

Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020

Restricted Call for submission of Concept notes

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline for the submission of Concept notes: 7 October 2022

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Legal Basis

CPR	REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006
ETC Regulation	REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal
IPA II Regulation	REGULATION (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)
IPA II Implementing Regulation (IPA II IR)	Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II)
Financial Regulation	Regulation (EU) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council from 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union
Delegated ETC Regulation	Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for Cooperation programmes
Cooperation Programme	The latest version of Cooperation Programme is version 4.0 from December 2020
Programme Rules on Eligibility of Expenditures	This document defines rules on eligibility of expenditures and provides guidance for the beneficiaries requesting IPA II ¹ co-funding as well as for Programme management bodies including First Level Controllers as regards the funding conditions and certification of expenditures in the Programme.

¹ The Programme is co-financed from ERDF (Croatia) and IPA II (Serbia) Funds, as defined in Cooperation Programme.

	Programme rules are applicable for all beneficiaries from the participating countries and for all operations ² financed by Programme.
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Operations contracted within this Call shall be implemented taking into account the following:	
Programme Visibility Guidelines	This document provides advice and guidance on communication activities within Programme projects. Project partners shall follow these Guidelines to ensure adequate visibility of EU contribution to IPA cross-border cooperation projects for the financing period 2014-2020, so that public awareness of the EU action is strengthened, and that a consistent image of EU support is created in the entire Programme area.
Last version of Project Implementation Manual	Project Implementation Manual (PIM) is a guide for Lead Partners (LPs) and Project Partners (PPs) in the implementation of the projects (on questions related to administrative and financial management, public procurement, reporting and other Programme related requirements).
Relevant national rules	Relevant national rules applicable to the Lead Beneficiary and Project Partners.

All of the above-mentioned documents are available on Programme website: <https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia.eu/>.

² Operation = Project.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

These Guidelines for Applicants (hereinafter GfA) aim to provide practical information to the applicants for the successful submission of the Concept notes.

This document presents general information on the Programme (including overview of the Programme: eligible cross-border area, priority axes and specific objectives, Programme indicators, Programme management structure, financial allocation, etc.), the submission procedure, the assessment and selection criteria, the decision procedure and other practical information.

The Application Package for the Call consists of:

Guidelines for Applicants and annexes;

1. Template for Concept note for each Priority Axis
2. Programme indicators

The Application Package is available on the Programme web site: <https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia.eu/>

1.1. Overview of the Programme

Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Serbia 2014-2020 (hereinafter the Programme) has been prepared in line with the above listed legislation. The Programme is the result of a co-operative effort coordinated by the Managing Authority together with the national, regional, local authorities and other relevant bodies of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia that were involved in preparation of the Programme. Cooperation Programme (version 1.0) has been approved by the European Commission on 24 August 2015. The latest applicable version of the Programme is version 4.0.

Detailed information can be found in Cooperation Programme and corresponding annexes, available on the Programme web site: <https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia.eu/about-programme/programme-documents-legislation/>

1.1.1. Programme strategy

The Programme is perceived as the instrument for the implementation of EU cohesion policy as the main investment tool for delivering Europe 2020 goals: smart, sustainable and inclusive growth that is to be achieved by concentrating on more effective investments in education, research and innovation, move towards a low-carbon economy and on job creation and poverty reduction thus focusing on five ambitious goals in the areas of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy.

The overall aim of this Programme is to strengthen the social, economic and territorial development of the Programme area through implementation of joint interventions in the areas of health and social care, environment protection and sustainable energy, development of sustainable tourism as well as sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage assets and strengthening of competitiveness and business environment.

The selected Priority axes reflect the needs and challenges of the Programme area. Each Priority axis consists of at least one specific objective, which represents a positive change that the Programme aims to achieve in the cross-border area.

