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NEXT Poland-Ukraine

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT MANUAL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BO	Branch Office
CBC	Cross-border Cooperation
CfPs	Call for Proposals
EC	European Commission
AF	Application Form
JS	Joint Secretariat
QA	Quality Assessment
MC	Monitoring Committee
MA	Managing Authority
NA	National Authority
WOD2021	Application for applicants to submit project proposals online within the Central Information System

LIST OF ANNEXES

1. **Scheme of the evaluation and selection process.**

Foreword

This document is addressed to all actors involved in the evaluation of the project applications within the framework of the Interreg NEXT Poland–Ukraine 2021-2027 Programme (Programme). It will be used both as a complementary material for the relevant actors to prepare them for the assessment process as well as a reference tool during work of the assessors.

Contents have been developed taking into account the relevant legal framework of the Programme.

1. Actors involved, roles and responsibilities

Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee has the overall responsibility for the evaluation and selection process. The Monitoring Committee performs also the strategic assessment of the projects in accordance with Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the MC .

Joint Secretariat

Working under the supervision of the Head of the Joint Secretariat, the employees of the JS assess the applications with attached documentation on the basis of evaluation criteria which are provided in the Programme Manual applicable for the respective Calls for Proposals. The JS also coordinates the involvement of external experts in the assessment.

External experts

The external experts may be involved in the process of the quality assessment, if necessary. They shall be selected via an open call for experts in accordance with the [Guidelines for involving experts in assessment process in Interreg Programmes for the 2021-2027 period](#) (developed by Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy of Poland acting as the MA). Unless decided otherwise, the external experts shall work remotely.

External experts and the JS assessors constitute one pool of assessors from which the Head of the JS selects assessors for the quality assessment.

2. Principles applying to the evaluation and selection process

Project selection procedures shall ensure that the principles of transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, objectivity and fair competition are complied with. The projects shall be selected and awarded on the basis of pre-announced selection and award criteria defined in the Programme Manual published for each Call. The selection criteria serve to assess the applicant's ability to complete the proposed action. The award criteria shall be used to assess the quality of the project's proposal against the set objectives and priorities. Any conflict of interest shall be avoided. The same rules and conditions shall be applied to all applicants.

The grants shall be subject to ex ante and ex post publicity rules. At the same time, the applicants shall be informed in writing about the evaluation results. If the grant requested is not awarded, the MA shall

provide the reasons for the rejection of the application with reference to the selection and award criteria that are not met by the application.

Actors involved in the evaluation declare to ensure the fulfilment of the following principles:

- **Confidentiality and secrecy** – the entire procedure, from drawing-up the CfPs to the selection of successful applicants, is confidential and secret. All information made available to actors involved in the evaluation process is to be treated as strictly confidential and specifically no information on the proposals submitted or the results of the assessment may be made public to any other person than applicants. The names of the assessors are confidential. Any documents disclosed to the MC, including evaluation reports, shall be used only for the purposes directly related to the works of the MC. Observers are required to respect the same confidentiality obligations as other members of the MC.
- **Objectivity, impartiality and equal treatment** – all proposals have to be assessed alike and treated impartially on their merits, following a review strictly based upon the information they contain, to be assessed in line with the criteria set up in the Programme Manual published for each Call and irrespective of where the applicant and its partners originate and their identity. Impartiality applies to the MC (both voting and non-voting) members as well as to the assessors and observers, therefore they may not assess applications submitted by institutions or individuals with whom they have a personal link. Any case of possible conflict of interest has to be reported to the Head of the JS, so that the proposal to be assessed may be assigned to someone else. In line with the above mentioned principles, before starting the evaluation, all assessors must sign a Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality that must be adhered to before, during and after the evaluation. By signing this Declaration they commit themselves to strict confidentiality and impartiality concerning their tasks and they declare not to have any conflict of interest. Therefore assessors with existing or past link with any applicant must declare it and immediately withdraw from the assessment or evaluation process. Persons involved in the assessment and evaluation process should also declare not to offer their services under a sub-contract to successful project applicants that they have assessed.
- **Transparency and clarity** – the process of evaluation, described in the Programme Manual and based on a scoring and ranking system, must be strictly kept and therefore eligibility, selection and award criteria must not be changed during the evaluation process of the CfPs. Comments have to be written in an explicit and detailed manner and adequate feedback must be provided to applicants on the outcome of the evaluation.
- **Quality** – projects selected for funding must demonstrate a high technical and managerial quality and must help in making a contribution to achieving the objectives of the Programme and those set out for each priority and specific objective. Key features of a high quality CBC project are: cross-border impact, cross-border partnership and common benefits. The selected projects should clearly demonstrate compliance with these criteria.
- **Efficiency and speed** – the procedures should be designed to be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation and respecting the legal framework of the Programme.
- **Traceability** – the overall evaluation process should be documented and recorded in the evaluation reports.

