

Guidance Note 14

Micro Project scheme

Please be aware that the Programme has a zero-tolerance approach to Fraud of any form. The Programme will always seek to recover any payments found to be a result of fraud, and will always pursue the harshest available penalty against individuals that commit fraud.

I. Micro Project scheme

The Interreg VA France (Channel) England has set up a Micro Project scheme aimed to attract new organisations to small-scale cross-border cooperation projects. Micro Projects have to contribute to the achievement of the Programme objectives and Programme indicators.

With the exception of the application process, the rules applying to Micro Projects are in many regards similar to the ones of regular projects. The Programme therefore advises applicants to read the Programme Manual in full.

However, the Micro Project scheme differs from the one of regular project in the instances listed below:

	Regular project	Micro Project
ERDF intervention rate	Up to 69%	Up to 80%
Total budget	No maximum budget	€400,000 ERDF maximum €500,000 maximum total budget
Project duration	No maximum duration	27 months (including 3 months closure)
Partnership requirements	At least one partner from each country within the Programme area. No maximum in number of partners	At least one partners from each country within the Programme area. A maximum a 5 partners
Eligible organisations	All legal entities	All local authorities in the UK and some “Collectivités Publiques ¹ ” in France Charities, “association loi 1901” (for French partners) and businesses employing fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million.

¹ You will find the list of all French “Collectivités Publiques” eligible under the Micro Project scheme in page 2

Calls	Four calls for projects a year	Two calls for projects a year
Application process	One-phase application to be submitted on eMS	One-phase application to be submitted on eMS
Work plan	3 compulsory Work Packages (WP) (Preparation, Management, Communication) and 5 WP maximum for Implementation	2 compulsory Work Packages (Preparation, Management) and 3 WP maximum for Implementation
Budget lines²	All budget lines eligible	All budget lines eligible except BL6 – Infrastructure and construction work.
Preparation lump sump³	€30,000 paid to the LP	€12,400 paid to the LP
Project Reports – Progress Reports and Payment Claims	Submission twice a year. Periods to be defined in the Application Form	Submission twice a year. Periods to be defined in the Micro Project Application Form
First Level Control⁴	One FLC per partner	One FLC per partner
Project closure⁵	Only BL1 – Staff costs and BL2 – Overheads are eligible	Only BL1 – Staff costs and BL2 – Overheads are eligible

The below table lists all the French « Collectivités Publiques » which are eligible under the Micro Project scheme:

-Communes -Départements -Régions -Directions de l'État -EPCI -Syndicats mixtes	-Offices Publics de l'Habitat -Centres Régionaux pour la Protection Forestière -Chambres consulaires -Comités Départementaux du Tourisme, Agences de Développement et de Réserve Touristiques	-Établissements publics médicaux ou médico-sociaux -Tous types d'établissements publics (hors hôpitaux, EPCST ⁶ et EPSCP ⁷) -Établissements publics de santé (Agences Régionales de Santé) -Centres Communaux d'Action Sociale (CCAS)
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² For further information, please refer to the Guidance Note on "Budget lines and eligibility rules".

³ Please note that the lump sum is subject to change

⁴ For further information, please refer to the Guidance Note on "Project implementation"

⁵ For further information, please refer to the Guidance Note on "Project closure"

⁶ EPCST : Établissements Publics à Caractère Scientifique et Technique

⁷ EPSCP : Établissements Publics à Caractère Scientifique, Culturel et Professionnel

A good partnership should include organisations that are relevant for dealing with the common challenge on the joint asset identified by the project. The Partners should have complementary expertise, and there should be a balanced selection of organisations in terms of split between the Member States and different sectors. In addition the France (Channel) England programme would like to see Partners included in projects who do not have previous experience in cross-border working, and encourages partnerships to have a mixture of experienced and new Partners. The Programme recommends that the partnership in Micro Projects remains balanced. The participation of large local authorities should benefit smaller organisations in the partnership. This balance also needs to be reflected in budgets.

II. Micro Project application process

A. Calls for Micro Projects

Calls for Micro Projects will be held throughout the Programme's lifetime. A calendar of future Micro Projects calls is available on the Programme website.

The calls for Micro Project will be open for four weeks. The launch of each call and related documents are also announced on the Programme's website.

