

On the basis of Article 219 of the Rules on the procedures of implementing the budget of the Republic of Slovenia The Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by the European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanisms Office, Cross-border Programmes Management Division, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, issues the

Open Call for Proposals

in the frame of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia – Croatia

(Reference number: 4300-113/2015)

1. Managing Authority

The Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by the European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanisms Office, Cross-border Programmes Management Division, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, acts as the Managing Authority.

The Managing Authority is the Contracting Authority for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

2. Legal basis

- 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 Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (of 11 July 2006),
- Commission 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,
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Regional Development fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing regulation No 1080/2006 of 5 July 2006,
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EU) No 1082/2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment of such groupings,
- Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia –Croatia, No CCI 2014TC16RFCB029, approved by the European Commission Decision No C (2015)6775 on 30 September 2015,

- Minutes of the 4th Monitoring Committee meeting of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia – Croatia of 10 May 2017.

3. Open Call for Proposals

This Open Call for Proposals is issued by the Managing Authority and is applicable for Applicants defined as eligible in point 7 of this document.

The Cooperation Programme (CP) Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia (Interreg SI-HR) invites beneficiaries of the individual investment priority established in programme area to submit Applications in the frame of the Open Call for Proposals.

The Application Pack, consisting of the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries, the templates of the Lead Partner Statement, Project Partner Statement, a sample of the Subsidy Contract, a sample of the Partnership Agreement and the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia is available on the web page www.si-hr.eu.

4. Subject of the Open Call for Proposals

The Cooperation programme Interreg SI-HR is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation objective. The subject of this Open Call for Proposals is co-financing operations that contribute efficiently to the **overall objective of the programme, which is:**

to promote sustainable, safe and vibrant border area by fostering smart approaches to preservation, mobilization and management of natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the people living and working in or visiting the area.

The Subject of this Open Call for Proposals is co-financing of projects from the European Regional Development Fund corresponding to the following priority axes/investment priorities and related specific objectives:

Priority Axis 2: Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources

- **Investment priority 6c: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage**
 - **Specific objective: Active heritage preservation through sustainable tourism**
- **Investment priority 6d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure**
 - **Specific objective: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and promoting ecosystem services**

Priority Axis 3: Healthy, safe and accessible border areas

- **Specific objective: Building partnerships among public authorities and stakeholders for healthy, safe and accessible border areas**

Projects 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 of the programme needs to be clearly demonstrated.**

For a detailed information on the description of the content of each priority axis/investment priority and programme specific objectives, including the indicative actions, beneficiaries and target groups, please refer to section 2 of the CP Interreg SI-HR document adopted by the European Commission on 30.09.2015. In order to make your project compliant with the programme it is compulsory to read and take into account the description under each priority axis/investment priority and corresponding specific objective.

Under the terms of this Call, a project proposal must refer only to **one** of the above-mentioned **priority axis** and one programme specific objective, even in case of a project where some activities might also fall under the other priority axis.

Activities have to indicate **cross-border impact on the eligible area** of this programme.

The project partners must fulfill at least three of the cross border cooperation criteria: joint development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), joint staffing, and joint financing (mandatory).

5. Available funds, share of co-financing and project size

The amount of **33.087.636,00 EUR** from the European Regional Development Fund will be available for co-financing operations.

The funds are subdivided by priority axes as follows:

Priority Axes	Community funding
Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources	28.074.358,00
Healthy, safe and accessible border areas	5.013.278,00
Total	33.087.636,00

Only eligible expenditure can be co-financed from the Programme, whereby the Community co-financing from the ERDF funds can amount to max. 85 % of the total eligible costs; at least 15% is to be ensured from other sources.

The projects eligible for participation in the programme are those with the total amount of requested ERDF funds from 100.000,00 EUR ERDF and up to 2.500.000,00 EUR ERDF for Priority Axis 2 (Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources) and from 100.000,00 EUR ERDF up to 1.000.000 EUR ERDF for Priority Axis 3 (Healthy, safe and accessible border areas).

6. Programme Area

The programme area of the CP Interreg SI-HR includes the following territorial units on the NUTS level 3:

- **in the Republic of Slovenia:** Pomurska region, Podravska region, Savinjska region, Zasavska region, Posavska region, Jugovzhodna Slovenija region, Osrednjeslovenska region, Primorsko-notranjska region, Obalno-kraška region;

- **in the Republic of Croatia:** Primorsko-goranska County, Istarska County, City of Zagreb, Zagrebačka County, Krapinsko-zagorska County, Varaždinska County, Međimurska County and Karlovačka County.