Priority axis (PA)	 Specific objective (SO)
1. Improving the quality of public social and health services in the Programme area	1.1. To improve the quality of facilities, services and skills in the area of public health and social care
2. Protecting the environment and biodiversity, improving risk prevention and promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency	2.1. To enforce integrated cross-border monitoring / management systems for key existing risks and environmental and biodiversity protection 2.2. To promote the use of sustainable energy and energy efficiency
3. Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage	3.1. To strengthen, diversify and integrate the cross-border tourism offer and better manage cultural and natural heritage assets
4. Enhancing competitiveness and developing business environment in the Programme area	4.1. To improve competitiveness of the Programme area through strengthening cooperation between business support institutions, clusters, education and research organisations and entrepreneurs with aim to develop new products / services / patents / trademarks in the Programme area

1.1.2. Programme area

The Programme area covers the following NUTS III regions³ of Croatia and Serbia:



Map 1: Geographical structure of the Programme area⁴

1.2. Financial allocation and sizes of grants

The available EU contribution (in EUR) **allocated for this restricted Call** is broken down per Priority axis as follows:

Priority axis (PA)	Indicative EU contribution (grant) (in EUR) ⁵
PA 1	80.000,00
PA 2	440.000,00

³ NUTS level III regions (or equivalent regions in the non-MS) covered by the Programme.

⁴ Geographical structure of the Programme area is Annex 3 to the Cooperation Programme. Graphical representation of the territory covered by the Programme is without prejudice to the settlement of the dispute regarding the extension of the state border between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Croatia.

⁵ Please note this is only indicative amount which may be increased or decreased at the moment of contracting.

PA 3	200.000,00
PA 4	250.000,00
TOTAL	970.000,00

Each project must request exact amount of EU contribution available for **PA 1 and PA 3**.
Within **PA 2** each project must request min. 220.000,00 EUR and max. 440.000,00 EUR of EU contribution and within **PA 4** min. 125.000,00 EUR and max. 250.000,00 EUR.

The Programme will finance min. 20% and max. 85% of the total eligible expenditures and each project partner shall provide min. 15% co-financing. Each eligible cost under all expenditure categories (including preparatory and closure costs) is reimbursed applying the Programme co-financing rate (max. 85%).

The planned implementation period of an Operation/Project shall not **be shorter than 6 nor exceed 9 months. All operations shall be implemented by 31 October 2023, at the latest.**

1.3. Objective of the restricted Call

The Programme aim is to contract additional projects which shall capitalize and further maximize the effectiveness of outputs and results of projects that have been supported within 1st and/or 2nd Call for Proposals and finalized by 30 June 2022. The Programme intention is to contract only those projects which would focus on certain types of actions/activities and Programme results.

Besides that, projects have to contribute to Programme output and result indicators.

The indicators are measurable units used to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Programme. They serve as a tool for monitoring and evaluation of the extent to which the Programme has achieved its objectives and how efficiently:

- **Output indicators** - measure the achievement of the quantitative targets of the Programme at the level of a specific objective.
- **Result indicators** - measure the level of achievement of the intended positive change defined by a specific objective.

NOTE!

- 1. Project main (overall) objective has to clearly target one Programme specific objective within the chosen Priority axis.**
- 2. Project specific objective needs to show direct contribution to the project main (overall) objective.**

3. Each project (and corresponding results) must contribute to the achievement of a Programme result indicator and this contribution has to be clearly described, demonstrated and verifiable (measurable in numbers or percentage).
4. Project activities and related deliverables need to contribute to the project outputs (project outputs represent outcomes obtained following the implementation of project activities).
5. Project outputs need to be captured by the Programme output indicators.

For further details on Programme objectives, Programme strategy, Programme indicators, priority axis and other, please refer to the Cooperation Programme.

2. RULES APPLICABLE FOR RESTRICTED CALL

The funding shall be made available to applicants through a **restricted Call**. The Managing Authority launches the Call by inviting all interested project partners who already implemented a project within 1st and/or 2nd CfP to submit their Concept notes. These Guidelines set out the rules for the submission and selection of the Concept notes.

