issue	Indicators	Data collection
Type of co-operation	No of partnerships respecting only two of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing of the project	Part of the Application Form, checked by JTS
	No of partnerships respecting only three of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing of the project	
	No of partnerships respecting four of the following criteria: Joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing of the project	
Geographic focus	Thematic cooperation with no specific geographic focus (Yes/No)[14]	Part of the Application Form, checked by JTS
	Functional geographic areas co-operation (Yes/No)[15]	
	No of project partners with a local geographic scope	
	No of project partners with a regional geographic scope	
	No of project partners with a national geographic scope[16]	
Type of partnership	No of total project partners	Part of the Application Form, checked by JTS
	No of participating states	
	No of partnerships including EU non member states	
	No of multilevel partnerships (including at least 2 levels: national, regional, local level)	
	No of homogeneous partnerships (e.g. all partners are municipalities)	
	New partnership, i.e. over 50% partners cooperating for the first time (Yes/No)	
	To a large extent established partnership, i.e. over 50% of the partners have worked together in a common project (e.g. in CADSES) (Yes/No)	
Time-dimension of co-operation	No of temporary networks / partnerships established for the project life span	Part of the Application Form and Final report, checked by JTS
	No of permanent networks / partnerships intended longer than the project life span	
Indicator reflecting Partners	No of project partners from national, regional and local authorities	Part of the Application Form, checked by JTS
	No of project partners from regional and local development agencies, regional associations	
	No of project partners from chambers of commerce, collective business support actors	
	No of project partners from infrastructure providers and operators	
	No of project partners from research and technology (universities, research centres, scientific institutions)	
	No of project partners from education and training centres, labour market services	
	No of project partners from non-governmental organisations / public like organisations	

[14] Beneficiaries: Thematic cooperation without a concrete spatial character, e.g. cooperation on SME financing or Innovation capacity building that could be applied to "any" geographical area within the SE-Europe cooperation area.

[15] Beneficiaries: Thematic cooperation with connection to a functional region is organized around a node or focal point with the surrounding areas linked to that node, e.g. along Corridor X, in the basin of the Danube, coastal Adriatic regions etc.

[16] Beneficiaries: Related to partners' scope of activities, e.g. ministries, national research institutes etc.

	No of project partners from voluntary sector organisations	
	No of project partners from international organisations and bodies	
	No of project partners from other relevant public like organisations	
	No of project partners from the private sector, especially SMEs	
	No of "other" project partners	
Type of costs occurring in projects	Allocation/expenditure on staff cost	Derived from the Application Form (planned) and of Progress Reports (delivered), conducted by JTS
	Allocation/expenditure on overheads	
	Allocation/expenditure on travel and accommodation costs	
	Allocation/expenditure on external expertise and services	
	Allocation/expenditure on equipments	
	Allocation/expenditure on small-scale Infrastructure Investments	
	Allocation/expenditure on financial charges and guarantee costs	
Type of activity to be implemented in projects	Allocation/expenditure on networking, dissemination and exchange of information activities	Derived from the Application Form (planned) and of Progress Reports (delivered), conducted by JTS
	Allocation/expenditure on studies and operational plans	
	Allocation/expenditure on capacity building activities	
	Allocation/expenditure on promotion actions	
	Allocation/expenditure on set-up of services	
	Allocation/expenditure on preparation and conduction of investments	
	Allocation/expenditure on infrastructure investment	
	Allocation/expenditure on administration	
	Allocation/expenditure on others	

Tab. 3: General output and result indicators at project level related to types of activity (can be aggregated to show in one table the programme's performance)

