

MINUTES

1st meeting of the Monitoring Committee Interreg NEXT Programme Poland–Ukraine 2021-2027

2-3 February 2023, Lublin & online

1. Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee

- The Joint Secretariat (JS) representative presented main assumptions on the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Monitoring Committee (MC).
- The MC representatives discussed issues concerning decision-making and selection of projects.
- The JS representative commented on remarks received from the MC members prior to and during the meeting. There were the following issues:
 - **Art. 1.** *Change in institutions' representation for a particular meeting.*
In case neither member nor his/her deputy can participate in the MC meeting, they may nominate an ad hoc representative informing the MC Chairman about the case. Such information shall be provided:
 - In case of Polish MC members – via the JS;
 - In case of Ukrainian MC members – via Ukrainian National Authority (which then informs the JS);
 - **Art. 2.** *Additional point to the Art. 2, p. 1 concerning environmental issues.*
The functions of the MC are indicated in accordance with Art. 19, 22 and 30 of the Interreg Regulation. The environmental issues are referred to in Art. 6, p. 2 of the RoP. During the projects' assessment, the JS (and external assessors, if involved) will check the projects' compliance with the environmental protection requirements arising from the applicable EU and national law;
 - **Art. 2.** *How shall the MC ensure compliance with horizontal principles?*
The JS checks if the projects are in line with horizontal principles, the MC makes a decision based on the JS' assessment;
 - **Art. 6.** *How does the MC perform the strategic assessment of the projects?*
The procedure is described under Art. 6, p. 1;
- the Commission representative commented on the following remark:
 - **Art. 3.** *Should the MC Chairperson (MA) have a voting right?*
According to the Interreg Regulation, the decision concerning the voting right of the MA shall be defined in rules of procedure. There is no provision that would go against a voting right of the MA.

Decision:

- Approval of the Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee.

Annexes:

- Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee,
- Presentation:
 - 1. MC RoP PL-UA NEXT.

2. Information on the institutional framework of the Programme

- The MA representative presented the institutional framework of the Programme and emphasised the main changes compared to the previous PBU 2014-2020 Programme.

Conclusions:

Main changes in the implementation of the programme:

- **Controllers:** public institutions set up by each country and free of charge to projects' partners instead of auditors financed from the project's budget

In Poland:

- for partners from Podkarpackie region – Podkarpackie Voivodeship Office in Rzeszow,
- for partners from Podlaskie region – Podlaskie Voivodeship Office in Białystok,
- for partners from Lubelskie and Mazowieckie regions – Center of European Projects (Control Department)

In Ukraine: State Audit Service of Ukraine.

- Information and implementation network:
 - Managing Authority: supported by the Joint Secretariat on the programme level and by the Branch Office in Lviv and 4 Contact Points in Poland (Białystok, Siedlce, Lublin, Rzeszów);
 - National Authority: supported by the National Contact Point on programme level and up to 6 Contact Points (Rivne, Lutsk, Ternopil, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Uzhhorod) in Ukraine.

Annex:

- Presentation:
 - 2. Institutional framework of the Programme.

NEXT Poland–Ukraine

3. Launch of the Programme, schedule of calls

- The Head of the JS presented the planned schedule of calls for proposals. The JS representative proposed to divide the 1st Call into two rounds in order to speed up the contracting.
- The representatives of the Polish regions asked the Head of the JS to elaborate on their idea and expressed their concerns regarding the feasibility and implications of the two deadlines for the project proposal submission. They also emphasised the importance of setting clear requirements and deadlines for applicants.
- The Commission representative underlined that the Programme should aim to start contracting and implementing projects rapidly. In that context, the discussed proposal on the 1st Call organization answers the need of ensuring money flows from the EC to the Programme (payments to the Programme based on its expenditures reported to the Commission).
- The NA representative suggested dividing the 1st Call into two rounds according to the priorities (the first round – HEALTH, the second round – ENVIRONMENT).

Decisions:

- Approval of the schedule of Calls for proposals, with the following amendments:
 - The 1st Call will be announced in May 2023 and will be open until 31 July 2023;
 - It will be addressed to HEALTH and ENVIRONMENT priorities, projects will be submitted simultaneously. Based on the number of proposals received, projects under the priority HEALTH will be assessed and selected in the first round, followed by projects under the priority ENVIRONMENT. Consequently, two meetings of the MC will be organised for the selection of projects.

Annexes:

- Schedule of projects submission, selection and contracting,
- Presentation:
 - 3. Launch, schedule of calls PL-UA NEXT.

4. 1st Call for proposals – project selection criteria

- The JS representative presented the project selection criteria for the 1st Call for proposals.
- The Tesim representative commented on the score for the p. 2. of the quality assessment “Cross-border cooperation potential and partnership”.
- The representatives of the Polish regions suggested providing the minimum score to be achieved for the CBC criterion.

Decision:

- Approval of the 1st Call application and selection documents (Application form, Budget for the project, Project communication plan, Assessment grid) with the following amendments:
 - The minimum score for the quality assessment – 1. Strategic assessment criteria – p. 2. “Cross-border cooperation potential and partnership” for a project in order to pass these criteria is 12 points (out of 24);
 - The project assessed with less than 12 points for that criterion will not be recommended for funding.

Annexes:

- 1st Call – application and selection (Application form, Budget for the project, Project communication plan, Assessment grid),
- Presentation:
 - 4. 1st Call PL-UA NEXT.

5. Large infrastructure projects 2021-2027 - LIPs state of play

- The JS representatives presented main assumptions on the Large Infrastructure Projects (LIPs) and gave an overview of submitted LIPs proposals. The JS representatives also commented on the LIP manual sent to the MC representatives prior to the meeting.
- The MC representatives noticed that project partners need more time for documents preparation and suggested prolonging the deadline for the submission of full applications until 31 May 2023.
- The Commission representative informed that according to the Interreg Regulation, the Commission shall receive LIPs concept notes 2 months before the MC meeting during which it will decide upon LIPs final approval.

Decisions:

- Approval of the LIP manual with annexes.
- The deadline for LIP full application submission – **31 May 2023**. Although applications may be submitted earlier, they will be treated on the ‘first come first served’ basis.
- The allocation for priority BORDERS should be spent on **LIPs selected via direct award**.

Annexes:

- LIP manual with annexes,
- Presentation:
 - 5. LIP PL-UA 21-27.

6. Programme communication strategy, visibility and communication activities in 2023

- The JS representative presented the Programme draft communication strategy, visibility and communication activities in 2023.

Conclusion:

- The document should be approved by the MC later after its final adjustment.

Annexes:

- Communication strategy (draft),
- Presentation:
 - 6. Info-promo 21-27 PL-UA NEXT.

7. Financing Agreement for the Programme

- The MA representative presented the legal framework, implication for the Programme, state of play and further steps.

Conclusion:

- The Financing Agreement needs to be signed **before 31 December 2023**.

Annexes:

- Presentation:
 - 7. Financing Agreement PL-UA NEXT.

Chaired by:

MARTA PIETRZYK (MA)

Secretary:

OLENA BUDARINA (JS)