

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

Announcement of the second call for proposals

26 April 2016

1. ANNOUNCEMENT

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme invites public and private organisations established in the central Europe regions to submit applications in the framework of the second call for proposals. The detailed conditions and the timeline for the call can be found in the “Application manual second call” included in the “Application package second call”. The application package constitutes an integral part of this call announcement and can be downloaded from the programme website www.interreg-central.eu/apply.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation objective which supports regional cooperation among central European countries during the programming period 2014-2020.

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme supports regional cooperation among nine central European countries. The overall objective of the programme is “to cooperate beyond borders to make central European cities and regions better places to live and work” by implementing smart solutions answering to regional challenges in the fields of innovation, low-carbon economy, environment, culture and transport.

The programme runs from 2014 to 2020 and invests EUR 231 million to co-finance transnational cooperation projects promoted by public and private organisations from central European regions. Projects supported shall deliver concrete and visible outputs and results in response to well-identified challenges of the programme area and addressing development needs in an integrated manner. Projects focussing on purely academic cooperation or basic research or aiming at mere networking and exchanging of experience and/or not demonstrating the translation of outputs arising from “soft” actions (surveys, studies, etc.) into concrete and sustainable results will not be supported by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme document in its latest version constitutes the legal basis for this call for proposals

3. PROGRAMME AREA

The CENTRAL EUROPE programme area includes all regions from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as eight Länder from Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen) and nine regions from Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Valle d’Aosta and Veneto).

4. THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The second call for proposals is open to all programme priority axes and all specific objectives, summarised in the following table:



PRIORITY AXIS 1

Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive

Specific objective 1.1

To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe

Specific objective 1.2

To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions



PRIORITY AXIS 2

Cooperating on low carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 2.1

To develop and implement solutions for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructures

Specific objective 2.2

To improve territorially based low carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation

Specific objective 2.3

To improve capacities for mobility planning in functional urban areas to lower CO2 emissions



PRIORITY AXIS 3

Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 3.1

To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources

Specific objective 3.2

To improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources

Specific objective 3.3

To improve environmental management of functional urban areas to make them more liveable places



PRIORITY AXIS 4

Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 4.1

To improve planning and coordination of regional passenger transport systems for better connections to national and European transport networks

Specific objective 4.2

To improve coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multimodal environment-friendly freight solutions

For a detailed description of contents of each priority axis and programme specific objective, including information on possible actions, beneficiaries and target groups, please refer to section 2 of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme document in its latest version. Information on further programme documents, as well as other relevant information sources, is available in part A, chapter V of the application manual.

Under the terms of this call, a project proposal must focus on only one priority axis and one programme specific objective.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to check the already approved projects in the respective areas to avoid duplication (more information can be found at www.interreg-central.eu).

5. ERDF BUDGET AVAILABLE

The programme will allocate around EUR 90 Million ERDF to the second call for proposals. An indicative ERDF allocation to the four programme priority axes is presented in the following table. When deciding for project funding, such allocation may be adapted by the monitoring committee according to programme needs.

	Indicative ERDF allocation (Mio EUR)
PRIORITY AXIS 1: Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive	27
PRIORITY AXIS 2: Cooperating on low-carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE	16
PRIORITY AXIS 3: Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE	34
PRIORITY AXIS 4: Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE	13
TOTAL	90

6. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The second call for proposals of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is organised according to a one-step procedure.

Project proposals must be submitted in English language and only through the web-based electronic monitoring system (eMS) available at <https://ems.interreg-central.eu/>. The application package for the second call contains also the off-line template of application form (for information purposes only). Project proposals can be submitted only through eMS.

7. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

In the framework of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, eligible applicants are:

- National, regional and local public bodies (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013);
- Private institutions, including private companies, having legal personality;
- International organisations acting under the national law of any CENTRAL EUROPE Member State or, with restrictions, under international law.

8. PARTNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Projects supported by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme must involve in the partnership:

- at least three financing partners,
- from at least three countries and
- being at least two of the partners located in CENTRAL EUROPE regions¹.