3. Evaluation and selection process

The project evaluation and selection is the overall responsibility of the Monitoring Committee (MC).

The project evaluation and selection procedure consists of subsequent stages:

- Formal assessment consisting of Administrative and eligibility check,
- Quality assessment consisting of strategic and operational assessment,
- Selection of projects.

Formal assessment: Administrative and eligibility check

First, the submitted applications undergo the full Administrative and eligibility check. It is performed solely by the JS. The Head of JS assigns the JS assessors for assessment of each individual application. Only applications that have met the deadline for submission will be subject to Administrative and eligibility check. The JS verifies the completeness and correctness of the submitted documents. The Administrative and eligibility check is carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria by at least two JS assessors who prepare one joint evaluation grid. If some of the criteria described in evaluation grid are not fulfilled, the applicants will be asked to submit clarifications and/or corrections to their applications.

Clarifications will be requested when information provided is unclear, missing or is incorrect. In this case the Lead Partner will be asked to provide clarifications within the deadline set by the JS but not later than within 14 calendar days from the date when the request for clarification was sent by e-mail to the Lead Partner.

The project application will be rejected:

- in case the applicant fails to correct the application or submit the clarification, or the submitted clarification or corrections are not adequate,
- if any potential Lead Partner/Project Partner proves to be ineligible.

The rejected project application will not be further evaluated.

The Administrative and eligibility check report is prepared by the Head of JS and sent to the MC for information purposes.

Following the Administrative and eligibility check, the JS will inform Lead Partners by e-mail sent to the Lead Partner, whether their Application Forms met all the Administrative and eligibility criteria and whether they will be the subject of the Quality assessment. If the decision is negative, the reasons shall be also given to Lead Partners.

The Lead Partners shall be entitled to file a complaint in case they do not agree with the outcome of the Administrative and eligibility check.

Quality assessment

The Head of JS selects from the pool of assessors and assigns assessors for assessment of each individual application form. The choice depends on factors such as:

- the number of applications submitted by the applicants within each of calls for proposals,
- workload of the JS connected with the stage of implementation and closure of the CBC Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020,
- stage of implementation of the Interreg NEXT Poland–Ukraine 2021-2027 Programme.

Subsequently, the Quality assessment is carried out by the assigned assessors (JS employees and/or external experts) in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the assessment grid. The Quality assessment consists of strategic assessment and operational assessment. The details on scoring and required minimum score the application has to achieve in order to be taken into consideration for possible financing is provided in chapter 5. How to evaluate.

Each application must be assessed by at least two assessors. Two independent evaluation grids shall be prepared for each application. The total score is arithmetical average of scores given by two assessors. The assessors are obliged to provide the justification of the scoring for each section of the evaluation grid. The evaluation grids shall be completed in English.

An additional third assessment of the project shall be carried out whenever:

- the total scores given by the initial two assessors diverge by more than 20 points and/or
- only 1 of the total initial scores is above the threshold for overall admissibility of the proposals.