Micro Projects calls will be open for all Programme Priorities. However, the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) reserves the right to restrict some calls, depending on the specific demand for certain topics or the availability of funding (especially later in the Programme's lifetime).

The Micro Project Application Form (MAF) shall be submitted by the closing date and time of each call for projects.

B. Micro Project Application Form

How to apply?

The submission of the MAF is to be carried out on eMS, although an offline template in Word format and a budget in Excel are available on the Programme website. **The JS strongly recommends that applicants use these templates as a working document to familiarise themselves with the MAF, and transfer in to eMS after the contents have been reviewed by a Programme Facilitator.**

Guidance to complete the form is given throughout the offline template. Guidance can also be found on the [eMS Technical Guidance Note](#) available for download from the Programme website..

The MAF consists of the following sections and subsections which have to be filled in. The work plan of the Micro Project Application Form (MAF) has been simplified with 2 compulsory work packages: Preparation and Management, and 3 implementation work packages maximum.

The below tree is structured on the following rationale:

- Section
 - Subsection
 - Question

- Project Summary
 - Project identification
 - Project Summary
- Partner
 - Partner details
 - Experience and role of partner
 - Other EU or International Projects
- Project Description
 - Project Relevance
 - Contribution to the Programme Specific Objectives
 - Need & Demand
 - Cross-Border Added Value
 - Project Focus
 - Programme Specific Objective
 - Micro Project specific objective
 - Programme Result Indicator
 - Micro Project main result
 - Project Context
 - Synergies
 - Sustainability / Durability
 - Location of project activities
 - Horizontal Principles
 - Sustainable development
 - Equal opportunities and non-discrimination
 - Equality between men and women
- Work plan
 - Work Packages List
 - WP P Preparation
 - WP M Management
 - WP T Implementation
 - Target Groups
 - Define Periods
- Budget
 - Project Budget per period
 - Partner Budget
 - Define Budget
 - Define Contribution
- Attachments:
 - Annex 1: De Minimis Form (for each PP)
 - Draft Partnership Agreement
 - Letters of Engagement (In case of external match-funding or shared costs)
 - Letters of Intent for all PP joined with an organisation chart (if available)
 - A copy of the last three years of accounts (private sectors)
 - A cover letter (optional)

Procedure

Applicants wishing to submit a MAF are strongly encouraged to notify the JS of their intention to submit an application **at least one week in advance of the call opening**.

The Lead Partner will need to create an account on eMS. The LP must register on the eMS homepage. Following the registration, a confirmation email will be automatically sent to the email address provided in the registration form. This account will be used to create and submit applications. Full details on how to create, edit and submit an application is available in the [eMS Technical Guidance Note](#) available for download from the Programme website.

eMS can be accessed through the following [link](#).

If LP has not already contacted their local facilitator, they should do so before submitting an application. Their contact details are available on the Programme website, or partners can email interregva.apply@norfolk.gov.uk to be put in contact with a facilitator.

To submit a MAF, applicants shall log into eMS using the credentials generated when filling in and submitting the MAF. A number of compulsory annexes must be submitted with the Micro Project Application Form. The templates of the annexes are available on the Programme website, and are to be uploaded in eMS. More specifically, and as indicated on the above tree the following annexes are required:

- For each partner, a signed, scanned copy of a Letter of Intent. The letter of intent is to confirm that the organisation is prepared to participate in the Interreg VA France (Channel) England Programme. This does not commit the organisation financially to the Micro Project, however it must be signed by a duly authorised representative of the partner. A duly authorised representative must be a person who has the authority to commit their organisation to take part in the Micro Project. An organisation chart, when available, showing the position of the individual within the organisation should be attached to the letter.
- In case of external match-funding, scanned copy of signed Letter of Engagement for each organisation contributing to the Micro Project. This also applies to Project Partners in case of shared costs. The Letter of Engagement is a commitment to support the Programme activities and verifies that the organisation is willing to commit financially to the project. The amounts reported in the letter of engagement must be set out in Euro. It must be signed by a duly authorised representative of the organisation committing the finance, who must be a person who has the authority to commit the organisation to the level of expenditure;
- Scanned copy of signed De Minimis State Aid Form for all Project Partners. Further details are available on the Guidance Note 11 on “State Aid”;
- Scanned copy of the draft Partnership Agreement, including provision on shared cost calculation methodology (if applicable), Intellectual property rights (if applicable) and preparation cost lump sum partner allocation. The final signed Partnership Agreement should be presented to the Managing Authority after the Micro Project approval and before the Grant Offer Letter (GOL) can be signed.
- For organisation which are private sector (including charities), a scanned copy of the last three years of accounts must be provided. If the organisation in question is less than three years old, all available accounts should be provided, including draft accounts if a full year set of account is not available.
- If needed, applicants may write a covering letter to address the issues related to State Aid or Revenue. The covering letter is not a compulsory annex of the MAF. Partners may use as many