Applicants located outside the programme area but within the EU can also apply for funding as project partners. Please note that ERDF allocated to a single project for such partners, together with the ERDF spent outside the programme area, cannot exceed 20 % of the total ERDF contribution to such project. The involvement of partners from EU regions outside the programme area shall bring a clear benefit to the regions of the programme area. Their involvement is considered as exceptional and must be duly justified.

Applicants can also be located outside the EU, but they will not receive ERDF funding from the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.

9. ELIGIBLE LEAD APPLICANTS

The following institutions can be lead applicants:

- National, regional and local public bodies (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013);
- Private institutions, including private companies, having legal personality;
- International organisations acting under the national law of any CENTRAL EUROPE Member State.

Only institutions located in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area² can apply as lead applicants.

Private lead applicants have to comply with obligatory financial capacity requirements detailed in part D, chapter V.1 of the application manual. Proposals submitted by private lead applicants not meeting the necessary financial capacity criteria will be rejected.

Private lead applicants should therefore carefully check their ability to fulfil the applicable financial capacity criteria before submitting their proposal.

10. PROJECT SIZE

The recommended financial size of projects to be submitted in the framework of the second call for proposals is in the range of EUR 1 to 5 million total cost. In exceptional cases, smaller or larger projects can be supported.

The size of the partnership should reflect the scope of the project and remain manageable. Therefore, the recommended maximum size of a partnership should not exceed 12 partners. Larger partnerships are possible but need to be duly justified according to the specific project scope.

¹ Please note that German and Italian national public authorities/bodies 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 to all effects assimilated, both in terms of rights and obligations, to partners located in the programme area.

² Ditto.

11. CO-FINANCING RATES

The following co-financing rates shall apply:

- Up to 85 % for applicants of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia;
- Up to 80 % for applicants of Austria, Germany, Italy;
- Up to 80 % for applicants located in EU regions outside the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area.

In case of EGTCs covering geographical areas in which different co-financing rates apply, the co-financing rate applicable to the EGTC is the one of the country in which it is registered.

In case applicants intend to implement activities considered as State aid relevant, the maximum grant will be calculated applying the de minimis regime³ while respecting the co-financing percentages listed above. Should the activities to be carried out by EU-partners from outside the CENTRAL EUROPE area be considered as State aid relevant, the participation of these partners will not be allowed due to the impossibility for the programme monitoring committee to validate the result of the state aid assessment on behalf of a Member State not participating in the programme.

12. PROJECT DURATION

The recommended project duration is 30 to 36 months. However, if justified by the project scope and the planned activities a longer implementation period up to a maximum of 42 months may be exceptionally acceptable.

13. AWARD CRITERIA

The selection of proposals is based on the assessment of received applications following a standardised procedure, which safeguards the principles of transparency and equal treatment.

Following a formal/administrative compliance check and - in case of private lead applicants - a lead applicant financial capacity check, each proposal which has positively passed these checks is assessed on its contents. The four strategic and operational assessment criteria against which eligible proposals are assessed are:

- Relevance
- Partnership
- Implementation
- Budget

Each criterion is composed of several sub-criteria measured according to scores (1 to 5).

Within the relevance criterion, proposals not showing an adequate quality in terms of relevance to the programme objectives and results, clarity and consistency between project specific objectives, results and outputs as well as a transnational added value will not be further assessed against the other criteria and will be rejected.

Decisions on project selection will be taken by the monitoring committee of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme at the level of each priority axis, on the basis of the results of the assessment.

For further information on the assessment process, please refer to Part D, chapter V.1 point e) of the application manual for the second call.

³ As referred to in Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 on de minimis aid.

14. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Project proposals must be submitted through the eMS at the latest by **Thursday 23 June 2016 at 18:00 CET**.

15. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

More information regarding the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, conditions for the submission of project proposals, assessment of proposals, the application package as well as other relevant information is available at:

www.interreg-central.eu/apply

It is also possible to contact the representatives of the National Contact Points located in each CENTRAL EUROPE Member State as well as of the Joint Secretariat based in Vienna. Contact information is also available on the programme website.