



Guidelines for the EoI

Disclaimer

This document was endorsed by the Danube Programming Committee on 9th September 2015. However, please note that it is still subject to final approval by the Monitoring Committee to be established within three months of the date of notification of the European Commission decision adopting the Cooperation Programme.

Introduction

The submission of the Expression of Interest (EOI) is the first step for applying for funding of projects within the first Call for Proposals (CfP) of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) 2014 – 2020.

The Application Pack for the first step consists of:

- DTP Applicants Manual (DTP AM) Version 1, August 2015
- CfP announcement
- EOI form
- Guidelines for EOI

It is very important to carefully read the DTP Cooperation Programme (DTP CP) and all the documents in the Application Pack before filling in the EOI form. The DTP CP is the main Programme document and most important reference concerning, amongst others, thematic scope, objectives and intervention logic of the DTP. The DTP AM provides useful information and guidance regarding eligibility of partners and eligibility of expenditure as well as information on how to develop a DTP transnational project proposal. The CfP announcement offers specific information in relation to a given CfP, such as deadlines, thematic restrictions (if the case) and further technicalities. The Guidelines for EOI assist the applicants in filling the EOI, considering both the content as well as formal and technical requirements.

Projects with a good level of planning to date, that comply with the relevant Specific Objectives of the Programme and follow the Call documents should be able to offer a level of detail and coherence in their EOI that positively evidences their preparedness.

The EOI form is an electronic document which must be filled in and submitted before the deadline set in the CfP announcement. This shall be done only by uploading the official EOI form on the specific section of the Programme website (www.interreg-danube.eu) where the applicant shall enter first name, last name, organisation, country, project acronym, select the priority axis and the specific objective and finally insert telephone number and e-mail address. After the upload of the EOI form, the applicant shall press the **Submit** button. An automatic message will appear: *“Thank you for submitting your proposal. Your Expression of Interest has been submitted on DAY-MONTH-YEAR at XX:XX (CET).”* Applicants will also receive an automatic confirmation message to the provided email address. The applicants shall no longer have access to the submitted document.

The **deadline** for submission of the Expression of Interest for the 1st call for proposals is **3rd November at 15:00** (CET: Central European Time).

ATTENTION: Applicants are advised not to submit the EoI at the very last moment as the system may not be able to process a high number of submissions in a very short time, thus causing delays resulting in late submission, i.e. after the set deadline. These EoIs will therefore NOT meet the eligibility criterion with regard to submission time and will NOT be considered for evaluation.

Please note that:

- **Only EoIs submitted in the provided format will be considered. No other formats or additional documents will be accepted**
- **Only EoIs submitted through the specific section of the Programme website will be accepted**
- **If an EoI is submitted more than once, only the first version shall be considered for assessment**

Technical requirements

Please, only use ADOBE READER 8.0 or higher to fill in the form. When using other readers, the form is not working properly. The latest version can be downloaded e.g. at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Please, ensure that JavaScript is enabled (check main menu > Edit > Preferences > JavaScript).

This is an interactive form e.g. some parts are only visible when you press certain buttons.

Guidance is displayed on grey background next to the relevant textboxes or tables.

Please, save the data from time to time during your work.

To validate & finalise the document, please use the button "Validate & Finalise". Please, be aware that after pressing this button the document will no longer be editable.

ATTENTION: Please, be informed that interactive PDF files can experience various malfunctions if they are sent by email to multiple users. To the extent possible, Applicants are therefore requested to avoid this particular situation.

Instructions on how to fill in the EoI form

This chapter provides the applicants with a comprehensive overview on how to fill in all parts of the EoI with the relevant and requested information.

Please note that:

- By “number of characters” it is meant “number of characters including spaces”.

Project overview

This Section refers to the general information related to the project.

1. Project identification: 250 characters are allowed for writing the full **project title** and up to 20 characters for its **acronym**. The Lead Applicant should note that effective acronyms should relate to the project title and concept, be easily remembered and should not be in conflict with existing brands and/ or projects. **Project duration** in months shall be inserted by considering the actual implementation period from the project start. The project implementation duration cannot be more than 30 months. Please note that the starting date should not take into consideration the project preparation phase. Name of the **Lead Applicant organisation** in English shall be inserted. The field allows a maximum of 200 characters. Applicants must then use the drop down menu to select the relevant **Programme Priority** and **Programme specific objective** to which the project proposal contributes to. Please note that the Programme specific objective, both in Section 1 and Section 6, cannot be selected unless the Programme Priority is previously selected.