2.1. Cross border relevance

The Programme shall support operations, which deliver direct cross-border impact and benefits for the Project Partners / target groups / project area / Programme area. The Project should clearly demonstrate the importance of the cross-border approach to the topic addressed and demonstrate that the project overall objective and result could not have been achieved without the involvement of cross-border element.

Direct cross-border impact is understood in terms of respecting the following **cooperation criteria** as they are defined below:

- **Joint development** means that the Application must be designed in close cooperation of the partners from both sides of the border. The Application must clearly show joint ideas and priorities reflected in development of joint activities. The Lead Applicant is the coordinator of this process, but all partners should be included in/contribute to the development of project idea from the beginning.
- **Joint implementation** means that the implementation of project activities must be coordinated/implemented jointly by all project partners resulting in contribution to project overall objective and project result. Moreover, a number of separately implemented activities on different sides of the border must contribute to one joint project objective/result in order to consider this criterion met. Please note that the Lead Partner bears the responsibility for the overall project implementation and each Project Partner takes responsibility for implementing its part of the project activities,

- **Joint staffing** means that the proposed project staff will be jointly involved in the implementation of the project activities (among partners on both sides of the border). Staff members should coordinate their activities with others involved in the project activities and exchange information regularly. However, unnecessary overlapping of similar functions within the Project team should be avoided.
- **Joint financing** means that there will be only one Subsidy Contract per Operation. The Project has a joint budget with funding allocated to partners according to the activities they are carrying out.

Each Operation has to fulfil at least three (3) of the described cross-border cooperation criteria, out of which joint development and joint implementation are mandatory. In addition to the two (2) mandatory criteria, each operation has to fulfil joint staffing or joint financing criteria.

2.2. Horizontal principles

The following Programme horizontal themes shall be observed by all applicants in the development and implementation of their projects:

a) Sustainable development – activities that relate to the biodiversity and environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, energy efficiency and renewable energy, green entrepreneurship, business focused on sustainable development, preventions of investments with considerable negative environmental and climate effects and overall sustainability;

b) Equal opportunities and non-discrimination – promotion of equal opportunities and prevention of any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the Programme and, in particular, in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination, and in particular, the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities;

c) Equality between men and women – promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at Programme and Operation level.

2.3. Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for funding under the Programme, the Concept note of the project should meet following sets of criteria:

1. Eligibility of proposals
2. Eligibility of applicants (project partners)

3. Eligibility of actions/activities
4. Eligibility of expenditures.

2.3.1. Eligibility of proposals

In order to be eligible for financing **it is obligatory** for the proposal to capitalize and further maximize the effectiveness of outputs and results of a **successfully implemented project within 1st and/or 2nd CfP.**

Ineligible proposals are those which:

- were not successfully implemented within 1st and/or 2nd CfP (subsidy contract was terminated);
- failed to achieve at least 65% of planned target values of each project output.

However, for 2nd CfP projects that approvals of project progress reports are still pending, the achievement of target values will be calculated against 65% taking into account the values reported (and evidenced with proper documentation) within the project progress reports submitted to the JS by the deadline for submission of the Concept note.

Project partners who participated in terminated projects and/or projects which failed to achieve at least 65% of planned target values of each project output **may** participate in capitalization proposals of other partners (Concept notes), if appropriate.

2.3.2. Eligibility of applicants (project partners)

It is recommended that the project partnership is the same as in already implemented projects from the 1st or the 2nd CfP. However, if appropriate, there can be fewer project partners than in implemented projects.

Also, new project partners may be introduced instead of previous project partners. There are two types of new project partners that are eligible:

- a) partner from another implemented project within 1st and/or 2nd CfP;
- b) applicant who has never participated in already implemented project within 1st and 2nd CfP.

New project partners cannot take the role of Lead applicant. **There can be only one newly introduced project partner per project.**

It is recommended that the Lead applicant is the same institution as in already implemented project within 1st or 2nd CfP. However, if agreed within partnership, another project partner may take the role of LP.