pages as necessary to fully explain the issues. The covering letter needs to be submitted in French and in English. Private sector partners can also explain how they will fund their participation in the project, taking into account both the match funding and the need to cover the project cash flow. If the source of funds is external then a corresponding letter of engagement indicating this amount must be included. If use of overdraft or similar facilities are planned which are not the companies own funds, evidence of these facilities should be provided.

The originals of the above mentioned annexes shall be kept by the Lead Partner and shown when required by the Programme or Auditors.

When submitted, the LP shall print and sign the MAF. It shall be signed by a duly authorised representative of the Lead Partner organisation i.e. a person authorised to commit resources for that period of time. Then, the LP shall scan the signed version and send it in PDF format to the JS at the following email address: interregva.apply@norfolk.gov.uk no later than 5 working days after call closure.

III. Micro Project Selection

The Joint Secretariat (JS) will be appraising the Micro Projects based on a series of Eligible, Administrative and Quality criteria and the decision. The Selection Sub-Committee (SSC) is responsible for Micro Project selection and makes the decision on approving or rejecting projects by assessing the proposal against the selection criteria. Please be aware that the Programme will only support Micro Project whose activities have not started prior to the submission of the MAF.

Firstly, Micro Projects will be checked against the Eligibility and Administrative criteria in order to ensure that they fulfil the technical requirements. There are 16 Eligibility and Administrative criteria.

As a general principle, it will not be possible to submit corrected documents after the deadline for submission. However, if there are minor omissions, the JS will notify the Lead Partner and request them to submit the missing elements within 5 working days. This procedure will be used in the following situations; missing signature on the Application Form and/or missing annexes; missing budget information; incorrect dates; and any other issue deemed as technical by the JS

Only where a Micro Project satisfies the Eligibility and Administrative criteria will it undergo a quality assessment. There are 17 quality criteria. The SSC will make a final decision and the LP will be notified of the outcome.

There are 2 possible outcomes from this process:

a) The project is approved:

Approval means that the Micro Project has been selected and will be funded.

b) The project is rejected:

If a Micro Project is rejected, a decision has been made that the Micro Project in its current form is not suitable for the Programme. The SSC will set out the reasons for rejection. This does not stop Partners from submitting a different Micro Project to the Programme in the future, or if the application was rejected due to specific issues which can be addressed, submitting a modified proposal.

Partners whose Micro Project has been rejected will need to go through the full application procedure for any future project submission or resubmission of a modified proposal. Rejected projects will receive an explanation of the reasons for rejection.

Micro Project approval might be conditional or come with recommendations issued by the SSC. These conditions will be built into the GOL.

As soon as the project applicants have received the notification of approval the project implementation phase starts. For further information, please see the Guidance Note 6 on “Project Implementation”

A. Eligibility and Administrative assessments

Eligibility and Administrative criteria are “minimum requirements”, each of which has to be met for a Micro Project to be declared eligible. The answer to any criterion is either yes or no.

Administrative appraisal

The following elements are verified during the Administrative appraisal (you can use the table below as a checklist):

