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Slovenia – Croatia



OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS

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On the basis of Article 106. of the Public Finance Act of the Republic of Slovenia the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by the Interreg and Financial Mechanisms Office, Cross-Border Programme Management Division issues the following

**OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS
for Small-scale projects**

in the frame of the Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2021-2027

(Reference number: 4300-132/2023-1630-4)

1. Managing Authority

The Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by the Interreg and Financial Mechanisms Office, Cross-Border Programme Management Division acts as the Managing Authority (hereinafter MA).

The MA is the contracting authority for the European Regional Development Fund (hereinafter ERDF).

2. Legal basis

- Public Finance Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 11/11 – official consolidated text, 14/13 – revised, 101/13, 55/15 – ZFisP, 96/15 – ZIPRS1617, 13/18 and 195/20 US Dept.);
- Rules on the procedures for implementing the budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 50/07, 61/08, 99/09 – ZIPRS1011, 3/13, 81/16, 11/22, 96/22 and 105/22 – ZZNŠPP);
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021, laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (Common Provisions Regulation) with all amendments;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund (ERDF Regulation) with all amendments;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported



by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments (Interreg Regulation) with all amendments;

- Implementing acts and delegated acts adopted in accordance with the aforementioned regulations;
- Other legal acts applicable to the implementation of projects co-funded by the ERDF;
- Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2021-2027 No CCI2021TC16RFCB028, approved by the European Commission Decision, No C (2023) 4323 final as of 22 June 2023 with all amendments.

The pronouns used in the masculine gender form in this document shall be considered as including the feminine gender form in line with the principles of gender-neutral language.

3. Open Call for Proposals for Small-scale projects

Open Call for Proposals for Small-scale projects (hereinafter Open Call for SSP) is issued by the MA.

The Application Pack for Small-scale projects (hereinafter Application Pack for SSP), consisting of the Manual for Beneficiaries for Small-scale projects (hereinafter Manual for SSP), the Project Statement for Small-scale project and the Project Partner Statement for Small-scale project templates, the ERDF Subsidy Contract sample for Small-scale project (hereinafter the SSP ERDF Subsidy Contract), the Partnership Agreement sample for Small-scale project, the Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2021-2027 (hereinafter IP SI-HR) and Methodological paper on indicators is available for download on the website www.si-hr.eu. The offline template of the Application Form (hereinafter AF) can be downloaded from the website www.si-hr.eu (this document is not part of the official Application Pack for SSP).

The Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia for the programme period 2021-2027 invites potential beneficiaries to submit project applications in the frame of this Open Call for SSP.

4. Subject of the Open Call for SSP

The IP SI-HR is funded by ERDF under the European Territorial Cooperation objective. The subject of this Open Call for SSP is co-financing projects that contribute **only to** the following priority and related specific objective:

Priority 3: An accessible and connected region

- ✓ *Specific objective 6.3: Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions*



Under this specific objective, joint cross-border events, awareness-raising actions and joint learning will be supported. This specific objective seeks to tackle unexplored possibilities of cross-border cooperation and foster knowledge exchange actions and interactions between the people on both sides of the border.

The Small-scale projects (hereinafter SSP) shall have to apply a result-oriented approach. **The coherence of the project intervention logic** (i.e. the project specific objectives, activities, outputs and expected results) **with the targeted specific objective and the indicators of the programme shall be clearly demonstrated.**

For a detailed description of the content of the priority and programme specific objective, including the actions and target group, please refer to section 2.3.2 of the IP SI-HR. In order to make your project compliant with the programme, it is compulsory to read and take into account the description under the priority and corresponding specific objective.

In line with the terms of this Open Call, a project proposal shall address the mentioned **priority** and **the programme specific objective.**

In the IP SI-HR, the following types of SSP will be supported:

- Cross-border cooperation projects and
- Mutual trust building projects.