2. Project summary: Applicants are requested to write a short but comprehensive summary of the project proposal. The summary should include a brief overview of the context (needs, challenges), main objective, the envisaged results and the main outputs of the project, clearly outlining proposed activities. The maximum number of characters allowed in this section is 1,000.

3. Partnership countries: In this summary table, the number of partners per country has to be inserted. For a complete overview, all types of partners shall be included: ERDF partners including the Lead Applicant (LA), IPA partners. Number of Associated Strategic Partners (ASP) shall be entered separately in the specific field. In case there are no partners from one or more countries, zero (0) should be entered in the relevant fields. Overall total of partners includes ASPs.

Partnership

This Section provides an overview of the project partnership.

4. Lead Applicant: 200 characters are allowed for writing **institution name in original language** (the use of Cyrillic characters is accepted by the document) and another 200 for its name **in English**.

Institution address (street, number, postcode, town, country) including homepage shall be filled in. Lead Applicants shall also provide the country and the region in which their main office is located by selecting from amongst the drop down list relating to the **NUTS2** divisions. For information related to the NUTS2 regions, please refer to the following web page: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/overview>.

Legal status of the Lead Applicant's institution shall be selected from amongst the three possible categories: public body/ body governed by public law (EGTCs are included in this category), private non-profit body or international organisation. For clarifications on the definition of the legal status, please refer to Part 2, Section II.3 – *General eligibility rules* of the DTP AM.

Name and position of the **contact person** within the LA institution, together with contact details (e-mail address, direct phone number) shall be inserted in the relevant fields.

Name and position of the **legal representative** of the LA institution, together with contact details (e-mail address and direct phone number) shall be inserted in the relevant fields.

The Lead Applicant should provide a short overview of the relevance and competence of its institution for the project topic, with a comprehensive description of the experience in managing international / ETC projects. The maximum number of characters allowed is 1,000.

Lead Applicant's estimated **budget** shall be inserted in the field. The LA should indicate its total budget (EU contribution and co-financing)

Please note that:

- **Only Project Partners coming from EU countries/ EU member states of the Programme area are entitled to apply as Lead Applicants**
- **The Lead Applicant cannot be changed between the first and the second step of the Call for Proposals.**

5. Project partners: when filling in this Section, it is recommended that project partners be listed in the following order: ERDF PPs, IPA PPs and then ASPs. The **type of partner** shall be selected from the drop down menu: ERDF PP (for institutions from EU countries of the programme area requesting ERDF co-financing), IPA PP (for institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia requesting IPA co-financing) and ASP (for institutions from EU countries in general and from non-EU countries of the programme area that are not requesting any direct EU financial support). **Partner institution name** shall be indicated only in English. The field allows maximum 200 characters. The partner should also indicate a

suitable **acronym**. The field allows maximum 20 characters. Partner's estimated **budget** shall also be inserted in the specific field. The total budget (EU contribution and co-financing) should be indicated in this section.

The **country** where the partner institution is located shall be selected from the drop down menu. **Address** of the partner institution (street, number, postcode, town) together with name, position, phone and email address of the **contact person** shall be inserted in the specific fields.

Additional partners can be included by clicking the **Add Partner** button at the end of the Section. ASPs, as indirectly financed partners, will also be included by using the **Add Partner** button. As their travel and accommodation costs will be included in the budget of the ERDF sponsoring partner, their budget shall not be indicated separately. To avoid this, the form does not allow filling in this cell.

In case the applicant needs to delete a partner (e.g. a partner withdraws from the partnership before submission of the EoI), note that the EoI form only allows deletion from bottom up by clicking on the **Delete Partner** button at the end of the Section. This means that if it is not the last inserted partner which needs to be deleted, the remaining ones must be inserted again.

Please note that:

- **The number of partners that can withdraw / be replaced between the first and the second step of the Call for Proposals is 2 in case of partnerships with up to 10 partners, 3 for partnerships with up to 15 partners and 4 for partnerships with more than 15 partners.**

Strategic overview

This is one of the most important Sections of the EoI, where the intervention logic of the project has to demonstrate not only its internal coherence but also the coherence with the programme intervention logic. The EoI form offers the applicant the possibility to logically link the programme and the project intervention logic. For detailed information on the development of the intervention logic, please refer to Part 6, Section III – *How to develop the intervention logic* of the DTP AM and Annex I thereof.