In order to be eligible for financing the project partner who already implemented a project within 1st and/or 2nd CfP must respect the following:

- project partner did not withdraw from the previous project;
- there was no delay in recovery of funds if applicable.

Important note:

Please note that the unprofessional conduct of the project partners such as: fraud, detected financial corrections and irregularities above 10.000 EUR, poor communication with Programme authorities, unjustified delays in submitting reports, low absorption rate (below 90%), may be taken into account during assessment process.

Project partners who withdrew from the previous project and/or who were late with recovery of funds **may not** participate in capitalization proposals (Concept notes).

In order to be eligible, **applicant who has never participated in already implemented project within 1st and 2nd CFP** must meet all of the following criteria:

1. be a non-profit-making legal person/entity established by a public or a private law for the purposes of public interest or specific purpose of meeting the needs of general interest. Non-profit status is proven by statute and/or articles of association/decision on establishment of the respective institution in accordance with the relevant law. Applicants owned by the state, regional/local government units (100%) shall be considered eligible for funding within this Call.
2. be established in the respecting participating country (Croatia or Serbia). This is determined based on the organization’s statutes and/or articles of the association/decision on establishment, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in Croatia or Serbia. In this respect, any legal entity whose head office has been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible applicant, even if the legal person/entity is registered in Croatia or Serbia or a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ has been concluded.

The minimum number of project partners in a project is 2 (two), one from each participating country, and the maximum number of partners is five (5), including the Lead Partner.

2.3.3. Eligibility of actions/activities

Eligible actions/activities per Priority axis/Specific objective:

Priority axis (PA)	Eligible actions/activities
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<p>1. Improving the quality of public social and health services in the Programme area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Upgrading existing facilities and/or systems by purchasing new equipment (e.g. hardware, software, medical equipment); B. Organizing thematic exchange events, trainings (in e.g. telemedicine, palliative care, etc.) aimed at providing specific knowledge and expertise to relevant cross-border stakeholders/service providers dealing with the health/social services; C. Developing/improving collaborative tools (e.g. online) for transfer of data/knowledge/expertise with the aim to supporting capacity building in specific fields; D. Identifying and implementing collaboration activities with the aim to create synergies and broaden the scope of existing platforms/networks/services ; E. Consolidate thematic material such as reports, studies, protocols, programs and/or put them into practice by enlarging their geographic area, including new target groups, etc.
<p>2. Protecting the environment and biodiversity, improving risk prevention and promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency</p>	<p>SO 2.1.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Joint exercises of first respondents from the broader cross-border area and/or purchase of additional equipment for regional training centres for first respondents; B. Upgrading the early warning systems, guidelines and standard operating procedures in case of floods and other disaster risks by extending their scope to other cross-border areas or including new competent authorities; C. Existing biodiversity monitoring protocols/ecosystem mapping tools applied to new (e.g. pilot) areas in the cross-border area and/or used by other protected area managing institutions. <p>SO 2.2.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Awareness raising events and transfer of knowledge for wider, cross-border dissemination of the benefits of renewable energy to the interested public and relevant stakeholders by using demonstrative equipment already purchased in previous Calls (electrical bicycles, electrical cars, solar chargers, solar benches, solar trees, solar playgrounds etc.); B. Upgrading existing RES systems from previous projects by installing additional functionalities (e.g. technology upgrade), storage systems, measuring and data-analysing equipment;

	<p>C. Presenting examples of best practices and know-how in using renewable energy and reducing energy consumption in public buildings, e.g. presenting the impact of installed green roofs/walls and/or circular economy systems, at cross-border educational workshops and round tables for stakeholders and policy makers of a wider Programme area.</p>
<p>3. Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage</p>	<p>A. Building on existing knowledge on using digital technologies in promoting touristic destinations and cultural heritage sites/events/routes of the programme area and/or digitisation of tourism services/products;</p> <p>B. Connecting, merging and promoting different tourism products and services generated by the projects into single tourism destination/platform/brand;</p> <p>C. Enhancing sustainability/accessibility of tourism products, sites and services developed and/or improved by the projects.</p>
<p>4. Enhancing competitiveness and developing business environment in the Programme area</p>	<p>A. Additional equipping of formally established and functional business hubs/competence centres;</p> <p>B. Widening the scope of existing networks (by including new members/stakeholders, expanding the geographical area, and/or including new sectors);</p> <p>C. Raising awareness, transferring knowledge and promoting project results, developed curriculums/new products and services and/or clusters/networks;</p> <p>D. Additional equipping of established laboratories with the aim to improve performance and delivery;</p> <p>E. Identifying and implementing collaboration activities with the aim to create synergies and broaden the scope of existing platforms/networks/services.</p>