Criteria	Description
Administrative criteria	
The Micro Project Application Form (MAF) has been submitted.	<i>Day, time of the day or within a period of ongoing call for proposals. The JS will consider the date of the submission on EMS as the official submission date.</i>
Required number of Micro Project Application Form versions is submitted.	<i>Application Form is submitted in the required number of paper and electronic versions. One hard copy of the signed Micro Project Application Form in the language of the Lead Partner (LP) must be received by the JS no later than 5 working days after submission.</i>
The Micro Project Application Form is signed by an authorised signatory.	<i>The Micro Project Application Form and its annexes are signed where necessary by a duly authorised representative of the organisation i.e. the person authorised to commit the relevant resources for the relevant period of time. On the signature page project applicants will be required to declare that the person signing is a duly authorised representative of the organisation. As a matter of simplification the signed scanned copy of the Application Form needs to be submitted only in the language of the Lead Partner.</i>
The Micro Project Application Form is correctly filled in.	<i>All applicable sections of the Application Form are correctly filled in (no missing information, in both French and English. The LP must ensure the quality of the translation and that the content is the same in both languages. This includes the work plan, the budget, the proposal of reporting periods and the upload of compulsory annexes. The Programme Manual define the compulsory annexes as well as the technicality of each section of the Application Form (example: maximum of Implementation Work Packages, maximum number of activities per WP, minimum number of deliverable per WP, flat rate option to be selected in the budget, etc.).</i>
All obligatory annexes are submitted.	<i>Obligatory annexes are attached to the Micro Project Application Form where applicable.</i>
Administrative and formal data in the Micro Project Application Form and annexes is consistent.	<i>Information presented in the annexes is consistent with the Micro Project Application Form (e.g. co-financing amounts in Letters of Engagement, Project Partner names etc.).</i>

Eligibility appraisal

The following elements constitute the Eligibility appraisal:

Eligibility criteria	Description
The Micro Project fulfils the requirements for partnership.	<i>At least 1 Partner from each country within the Programme Area and a maximum of 5 partners (including LP).</i>
The Lead Partner and Project Partners are eligible organisations.	<i>All partners correspond to the type of organisation listed in the Guidance Note 14 on Micro-Project</i> <i>All Partners are correctly attributed to NUTS3.</i> <i>Partners from outside the area may be accepted if there is a clear added-value for the project, however, the Lead Partner shall be an organisation based within the Programme Area.</i> <i>The territorial eligibility is related to activities not where Partners are located geographically.</i>
Time limits are correct.	<i>Start and end dates (eg depending on the closure of the call of proposals or the end of the Programme period) and duration of the project.</i>
The Micro Project fits with one of the Programme priority and its Specific Objective.	<i>The Micro Project has selected the correct Programme Priority and Specific Objective.</i>
Minimum and maximum budget requirements are correct.	<i>Total, Programme contribution, maximum ERDF is respected etc.</i>
There is no evidence of double funding of activities.	<i>Lead Partners will be asked to provide a signed declaration stating that the expenditure related to the Micro Project activities and funded by the Programme is not funded twice (e.g. by other national or EU programmes).</i> <i>The declaration is on the last page of the Micro Project Application Form.</i>
External match-funding is secured (if applicable).	<i>In case of external match-funding, availability of an external contribution needs to be evidenced by a Letter of Engagement.</i> <i>The information entered in the Micro Project Application Form must be consistent with the Letter of Engagement</i>
Partnership Agreement	<i>The LP has confirmed that the mutual financial and legal responsibilities of the Partners have been defined and will be included in the Micro Project Partnership Agreement.</i>
The Micro Project complies with State Aid regulation	<i>Project partners have all filled in the State Aid⁸ declaration and they all meet the criteria of the De Minimis rule and/or of the GBER (General Block Exemption Regulation)</i>
The Micro Project complies with public procurement requirements	<i>The Project Partners have completed the relevant section(s) of the Micro Project Application Form explaining how they are going to meet organisational, national and EU procurement requirements.</i>

⁸ For further information, please refer to the Guidance Note on “State Aid”

B. Quality Assessment

Micro Project quality will be scored against the strategic and operational criteria listed below.

The main aim is to determine the extent of Micro Project's contribution to the achievement of Programme objectives (and contribution to Programme indicators) by addressing joint or common target group needs through the following strategic criteria; the Micro Project's context; Cooperation character; Micro Project's contribution to Programme's objectives; the delivery of expected results and outputs; and Partnership relevance and quality.