The Head of the JS confirms the necessity of the third assessment and indicates the assessor that will carry it out. In case of the third assessment, the total score for the application is the arithmetical average of scores between the third assessment and that initial assessment which is more similar to the third assessment.

Monitoring Committee's approval

The Head of the JS prepares a draft Evaluation Report along with a draft ranking list of all applications that undergone quality assessment (according to their score and within allocation available in the CfP for selected priorities and specific objectives), including the reserve list of applications, for the Monitoring Committee's approval.

The decision on the selection of project proposals is taken by the MC, based on the results of the assessment and selection processes.

Moreover, in the selection process, the Monitoring Committee performs its own strategic assessment of the projects in accordance with Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee.

During performing the strategic assessment the MC shall ensure that:

- a. justification of the strategic assessment, proving that the project has a clear strategic impact for a cross border region, is clearly set out in the MC decision, basing on votes from each national delegation based on the criteria indicated below :
 - i. the project corresponds to the guiding principles;
 - ii. the project proposes systematic solutions in order to achieve Programme objectives;
 - iii. the project demonstrates strong cross-border-character (results or outputs of the project benefit both sides of border) and/or clear links to the future cross-border cooperation;
 - iv. the project shows economic impact (e.g., strengthening competitiveness), social impact (e.g., preservation of the cultural heritage, raising qualifications) on regional level;
 - v. the project activities affect and solve the problems of the entire Programme area or its significant part;
- b. the strategic assessment of MC shall be done only towards the projects, which received at least 70 points (i.e. at least 36 points from the strategic assessment and at least 24 points from the operational assessment (including the minimum required score for the quality

- assessment – 1. Strategic assessment criteria – p. 2. “Cross-border cooperation potential and partnership”, i.e. 12 points (out of 24)) after quality assessment performed by JS and/or external experts;
- c. during the strategic assessment stage the MC may give additionally maximum 10 points for each application which demonstrate the biggest added value for the Programme and that have a great potential to impact the Programme area.

Once the MC have agreed on the outcome of the assessment it approves the Report on the evaluation of the application forms together with the ranking list of projects reflecting the scores and with the division on Priorities and specific objectives. Projects recommended for financing are those that following the Quality Assessment received the highest number of points and are covered by the budget foreseen for each Priority/specific objective within the CfPs. The MC may approve the projects with recommendations.

Decision on selected projects

After the MC’s decision on the Call:

- the JS informs applicants by e-mail sent to the Lead Partner of the MC decision. If the decision is negative, the reasons shall be given in the letter. Applicants will have a possibility to appeal from the results of the quality evaluation to the MA.
- JS publishes a list of the approved projects on the Programme website www.pl-ua.eu within 5 working days.

The MC may approve the projects with recommendations. In case when the project is approved, but certain conditions are set by the MC, the Lead Partner will be accordingly notified by the JS by e-mail sent to the Lead Partner. The project will finally be approved only after the conditions have been fulfilled and all clarifications delivered within the deadline set and accepted by the JS.

Reserve list of the applications

The MC can create a reserve list of the applications, ranked by the scoring, to use the available funding at later stages of implementation. If the Lead Partner awarded a grant does not decide to follow the recommendations of the MC or decides not to implement its project, the support may be recommended to a reserve project from the same Priority and specific objective, starting from the project ranked on the first place.

If the MC takes a respective decision, projects from the reserve list will receive the Programme co-financing in the event of:

- The availability of funds due to the savings made from previously approved projects;
- Voluntary withdrawal of an approved project;
- Approved project’s failure to finalize the clarification process within the set deadline.

Appeals

A Lead Partner is entitled to file a complaint when they believe that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the assessment or in case they do not agree with the final decision of the MC.

The complaint can be sent after each evaluation stage. The complaint can be filed in case the decision:

- infringes the rights stipulated in the Programme legal basis and Regulations of the European Union;

- presents an encroachment to the published CfP rules or the procedures regulating the evaluation process.