Under all priority axes, the following activities are **not eligible** for support:

- Activities already implemented through operations funded within the 1st and 2nd Call;
- Activities not related to existing project results/outputs from the 1st and 2nd Call;
- Activities lacking the cross-border cooperation;
- Regular activities which are considered as "core-business" of project partners;
- Creation of strategic documents;

- Infrastructure and works.

2.3.4. Eligibility of expenditures

In order to be considered eligible, the expenditures have to fulfil all the following criteria:

- they incurred during the implementation period of the Operation;
- they are indicated in the budget of the Operation;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the Operation which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable, verifiable and documented (e.g. contract, invoice, order form), in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social security legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency;
- they incurred in accordance with the relevant EU legislation, Programme rules, national legislation, and other relevant documents (e.g. Financing Agreement);
- they are not listed as an ineligible expenditure;
- they are not double funded (i.e. they are not financed from other sources under the Union Funds or other (national) Funds);
- one expenditure item cannot be listed or declared under more than one expenditure category or under more than one budget line under a specific expenditure category;
- amounts declared in partner progress reports/statement of expenditure do not exceed amounts in the approved operation budget (in line with the provisions of the Subsidy Contract/Addenda/accepted modifications);
- co-financing rate (as stipulated in the Subsidy Contract) is applied to each eligible cost under all expenditure categories (including preparatory and closure costs).

2.3.4.1. Eligible expenditure categories

At this phase, projects shall plan only indicative total budgets which are not broken down per expenditure categories.

Without prejudice to Programme Rules on Eligibility of Expenditures the costs of operations implemented under this Call shall be eligible within the **following expenditures categories:**

- 1. staff costs,**
- 2. office and administrative expenditure,**

3. travel and accommodation costs,
4. external expertise and services costs,
5. equipment expenditure.

Expenditure category Infrastructure and works is not eligible within this Call.

Expenditure categories staff costs, office and administrative expenditure, and travel and accommodation costs are not obligatory (e.g. project may plan budget only with external expertise and services and/or equipment costs). If staff costs are planned this category shall be planned on flat rate basis only (up to 20%) as well as office and admin expenditure category.

3. HOW TO APPLY

The **Application Package** for the restricted Call can be downloaded from the Programme website: <https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia.eu/>.

The **official language** of the Programme is **English**. Therefore, Concept note and all communication between applicants and the Programme bodies is carried out in **English language**.

3.1. How to submit Concept notes

Lead applicants are requested to submit filled in document Concept Note for PA for which they are applying via e-mail: js@interreg-croatia-serbia.eu

The Concept note **must be submitted as scanned document** signed by the legal representative of the Lead applicant organisation. The submitted Concept note **must contain all the required data** and the required accompanying supporting documents, if applicable, which must be delivered also as scanned documents.

The complete proposal shall contain the following:

1. **Filled in Concept note which is signed by the legal representative of the Lead applicant;**
2. **Supporting documents for eligibility check of applicants who has never participated in already implemented project within 1st and 2nd CFP, if applicable**
 - a) **The registration acts** (in accordance with relevant national law) of each Partner⁶;

⁶ Where the Applicant/Project Partner is a public body created by a law (e.g. Units of local and regional self-government (towns/cities, municipalities, counties, districts, regions, etc.), instead of a registration act a direct reference to the said law/legal act must be provided. If the Applicant/Project Partner have already participated in implemented project within 1st and/or 2nd CFP the registration act should not be provided unless there were some changes in legal status of particular partner.

b) **Statutes or** articles of association/decision on establishment of the partners.⁷

Note: In cases when the supporting documents are neither in English nor in the language of the participating countries (Croatian, Serbian), a translation into English must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of the eligibility check.