Cross-border cooperation projects (hereinafter Type 1) are projects supporting smaller events for specific target groups as defined by the project and its objectives. **Mutual trust building projects (hereinafter Type 2)** are projects supporting bigger events that will have an impact on the people living in the cross-border area. The intention of a SSP is not to attract tourist or general public but to deepen mutual trust and understanding among the people living in the cross-border area, and to strengthen the ties between them.

5. Available funding, co-financing rate and project size

The indicative amount of **EUR 720.555,00** of ERDF funding shall be made available for co-financing of projects in the frame of the current Open Call for SSP.

Only eligible expenditure (see point 10 of this document) shall be co-financed by the programme. Co-financing from the ERDF shall amount to a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs, and at least 20% shall be provided by the Project Partners' own contribution and/or other sources¹.

The **maximum project budget** for SSP is up to **16,000 EUR ERDF for Type 1 projects** and up to **24,800 EUR ERDF for Type 2 projects.**

¹ For detailed information see the Manual for SSP.



6. Programme area

The programme area comprises nine Slovenian (Podravska, Pomurska, Savinjska, Zasavska, Posavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Obalno-kraška, Osrednjeslovenska, and Primorsko-notranjska statistical regions) and eight Croatian (Primorsko-goranska, Istarska, Zagrebačka, Krapinsko-zagorska, Varaždinska, Međimurska, and Karlovačka counties and the City of Zagreb) NUTS-3 regions.

7. Partnership requirements

In line with the minimum requirement the partnership shall have **at least one Project Partner from Slovenia and one from Croatia** or an European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (hereinafter EGTC) registered in one of the participating countries consisting of members from both Member States and a **maximum of four Project Partners**.

Natural persons and political parties shall be excluded from participation. All other legal entities shall be able to participate provided they are **not acting as external service providers** and have the **financial, administrative and operational capacity** to participate in the programme. All partners (including Lead Partner) **shall be located within the programme area**.

8. Eligible period of co-financing

The start and end date will be set up in the SSP ERDF Subsidy Contract. However, the start date shall not be earlier than the date of the approval of the project by the Monitoring Committee (hereinafter MC) and the end date shall not be later than **30 November 2028**.

9. Project duration

The project duration should not exceed **12 months**.

10. Eligible costs and forms of reimbursement

1. Standard scale of unit costs per participant per event for Type 1 SSP
2. Lump sum for Type 2 SSP

Infrastructure and works are not eligible under this specific objective.

A detailed description of eligible costs for both types of SSP is included in the Manual for SSP.

11. Project development support

Before submitting their SSP, the applicants should read the documents related to the respective Open Call for SSP published on the website www.si-hr.eu. Any inquiries and requests for additional information during the Call should be sent by e-mail to the Joint Secretariat (hereinafter JS) at si-hr.mkrr@gov.si.



The following **information and support** related to project development and preparation of applications shall be **provided by the JS**:

- information about the programme and the Open Call for SSP;
- information about the preparation and submission of applications;
- organisation of information workshops;
- publication of frequently asked questions and answers;
- publication of information about approved projects.

Support concerning specific SSP content-related topics, including information on State Aid and Project Partners search shall be **provided by the representatives of both Member States** (National Authorities).

Contacts are listed in Chapter 8, section 8.2 of the Manual for SSP and on the dedicated programme website.

The information about the planned information workshops, most frequently asked questions and approved projects shall be available on the programme website www.si-hr.eu.

12. Submission of project applications

SSP can be submitted at any time between the launch date and the closing date of the Open Call for SSP or as long as the funding is available. The applicants can submit project applications continuously after the Open Call is launched.

The first deadline for the submission of project applications shall be 31 January 2024. (at 12.00 CET). All subsequent deadlines for the submission of project applications shall be published on the programme website www.si-hr.eu at least two months before the set deadline. Applications received in due time before each Monitoring Committee (hereinafter MC) and fulfilling all requirements shall be subject to MC decision.

The project application shall be submitted by the LP through Jems. The submitted application shall contain all the required data and shall be accompanied by signed and scanned documents annexed to the AF as stated in the Manual for SSP.