Type of Activities	**Output** of the activity (physical output)	**Result** (benefits)
Networking, dissemination and exchange of information activities (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of articles/appearances published in the press and in other media (including online media, TV, radio) ▪ No of press conferences ▪ Average of hits per month on the project's website ▪ No of publications produced (editions, specify: e.g. folder, newsletter, brochure, report, guideline, handbook), No of copies disseminated ▪ No of transnational events implemented, no of participants involved ▪ No of national events implemented, no of participants involved ▪ No of regional events implemented, no of participants involved ▪ No of study visits organised, no of participants involved	▪ No of permanent information sources / channels in project (e.g. websites, regular publications) ▪ No of individuals reached directly through dissemination outputs in the co-operation area ▪ No of administrative actors reached directly through dissemination outputs in the co-operation area ▪ No of private sector actors reached directly through dissemination outputs in the co-operation area ▪ No of SME reached directly through dissemination outputs in the co-operation area ▪ No of advanced tools and methodologies adopted to increase the projects visibility among experts and wider communities, the public (additionally description necessary)
Studies and operational plans (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of studies produced ▪ No of guidelines produced ▪ No of management plans developed ▪ No of joint action plans produced ▪ No of databases created or improved	▪ No of common positions / agreements formulated ▪ No of common methodologies adopted ▪ No of strategies adopted at governmental level ▪ No of innovative products developed ▪ No of regional/local policies and instruments improved or developed ▪ No of common standards established (e.g. through new guidelines) ▪ No of new tools / instruments developed ▪ No of impact studies on environmental issues carried out (e.g. in pre-investment projects) ▪ No of pilot actions prepared (first application) ▪ No of pilot actions implemented (first application)
Capacity building activities (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of training events, seminars organised, ▪ No of participants involved ▪ No of individuals that participated in exchange schemes	▪ No permanent exchange programmes established ▪ No of staff members with increased capacity (awareness / knowledge / skills) ▪ No of advanced tools and methodologies adopted to improve knowledge management within the partnership (additionally description necessary)
Promotion actions (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of promotion concepts ▪ No of promotion actions	▪ No of regions proactively promoted
Set-up of services (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of services developed	▪ No of common management structures / systems established ▪ No of individuals benefiting directly from new / improved services

Preparation and conduction of small scale infrastructure investments (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of small scale infrastructure projects	▪ No of investment proposals developed (if possible specify volume of investment) ▪ No of private market reactions achieved (e.g. private activities mobilized) ▪ No of investment projects implemented (specify volume of investment) ▪ No of infrastructures of common interest improved
Administration (Allocation/expenditure)	▪ No of person in charge for administration of projects ▪ No of project meetings held	▪ No of successfully implemented projects[17]

Data collection: Indicators should be part of the Application Form (planned) and of the Progress Reports (delivered), checked by JTS

Tab. 7: Result indicators on the project's contribution to cross-cutting objectives of the programme

Cross-cutting programme objectives	Results
Equal opportunities and non-discrimination	▪ No of projects directly contributing positively to equal opportunities and non-discrimination ▪ No of projects being neutral to equal opportunities and non-discrimination
Environment	▪ No of projects with positive effects on sustainability and eco-compatibility ▪ No of projects being neutral on sustainability and eco-compatibility ▪ No of bio diversity areas maintained
Interaction and coordination with other EU funded programmes	▪ No projects achieving in fact synergies with Objective 1 and 2 Programmes ▪ No projects achieving in fact synergies with other Territorial Cooperation Programmes ▪ No projects achieving in fact synergies to other EU programmes (CIP, FP 7, etc.)

[17] Successful project implementation: Most of the project objectives and expected results have been achieved and the planned funds have been spent to a great extent