Concept notes sent by any other means (e.g. by fax, by post) or delivered to the address will be rejected. Hand-written Concept notes will not be accepted. Incomplete Concept notes may be rejected.

3.2. Timeframe of the restricted Call

The Call will be open from 7 September 2022 until 7 October 2022, 15:00 h CET.

Concept notes submitted after the deadline will not be accepted, as evidenced by the date and time of submission of Concept note by e-mail.

3.3. Further information

The Programme will organize online information workshops for each PA after publication of the Call. The exact dates will be published in advance on the Programme website and other relevant websites of the National Authorities.

Online clarification meeting (Q&A session) will be held few days prior to closure of the restricted Call. Information on the event will be published on the Programme web site.

Programme website: <https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia.eu/>

⁷ Where the Applicant/Partner is a public body created by a law (e.g. Units of local and regional self-government (towns/cities, municipalities, counties, districts, regions, etc.), instead of a statute or articles of association/decision on establishment a direct reference to the said law/legal act must be provided. If the Applicant/Project Partner have already participated in implemented project within 1st and/or 2nd CfP the statute or articles of association/decision on establishment should not be provided unless there were some changes in legal status of particular partner.

4. ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION OF CONCEPT NOTES

4.1. Assessment and selection

The selection of projects is based on the assessment of the received Concept notes following a standardized procedure, which safeguards the principles of transparency and equal treatment.

The assessment process will be conducted in two steps:

1. Administrative compliance and eligibility check;
2. Quality assessment of Concept notes.

Step 1: Administrative compliance and eligibility check
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Administrative compliance and eligibility check will be performed by Joint Secretariat under responsibility of Managing Authority respecting administrative and eligibility checklist.

Administrative and eligibility criteria - checklist

#	Criteria	Description	Yes	No	N/A
A	ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA				
A.1	Concept note is submitted by the set deadline and is signed by the legal representative of Lead applicant.	<i>Concept note is submitted within set deadline to the prescribed e-mail address and legal representative of Lead applicant has signed the Concept note.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.2	All the sections of the Concept note have been filled in and are written in the required language.	<i>All sections of the Concept note are filled in (no missing information) and written in English, as the official language of the Programme.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.3	Supporting documents for newly introduced project partner are submitted (uploaded as PDF or other applicable format), if applicable.	<i>Supporting documents required for eligibility check of newly introduced applicants/partners are delivered:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The registration acts (in accordance with relevant national law) of each partner;</i> - <i>Statutes or articles of association/decision on</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		<i>establishment of each partner.</i>			
A.4	Requested EU contribution limit is respected	<i>EU contribution (grant) requested by the project is respected (grant size and %).</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA				
B.1	Proposal (concept note) is eligible for additional financing	<i>Proposal (concept note) met all eligibility criteria according to point 2.3.1.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B.2	Applicants (project partners) are eligible	<i>All applicants (project partners) are eligible according to point 2.3.2. and they are in no situation that may exclude them from participation in this restricted Call.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B.3	Proposed activities are eligible	<i>Proposed activities are those listed as eligible for financing according to point 2.3.3. There are no ineligible activities.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Clarification regarding Concept note may be requested from the Lead applicant only when the information provided is unclear or missing and thus prevent JS from conducting an objective assessment. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, Concept note may be rejected on that sole basis and will not be evaluated further.

Only Concept notes that meet all the administrative and eligibility criteria will be subject to quality assessment.

Step 2: Quality assessment of Concept notes

Quality assessment of received and administrative compliant and eligible Concept notes will be performed by the JS and with the support of Managing Authority and National Authorities.