The Application Pack for SSP is available on the dedicated programme website at www.si-hr.eu.



13. Project selection

The SSP shall have **cross-border impacts on the programme area but in Slovenia the impact of the project should be focused on regions (NUTS 3) that are directly bordering Croatia**. At least three of the cross-border cooperation criteria shall have to be fulfilled. The Project Partners shall cooperate in joint development, joint implementation and joint financing. In addition, they may cooperate in joint staffing.

The selection of projects shall be based on the assessment of the received applications following a standard procedure, which shall ensure the respect of the principles of transparency and equal treatment. The project application submitted through Jems shall be the only one considered valid.

The project selection procedure shall be conducted in two phases:

Administrative compliance and eligibility check

The set administrative and eligibility criteria shall have to be fulfilled by each project application. The project applications that fully comply with the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be further subject to quality assessment.

If there are some discrepancies or some certain documents are missing according to the administrative check, the LP shall be asked for supplements. The supplements may refer to the compliance with criteria **A.2 and B.1. The LP shall be able to supplement the project application within (7) seven calendar days** after the request for supplements was sent. In case the project application fully complies with the set administrative and eligibility criteria after the requested supplements have been provided and is approved by the MC, all supplements shall be entered in the AF (in the Jems) before signing the SSP ERDF Subsidy Contract.

Quality Assessment

SSP that pass the administrative compliance and eligibility check shall be further assessed for quality against the following assessment criteria:

- Strategic assessment criteria
- Operational assessment criteria

The total number of points for a project application in the scope of quality assessment shall be 100 (100%). Each project application shall have to achieve **at least 60% or 60 points** to be further considered. Project applications **not reaching 60 points shall be rejected**. Project applications reaching 60 points or more shall be discussed at the MC meeting with the possibility of being **approved for funding, approved under condition, not approved for funding, or put on the reserve list**.



For IP SI-HR, it is crucial that **horizontal principles** are integrated in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project activities. During the whole life cycle of the projects, partners should take into account the horizontal principles of the EU. More precisely, actions should be planned, implemented and reported considering the horizontal **principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, gender equality and sustainable development**.

The Project Partners shall indicate the contribution of the project to horizontal principles as positive, neutral or negative and provide a short justification. **Negative assessment in one of the horizontal principles will lead to rejection of the project.**

The detailed description of the scoring applied in the scope of the assessment is provided in Chapter 3, section 3.2 of the Manual for SSP, which is part of the Application Pack for SSP published on www.si-hr.eu.

14. Small-scale project approval

The **final decision** on the SSP shall be made by the MC of the programme. The MC shall formally decide whether to approve or not approve the project application for funding and shall set the corresponding ERDF contribution by taking into consideration the quality of each project application and its contribution to the programme objectives.

15. Notification regarding project selection

The MA/JS shall inform the LP whether its project proposal was approved for funding/not approved for funding/put on the reserve list within 30 calendar days from the decision of the MC.

16. Amendments to the Open Call for SSP

Any amendment to the text of the Open Call for SSP or its Application Pack shall be published on the programme website www.si-hr.eu.

Amendments to this Open Call for SSP shall be published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. Applicants are obliged to respect potential amendments to the Open Call for SSP and its Application Pack published in the manner as described above.



17. Language

The Open Call for SSP and the Application Pack for SSP shall be **published in the Slovene, Croatian and English language**. In case of discrepancies between the Slovene and the Croatian text of the Open Call for SSP and the Application Pack for SSP, harmonized English version shall prevail and shall be used as a tool for common understanding.

The project application shall be bilingual, written in both the **Slovene and Croatian language**, except for **the project summary which shall be written in the Slovene, Croatian and English language**. In case of discrepancies, the language of the LP shall prevail.

18. Other provisions

The results of the Open Call for SSP are considered information of public nature and shall be published on the website www.si-hr.eu after signature of SSP ERDF Subsidy Contracts with the selected LPs.

Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development