7. Eligible Applicants

In the frame of the CP Interreg SI-HR eligible Applicants are:

7.1 Priority Axis 2: Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources

7.1.1 Investment priority 6c: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

- Local, regional or national authorities (e.g. municipalities, counties...).
- Non-profit organisations established by public or private law - legal persons acting in the field of cultural or natural heritage, sustainable tourism development or related services (e.g. museums, Natura 2000 and protected areas management authorities, regional development agencies, tourism destination management organisations, NGOs, associations...).
- Small and medium sized enterprises.

7.1.2 Investment priority 6d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

- Local, regional or national authorities (e.g. municipalities, counties...).
- Non-profit organisations established by public or private law - legal persons in the field of nature protection (e.g. Natura 2000 and protected area management authorities, conservation authorities, NGOs, R&D institutions, regional development agencies, forest institutes, rural development centres, etc.).

7.2 Priority Axis 3: Healthy, safe and accessible border areas

- National, regional and local authorities.
- Non-profit organisations established by public or private law - legal persons (e.g. health centres, social care organisations, NGOs, elderly centres, regional development agencies, social enterprises, rescue services and civil protection organisations, etc.).

The minimum requirement is to have at least one project partner from Slovenia and one from Croatia or an EGTC registered in one of the participating countries consisting of members from both Member States.

Lead Partner must be located in the Programme Area; Projects Partners should be located in the Programme Area; if Project Partner is located outside the programme area a justification must be provided in the Application Form.

Applicants located outside the programme area but inside the European Union can become project partners only in duly justified cases. Please note that, in case of project approval, the effective participation of partners from EU regions outside the programme area is subject to the condition that the Member States where they are located accept all of the implementing provisions in relation to management, control and audit.

All partners must have legal, financial and operational capacity to participate in the programme.

8. Eligible period of co-financing

The earliest possible start of the period of eligibility of expenditure is the date of the project approval by MC; except for the preparation costs where the period of eligibility of expenditure starts with the date of the publication of the Open Call.

The project end is the date defined in the Subsidy Contract, but not later than 30 November 2022.

9. Duration

The projects eligible for participation in the programme are those with the duration up to 30 months for Priority Axis 2 (Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources) and up to 24 months for Priority Axis 3 (Healthy, safe and accessible border areas).

10. Eligible costs

1. Staff costs
2. Office and administrative expenditure
3. Travel and accommodation costs
4. External expertise and services costs
5. Equipment expenditure
6. Infrastructure and works expenditure

A detailed description of the eligible costs is included in the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries (Part 4).

The expenditures are eligible only within the project duration (except for preparation costs and the expenditure incurred in the last reporting period, which must be paid within 30 days from the end date of the project).

11. Project development support

Applicants should read all the documents related to the Open Call for Proposals before the project submission. In the course of the Call for Proposals, questions may be sent by e-mail to Joint Secretariat.

The following information and support related to project development and preparing of applications will be provided by the JS:

- information about the programme and the Open Call;
- information concerning preparation and submission of Applications;

Support concerning specific project content related topics, including information on State aid and Project Partners search will be provided by the representatives of both Member states (National

Authorities). Contacts are listed in Part 2, Chapter 2.1 of the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries, which is part of the Application pack.

The information on the planned informative workshops and most frequently asked questions will be available on the web site www.si-hr.eu.

12. Submission of the Applications

The Application can be submitted at any time between the launch date and the closing date of the Open Call for Proposals or till the funds are available. The project Applications can be submitted continuously after opening the call.

The first deadline for the submission is 11th March 2016. The following deadlines for the submission of the Applications will be published on the programme web site www.si-hr.eu at least two months before the set deadline. Applications received in due time before each Monitoring Committee (MC) and fulfilling all requirements will be subject to MC decision.

The Application must be submitted by the Lead Applicant through the eMS system. The submitted Application must contain all the required data and the signed scanned annexes to the Application Form as stated in the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries.

The Application Pack is available at the web site: www.si-hr.eu.