The quality assessment grid is structured according to the concerned assessment criteria, which are appraised using the following scale:

The quality assessment scale

SCALE		1-3-5
excellent	5	<i>The Concept note fulfils the given criterion to an excellent level and all provided information is clear and coherent for assessing the criterion.</i>
sufficient	3	<i>The Concept note fulfils the given criterion to a sufficient level; however, more than 1 aspects of the given criterion have not been met fully or not explained in full clarity or information are missing.</i>
insufficient	1	<i>The Concept note does not fulfil the given criterion and/or the majority of information required is missing.</i>
SCALE		1-2-3
excellent	3	<i>The Concept note fulfils the given criterion to an excellent level and all provided information is clear and coherent for assessing the criterion.</i>
sufficient	2	<i>The Concept note fulfils the given criterion to a sufficient level; however, more than 1 aspects of the given criterion have not been met fully or not explained in full clarity or information are missing.</i>
insufficient	1	<i>The Concept note does not fulfil the given criterion and/or the majority of information required is missing.</i>

The quality of the Concept notes will be assessed using Quality assessment grid:

Quality assessment grid

#	Assessment questions	Guiding principles for assessment	Numerical assessment
C	RELEVANCE CRITERIA		
C.1.	Project relevance	<p><i>The project is relevant for the programme area, addresses common challenges, and contributes to Programme objectives. The project demonstrated added value for the selected territories and target groups.</i></p> <p><i>It is clearly described how this project will further use the project outputs and results achieved in already implemented projects</i></p>	1-5

		<i>and why those outputs and results are chosen for the capitalisation.</i>	
C.2.	Cross-border cooperation character	<i>The cross-border cooperation is needed to achieve the project's objectives and results. The Project's objectives and results cannot be achieved without cross-border cooperation.</i>	1-5
C.3.	Intervention logic – results and outputs	<i>The contribution to Programme indicators is clearly described and verifiable (measurable). All elements of project output indicators are described and coherent.</i>	1-5
D	OPERATIONAL CRITERIA		
D.1.	Main activities	<i>Main activities are clearly described, realistic and necessary for the implementation and for the planned projects outputs and results to be achieved. Activities, deliverables and outputs can be achieved in given timeframe.</i>	1-5
D.2.	Budget	<i>The proposed budget is balanced and clearly reflects planned activities.</i>	1-3
D.3.	Communication	<i>It is clearly described how project outputs will be further disseminated to wider target groups and how awareness on existing projects results will be raised</i>	1-3
E	SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA		
E.1.	Sustainability	<i>Project outputs will be further used and the sustainability will be ensured once the Project has been finalised (concrete measures have been described to ensure sustainability).</i>	1-5

Maximum score in quality assessment of Concept note:

	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE
C	RELEVANCE CRITERIA	15
D	OPERATIONAL CRITERIA	11

E	SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	5
TOTAL		31

Important: In order for the project to be considered for funding, Concept note must fulfil all the administrative and eligibility criteria and receive at least 19 points at the quality assessment.

Provisional selection of Concept notes

After completion of assessment process and respecting scores obtained, **four (4) ranking lists** will be created one per each priority axis listing the provisionally selected Concept notes ranked in descending order with minimum of 19 points and within the available financial envelope, a reserve lists following the same criteria as well as list of rejected Concept notes (under 19 points).

The Managing Authority with the support of JS will present these lists to the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) for final decision. JMC approves or rejects entire list/s.

The JMC reserves the right:

- not to use all available funds allocated under this Call if there is no enough quality Concept notes;
- to contract more funds than available under this Call (over-contracting);
- to replace any selected Concept note that fails to sign the Subsidy Contract.

JMC decision together with assessment results will be communicated to each Lead Applicant through official letter signed by the MA.

Upon receipt of the notification on JMC decision, Lead Applicant may request clarification from the MA or issue a formal complaint towards the decision of the JMC, following the complaint procedure described in these Guidelines for Applicants (Section 4.4.).