The strategic relevance helps to understand how an articulated and logically linked proposal covers each of the following main aspects: territorial needs and challenges, innovative methodology, contribution to EU strategies and policies, transnational approach, relevance of the partnership, durability and transferability of results and the involvement of the target groups.

6. Strategic focus

Please note that:

- **The Intervention Logic cannot be changed between the first and the second step of the Call for Proposals.**

Programme specific objective: the Applicant has to select from a drop-down menu the programme specific objective linked to the selected programme priority and most appropriate for the project proposal. This should be the same with the one selected in section 1 because otherwise the form will generate an error message.

Project main objective: the project main objective should be briefly outlined, with a short but comprehensive description on how this objective is contributing to the selected programme specific objective. Furthermore, the Project main objective should be clearly connected with the needs and challenges identified by the partnership. The field allows maximum 1,000 characters.

Project specific objectives: the Applicant should describe up to three project specific objectives, with maximum 500 characters per each specific objective. Furthermore, Applicants are requested to describe how the achievement of the defined specific objectives is contributing to the achievement of the main project objective.

Programme result indicator: the Applicant has to select from the drop down menu the programme result indicator to which the project is contributing, based on the selected programme specific objective.

Project main result: the project main result clearly contributing to the programme result indicator has to be defined. The explanation should give evidence of how and to which extent the project will contribute to the programme result indicator linked to the chosen specific objective. Please note that the contribution to the result indicator shall relate not only to project partners, but also to the target groups of the project considering also the transferability of project results to other territories facing similar challenges. Contribution of the project main result to the programme result indicator has to be quantified (e.g. percentage) considering SMART criteria (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound). However, given their absolute character, quality-type project results are excluded from quantification. Altogether, the maximum number of characters allowed is 1,000.

Programme output indicators: the Applicant has to select from the list the programme output indicators to which the project is contributing. Besides the pre-defined one which is mandatory (*documented learning interactions*), applicants must select at least one more but not more than five programme output indicators, including the pre-defined one. Once the programme output indicators are selected, project's contribution to their achievement need to be defined, described and quantified in the newly appeared field(s). For detailed information, definitions and examples of project outputs, please refer to Part 6, Section IV -

How to contribute to the programme output indicators of the DTP AM. The maximum number of characters allowed for the description of each project output is 500.

7. Strategic relevance

7.1. Territorial needs/challenges: the proposal has to contain a comprehensive description of the addressed territorial needs/ challenges, answering the questions “Which is the problem/ need/ challenge in the Danube territory we would like to solve through the project? How is this problem/ need/ challenge linked to the programme specific objective we would like to achieve? How do we want to address these problems/ needs/ challenges so that we can achieve the programme specific objective?” Altogether, the maximum number of characters allowed is 2,000.

7.2. Methodology: a description of the methodology used to achieve the project objectives is to be outlined. Innovative approaches are highly recommended while defining the project methodology. However, in case the proposal plans to capitalise from previous projects or initiatives, a description on what exactly is capitalised, its added value for the current proposal and its practical insertion in the proposal is to be included. The maximum number of characters allowed is 2,000.

7.3. Contribution to EU strategies and policies: the link between the proposal and a relevant EU, national, regional policy or strategy should be thoroughly described, by highlighting the contribution of the project proposal to the implementation of the relevant policy or strategy. In case the proposal is contributing to the EUSDR, the proposal should additionally describe the link to the relevant Priority Area(s) (PA) and the concrete contribution to the implementation of the Priority Area(s), as well as the contribution toward achievement of the EUSDR current targets and/or corresponding actions, as described in the list of targets and actions (the EUSDR Action Plan can be checked in the EUSDR website: <http://www.danube-region.eu/component/edocman/action-plan-eusdr-pdf>, the targets per priority can be found on each Priority Area website). Applicants are advised to check the websites of the PAs in order to better understand how the proposal can contribute to the EUSDR (<http://www.danube-region.eu/about/priorities>). The website of each PA has the section “contact”, so applicants with specific questions have the opportunity to get in contact with the PA team. The maximum number of characters allowed is 2,500.