13. Project selection

The selection of proposals is based on the assessment of the received applications following a standardized procedure, which safeguards the principles of transparency and equal treatment. Only Application Form submitted via eMS system till set date is valid.

The project selection procedure will be conducted in two phases:

13.1. Administrative compliance and eligibility check

The administrative and eligibility criteria have to be fulfilled by every project proposal and will be checked by the JS. Those project Applications that fully comply with the administrative and eligibility criteria will be subject to the quality assessment.

If there are some discrepancies or some documents are missing according to the administrative check, the Application will be rejected in the eMS system as administrative not eligible without any request for clarifications or supplements, except in case of administrative criterion A4 "The Application Package is compiled in the required language(s)" where there is missing or unsuitable translation in one field of the Application Form, meaning if the text is inserted in one language and the translation is missing or the text is inserted twice in the same required language, the Lead Applicant will be requested for supplement of the Application Form to be delivered within five calendar days. If the project still does not fulfil the administrative and eligibility criterion, after received supplement or passed five calendar days, the project has to be rejected. The Applicants of administratively incompliant and ineligible Applications have the possibility to submit the revised Application again till one of the next deadlines.

13.2 Quality Assessment

The projects that pass the administrative compliance and eligibility check shall be further assessed for quality using the following assessment criteria (presented in detailed in Part 3, Chapter 1.5.1 of the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries):

- Strategic assessment criteria
- Operational assessment criteria

Priority axis 2 (investment priority 6c and 6d):

Total available points within the quality assessment for priority axis 2 are 89 (100%). Each project has to score at least 70% or 63 points. Projects not reaching 63 points will be rejected. Projects reaching 63 to 72 (80%) will be discussed on the MC meeting with the possibility of being postponed or rejected, projects reaching 73 points and more will be discussed on the MC meeting with the possibility of being approved, postponed, rejected or put on the reserve list.

Criteria C13 – C14 and C20 – C22, referring to Guiding Principles of individual investment priority, are knock-out criteria. If a project is assessed with 0 point in either of these criteria it will be automatically rejected.

Priority axis 3 (investment priority 11):

Total available points within the quality assessment for priority axis 3 are 95 (100%). Each project has to score at least 70% or 67 points. Projects not reaching 67 points will be rejected. Projects reaching 67 to 76 (80%) will be discussed on the MC meeting with the possibility of being postponed or rejected, projects reaching 77 points and more will be discussed on the MC meeting with the possibility of being approved, postponed, rejected or put on the reserve list.

Criteria C13 – C14 and C20 – C22, referring to Guiding Principles of individual investment priority, are knock-out criteria. If a project is assessed with 0 point in either of these criteria it will be automatically rejected.

The detailed description on the scoring (C1 – C31) and thresholds within the assessment process are described in Part 3, Chapter 1.5.1 of the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries, which is part of the Application pack.

Projects on which the MC will decide to be rejected after the quality assessment, may not apply for Interreg V-A SI-HR funds again with the same project idea and partnership.

14. Approval of the projects

The **final decision** on the project is made by the MC of the CP Interreg SI-HR.

The MC formally decides on the approval or rejection of the project and on the ERDF contribution by talking into consideration the quality of projects and contribution to the Programme objectives.

15. Informing on the project selection

On the basis of the decision of the MC, the Lead Partner will be informed by the Managing Authority (MA) on the approval/postponement/rejection/being put on the reserve list of the Application with an official letter within 30 days of the decision of the MC.

16. Amendments to the Open Call for Proposals

Should the Open Call for Proposals and its Application Pack be amended corrigenda will be published on the following web site: www.si-hr.eu.

Amendments of this Open Call for Proposals shall be published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia.

Applicants are obliged to respect eventual amendments to the Open Call for Proposals and its Application Pack published in the manner as described above.

17. Language

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

The Application must be submitted bilingual in **Slovene and Croatian** language. **The Summary of the project needs to be submitted in Slovene, Croatian and English language**. In case of discrepancies, the language of the Lead Partner prevails.

The Applicants must make sure that the wording in Slovene and Croatian language is the same and understandable.

18. Other provisions

The results of the Open Call for Proposals are information of public nature and will be published on the web site www.si-hr.eu after signing the ERDF Subsidy Contracts with the selected Lead Partners.

Government Office of Republic of Slovenia for
Development and European Cohesion Policy