Tab. 8: Result indicators in view of the programme objectives

Focus	Indicators	Data collection
Priority Axis 1	**Total no of contributions to facilitated innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge economy and enhanced integration and economic relations in the co-operation area**	Part of the Application Form (planned) and of Progress Reports (delivered), checked and summed up by JTS It is important to record the contributions additionally in terms of valuable qualitative descriptions
	Of this:	
	No of contributions to established technology and innovation oriented networks in specific technology fields	
	No of contributions to more effective provision of collective business and innovation support especially for SME	
	No of contributions to improved innovation governance and increased public awareness with regard to innovation	
Priority Axis 2	**Total no of contributions to protected and improved environment**	
	Of this:	
	No of contributions to improved integrated water management and flood risk prevention structures and systems	
	No of contributions to improved transnational risk prevention structures and systems	
	No of contributions to co-ordinated activities on management schemes of natural assets and protected areas	
	No of contributions to co-ordinated activities on energy and resource efficient technologies, services and policies	
Priority Axis 3	**Total no of contributions to the co-ordinated preparation of accessibility networks and supported multi-modality**	
	Of this:	
	No of contributions to the co-ordinated promotion, planning and operation of primary and secondary transportation networks	
	No of contributions to co-ordinated activities to lessen the digital divide among states and regions especially in the case of market failure	
	No of contributions to co-ordinated activities for increased efficiency of existing transport and to the stimulated shift to environmentally friendly transportation systems	
Priority Axis 4	**Total no of contributions to developed and implemented integrated strategies for metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements, work towards optimal polycentric structures in the area and used cultural values for sustainable development**	
	Of this:	
	No of contributions to built up and disseminated strategies, skills and knowledge and pilot action for tackling crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements	
	No of contributions to the provision of partners with new tools for the formulation of their role and the formation of new partnerships for functional growth areas	
	No of contributions to improved joint conservation and better utilisation of cultural values for development and sustainable tourism	

Tab. 9: Specific result indicators for the Environmental Monitoring according to SEA "Guiding Questions" to fulfil the SEA Directive requirements on environmental monitoring (2001/42/EC, Article 10 Monitoring)

Issue	Indicators	Data collection
Water	No of contributions influencing the surface and/or ground water quality in the sense of the Water Framework Directive ("good ecological and chemical status")	Part of the Application Form (planned) and of Progress Reports (delivered), checked by JTS
	No of contributions positively affecting the hydro-morphology of river systems	
	No of contributions promoting the sustainable use of water resources	
Soil	No of contributions helping to protect soil attributes	
	No of contributions having positive effects on the state of contaminated sites	
	No of contributions promoting sustainable waste management with focus on avoiding waste dumping and reducing land filling	
Air, Climate	No of contributions leading to reduction of air pollutants	It is important to record the contributions additionally in terms of valuable qualitative descriptions
	No of contributions improving the ambient air quality	
	No of contributions leading to reduction of green house gases (GHG)	
	No of contributions increasing energy efficiency	
	No of contributions changing positively the role of renewable energy sources	
	No of contributions leading to reduction of transport related emissions	
Population, Human Health	No of contributions catalysing the reduction of the share of population exposed to noise	
	No of contributions supporting endeavours to reduce environmental related health risks	
Fauna, Flora, Biodiversity	No of contributions supporting the EU objective to stop the loss of biodiversity	
	No of contributions improving the quality and/or quantity of protected areas, especially the NATURA 2000 network	
Landscape, Cultural Heritage	No of contributions influence the demand of land take for urban development	
	No of contributions supporting conservation or reconstruction of valuable cultural landscape	
	No of contributions facilitating protection of cultural heritage	
	No of contributions supporting sustainable urban and regional development	
	No of contributions enhancing protection against natural hazards	

Tab. 10: Output and result indicators related to Technical Assistance

Type of Activities	**Output** of the activity (physical output)	**Result** (benefits)
Activities related to public awareness	▪ No of dissemination events organised ▪ No of press releases produced ▪ No of brochures, newsletters disseminated (editions and copies) ▪ Average no of visits per month on the programme's website	▪ No of permanent information sources / channels in operation (e.g. websites, regular publications) ▪ No of individuals reached directly through dissemination outputs in the co-operation area
Activities related to coordinating the programme	▪ No of monitoring meetings held ▪ No of meetings with national coordination held ▪ No of meeting with financial controlling group held ▪ No of meetings with SEE programme actors held	▪ % allocated ERDF funds at programme level per end of 2009 ▪ % allocated ERDF funds at programme level per end of 2013
Activities related to project generation	▪ No of information events carried out ▪ No of consulted applicants ▪ No of Expression of Interests submitted ▪ No of full applications submitted ▪ No of strategic projects developed (top down projects)	▪ No of applications approved and contracted
Activities related to project implementation	▪ No of consulted project LPs ▪ No of reports received and treated	▪ No of successfully finalised projects

Data collection continuously by JTS

Annex 3: SEE Contact Points

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