7.4. Transnational approach: the Applicant has to describe the benefits, advantages and added value of the transnational approach in achieving the project objectives. The transnational approach cannot be considered as a collection of local/ national actions uniquely beneficial for the involved territories, but a joint work that produces an added value to the final outcomes and from which all territories of the Programme area are benefitting. Applicants must demonstrate that transnationality is present throughout the project (planning, implementation of activities, achievement and dissemination of achieved results, follow-up). The maximum number of characters allowed is 1,500.

7.5. Relevance of the partnership: the Applicant has to explain how the composition of the partnership, both geographically and competence wise, can effectively achieve the project

objectives. A brief description of the transnational experience of the partners in terms of participation of cooperation projects is recommended for a better understanding of their relevance. The competence of the partners should relate to the planned activities and the benefit for the territories of the involved partners should be underlined. The maximum number of characters allowed is 2,000.

7.6. Durability and transferability of results: the Applicant should describe how the project proposal will ensure the long-lasting effect of its results and their financial, institutional and political sustainability. Therefore, the Applicant should describe this by proving answers to the following questions: how, when and by whom will the outputs be used? - How will the durability of the project's results be ensured? - How will the project results be financially and institutionally maintained after project closure? - How can the project's results be directly or indirectly used in other areas or by other target groups in the future? The maximum number of characters allowed is 1,500.

7.7. Target group: the Applicant must provide a description of the target group(s) explaining how they will integrate/ use the project results. The description should be outlined by answering the following questions: Who needs the outputs and results of this project and who will benefit from them (including indirect beneficiaries)? How will the target group benefit from the project results? Was the target group consulted with regard to the necessity of such results during project development? The maximum number of characters allowed is 1,500.

Operational framework

8. Project requested budget: the budget table shall be automatically filled in with following information: total requested **ERDF** funds (i.e. 85% of the ERDF partners' budgets), total requested **IPA** funds (i.e. 85% of the IPA partners' budgets), **total community funding** (i.e. sum of the above) and **total project budget** (i.e. 85% community contribution plus national co-financing). The information will be taken over from LP and PP budget sections and cross-checked with the information provided in the Workplan section. In case of inconsistencies the form will generate an error message before allowing the validation.

9. Workplan: the EoI pre-sets the compulsory work packages: *WP1 Project management*, *WP2 Communication activities* and one *Content WP - WP3*. Additional Content WPs (but not more than 7, including the pre-defined ones) can be added by clicking the button **Add WP** at the end of the Section. In case the applicant needs to delete a WP, note that the EoI only allows deletion from bottom up by clicking on the **Delete WP** button at the end of this Section. This means that if it is not the last WP which needs to be deleted, the remaining ones have to be inserted again.

Content WPs shall be titled by the applicants, the field allowing a maximum of 40 characters.

A brief (maximum 1,000 characters) but comprehensive **description** of the content of each WP has to be outlined and, if applicable, also the link to the expected outputs. Total **amount** (i.e. including national co-financing) allocated for each WP has to be inserted in the relevant field. Duration of each WP (*month/ year to month/ year*) shall also be inserted in the **timeframe** field. The applicant shall also insert the acronym of the WP **responsible partner**.

It is advisable that acronyms of the LA and PPs are not changed during the two-step procedure of the Call for Proposals or throughout the implementation of the project.

Within WP1, at least following three types of activities shall be described: project coordination, financial management and quality management. For more information, please refer to Part 6, Section V - *How to set up an efficient project coordination* of the DTP AM.

Within WP2, please be note that project webpage will be hosted by the Programme website, therefore no activities related to the development of the website *in se* shall be included. Only activities related to uploading, maintaining and regular updating of the webpage are to be considered alongside other communication and dissemination activities.

Validation and finalisation

After all the information has been filled in and the application is ready to be submitted, the Applicant shall press the **Validate & Finalise** button. If no error messages appear, the EoI form will be turned into a non-editable file to be uploaded on the DTP website (www.interreg-danube.eu) as indicated in the Introduction.

In case not all obligatory fields have been filled in by the Applicant, an automatic error message is generated indicating this, while the empty fields required to be filled in are marked in red. Another automatic message appears in case the partners' total budget does not match the WP total budget, in which case the Applicant has to correct the errors.

When all errors are cleared out and the EoI form is validated the Applicant shall upload the non-editable file on the DTP website (www.interreg-danube.eu).