Criteria		Description	Sections in MAF
Assessment questions		Strategic criteria	
Micro Project's context <i>How well is a need for the Micro Project justified?</i>	3.1.1	<i>The Micro Project addresses common territorial challenges and opportunities in the Programme Area as defined in the Cooperation Programme. There is a real demand for the project</i>	A.1.2 / C.1.1 / C.1.2 /
	3.1.2	<i>The Micro Project builds on existing results and practices, and complement the initiatives it builds on.</i>	C.3.1
	3.1.3	<i>The Micro Project makes a positive contribution to the Programme horizontal principles :</i> <i>-Sustainable development ; Actions to take into account environmental protection requirements (including addressing soil, water and air pollution), resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management.</i> <i>-Equal opportunities and non-discrimination :</i> <i>Actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent 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 project. In particular, in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination, and the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.</i> <i>-Equality between men and women:</i> <i>Promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at project level.</i>	C.4
Cooperation character <i>What added value does the cooperation bring?</i>	3.2.1	<i>The added value of the cross-border approach to the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated :</i> <i>-the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation between Partners.</i>	C.1.3
	3.2.2	<i>The Micro Project demonstrates new solutions (new ways of responding to identified needs) that go beyond existing practice in the sector/programme or adapts and implements already developed solutions.</i>	A.1.2 / C.1.1 / C.1.3
	3.2.3	<i>The 2 following cooperation criteria are fulfilled: Joint development and joint implementation. Additionally at least one of either joint staffing or joint financing is fulfilled</i>	D.1

<p>Micro Project's contribution to programme's objectives and delivery of expected results and outputs</p> <p><i>To what extent will the Micro Project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives?</i></p> <p><i>Focus on achieving results for the territories and their population</i></p>	3.3.1	<p><i>-Objectives :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>There is a clear link between the Micro Project specific objective and a Programme Specific Objective</i> <i>There is a clear link between the micro project specific objective and the micro project results.</i> 	C.2.1 / C.2.2 / C.2.4
	3.3.2	<p><i>-Outputs :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>There is a clear link between the Micro Project outputs and at least one programme output indicator</i> <i>There is a clear link between the Micro Project results and the Programme result indicators</i> 	C.2.2 / C.2.3 / C.2.4
	3.3.3	<p><i>Results and main outputs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>-are tangible and measurable,</i> <i>-are realistic (is it possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, Partners, budget - and they are realistic based on the quantification provided)</i> 	C.2.4 / D.1 / E.2
	3.3.4	<p><i>There is an explicit plan to make use of the outputs and results after the end of the Micro Project activities.</i></p>	C.3.2 / D.1
<p>Partnership relevance and quality</p> <p><i>To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed Micro Project?</i></p>	3.4.1	<p><i>The Micro Project involves the relevant Partners (with the necessary skills) needed to address the Micro Project specific objective.</i></p> <p><i>The micro project partnership is balanced</i></p>	B
	3.4.2	<p><i>Micro Project Partner organisations have proven experience in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human, resources, structures, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>All Micro Project Partners play a defined role in the partnership and get a real benefit from it.</i></p>	B / D.1

To assess the viability and the feasibility of the proposed Micro Project, as well as its value for money in terms of resources for the results delivered the operational criteria are set out below which consist of; Budget; Communication; Work Plan; and Management.

Criteria		Description	Sections in MAF
Assessment questions		Operational criteria	
Budget	4.1.1	-Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation including management, audit and any required training costs.	D.1 / E.2
	4.1.2	-Financial allocation per budget line is in line with the work plan -Distribution of the budget per period is in line with the work plan -Distribution of the budget per WP is in line with the work plan -The need for engaging external expertise is justified and the costs are realistic -The need for equipment purchases is justified and their costs are realistic. -The costs are in line with the Programme's eligibility criteria -The budget is clear and realistic -Budget takes in account audit (including First Level Controller) -Micro Project Partners have a clear and mutual understanding of the compulsory expenses (training costs).	D.1 / E.2
Work plan	4.2.1	-Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to the planned main outputs and results -Activities outside the Programme Area clearly benefit the Programme Area (if applicable) -Time plan is realistic and includes relevant timeframe for procurement -Activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence	D.1
Management	4.3.1	-Management and structures (e.g. project committee meeting) are proportionate to the project size and needs and allow Partners' active participation in decision-making -Management and audit procedures (such as reporting and evaluation procedures in the area of finance, project content, communication) are clear, transparent, efficient and effective -Micro Project management includes regular contact between Micro Project Partners and ensures transfer of expertise across the partnership (internal communication within the partnership)	D.1 WP1 + Annex of PA
	4.3.2	The Lead Partner demonstrates competency in managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects, or can ensure adequate measures for management support	D.1 WP1

Scheme 1: Application and Selection process