Lead Applicant whose Concept note is selected will be invited to prepare and enter full application in the eMS.

Any selected Concept note that fails to sign the Subsidy Contract may be replaced by another from the reserve list per each Priority Axis.

4.2. Negotiation and contracting

Contracts with the Lead Applicants will be prepared on the standard template.

Before signing the Contract, negotiations with selected Lead Applicants will be performed in order to finalise Contract related to **Application optimisation** (Application and budget adjustments, if necessary).

After signing the Subsidy Contract, the Lead Partner is responsible for implementing of the EU financed Operation on behalf of all Project Partners.

4.3. Indicative timetable

INDICATIVE TIMETABLE FOR RESTRICTED CALL		
Restricted Call for submission of Concept notes	DATE	TIME⁸
Deadline for submission of Concept notes	7 October 2022	15:00 h
Information workshops (online)	September 2022	
Clarification meeting (online)	September/October 2022	
Information to Lead applicants on the results of assessment process/JMC decision	November 2022	
Invitation to successful proposals (Concept notes) to submit (enter) full Applications via eMS	November 2022	
Application optimization and contracting	December 2022	

4.4. Complaint procedure

The Lead Applicant, on behalf the partnership, has the right to file a complaint in case a failure affecting the JMC funding decision is suspected during the selection process. Failure means that the assessment or part of assessment did not comply with the selection criteria and/or with the procedures laid down in the Cooperation Programme and/or in the call-specific documents (Application Package).

Complaints against the selection process have to be submitted to the MA within 14 calendar days after the notification on the JMC decision regarding the Call. In the complaint letter, the Lead Applicant should clearly specify what failures or mistakes have happened during the assessment and support its claim with clear references to the relevant Programme documents (Cooperation Programme, Application Package or other call-specific documents) and Concept note in question.

Prior to filing a formal complaint, the Lead Applicant may request additional clarification or technical or legal information from the MA within the timeframe available for submitting a complaint (14 calendar days). Request for clarification/information interrupts the deadline for submitting a complaint until the day of the reply by the MA to the Lead Applicant.

⁸ Provisional date and time. All times are in the time zone of the country of the Managing Authority.

In case the Lead Applicant is not satisfied with the received additional information from the MA, it may decide to submit a formal complaint to the MA.

The complaint has to comply with the following minimum requirements:

- the name and address of the Lead Applicant are indicated,
- the title of the Concept note in question is stated,
- reasons for the complaint are clearly described,
- the complaint is signed by the legal representative of the Lead Applicant.

If a complaint does not comply with the above stated requirements or includes an incomplete description of a case that does not allow MA or any involved body to perform a thorough assessment of a complaint, the MA may request further information from the Lead Applicant. If the information requested is not provided within the period of time as specified by the MA, the MA shall close the case without further investigation.

The MA shall inform in writing the Lead Applicant on the results of the examination of complaint.

Complaint must be submitted in writing with a clear indication of the following subject: **Complaint on the Joint Monitoring Committee decision**, by e-mail to the following address:

ma@interreg-croatia-serbia.eu

or by regular post to the following address:

Ministarstvo regionalnoga razvoja i fondova EU
Sektor za upravljanje Interreg programima suradnje
Upravljačko tijelo Interreg IPA Programa prekogranične suradnje Hrvatska - Srbija 2014. - 2020.
Miramarska cesta 22, 10 000 Zagreb

4.5. Data protection

All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

The information provided in Concept note is necessary to evaluate and further process the Concept note in accordance with the specifications of the Call. Personal data will be processed solely for that purpose by the JMC, MA and JS. Personal data may be transferred to third parties involved in the assessment and selection process and/or in the grant management procedure, without prejudice of transfer to the bodies in charge of monitoring and inspection tasks in accordance with EU law.

In particular, for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interests of the Union, personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, or to the European Anti-Fraud Office.

The results of the restricted Call are information of public nature and will be published on the Programme web site.

5. ANNEXES TO GfA

1. Template for Concept note for each Priority Axis
2. Programme indicators