The MA shall be responsible for handling the complaint. Therefore, all the complaints shall be submitted to the MA via the JS (via e-mail appeals@pl-ua.eu) not later than 21 calendar days after the respective letter from the JS has been sent by e-mail. Any complaint submitted after the deadline will be rejected. The answer shall be provided by e-mail within 45 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint. The reply to the appeal represents the final decision of the MA regarding the application.

4. Requirements for external experts and JS assessors

In performing the assessment, the external experts and the JS assessors shall:

- be free from conflict of interest,
- act impartially, in an independent, objective and confidential manner,
- apply the best of their abilities, professional skills and knowledge,
- strictly comply with the rules defined by the Programme,
- submit a signed declaration of impartiality and lack of conflict of interests for each of the assessed applications and other applications submitted within the same Call for Proposals, before starting the assessment of applications.

Additionally, the external experts:

- are deemed to work in a personal capacity, in performing the work they do not represent any organisation,
- perform their duties based on the contract with external expert,
- are selected in accordance with the Guidelines for involving experts in assessment process in Interreg Programmes for the 2021-2027 period.

Moreover, the experts and JS assessors:

- must not discuss any proposal with others not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposals;
- must not communicate with the applicants and the Partners. This includes communications related to clarifications, the announcement of the results of each evaluation phase as well as dealing with any sort of requests for information and questions raised by the applicants;
- must not disclose the names of other experts/ assessors participating in the evaluation;
- must immediately inform the Head of the JS if during the assessment she/he discovers being directly or indirectly connected with a proposal to be assessed,
- must be aware that failure to comply with these rules may result in exclusion from the current and future evaluation processes.

5. How to evaluate?

How to give scores?

The QA consists of strategic assessment and operational assessment. It is carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the Programme Manual which is applicable to the respective call. The maximum score the application can obtain is 100 points.

Each AF shall be assessed by 2 assessors (JS employees and/or external assessors, depending on the decision of the Head of the JS). 2 independent evaluation grids shall be prepared for each application.

The minimum score the application has to achieve in order to be taken into consideration for possible financing is 70 points. In addition, each project to be taken into consideration for possible financing has to achieve at least 60% from each of the parts of the quality assessment, i.e. at least 36 points from the strategic assessment and at least 24 points from the operational assessment. At the same time, 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 CBC criterion will not be recommended for funding.

The AF evaluation grid is divided into sections and sub-sections. For each sub-section there is information about the maximum score which may be given for the relevant sub-section and each bullet point (if sub-section is divided into bullet points). Depending on the importance of the specific issue from the Programme point of view, the maximum score possible to be attributed varies for each bullet point/sub-section.

The assessors are obliged to give the score for each bullet point/sub-section. In case of bullet point with a maximum score making 1, 2, 3 or 4 point the scores shall be attributed by the assessors according to the completeness and relevance of information provided by the applicant and following the spirit of evaluation described above, i.e. the highest possible score may be only attributed if the content of the proposal assessed cannot be improved with regards to the evaluation criterion towards which it is being assessed. Decimal scores (e.g. 2,5) may not be attributed.

How to formulate comments and recommendations?

The assessors are obliged to provide the explanation of the scores awarded in each sub-section of the evaluation grid, if relevant. The assessors shall strictly use the evaluation grid provided to them. They are expected to assess applications in a highly professional manner and objectively and they must be conscious that their comments and arguments for or against a proposal will constitute the basis for the approval or rejection of the application.

Scores shall be attributed according to the schemes set out in the Programme Manual applicable for the respective Call. Assessors will justify their scores with clear, objective and relevant comments for each section. The assessors should focus on points that they consider to be extremely positive or negative in answer to the questions of the evaluation grid.

Assessors should be aware that comments serve:

- as inputs to the MC deliberations to take the decision to recommend or reject the project. When using value statements, such as “excellent”, “adequate” or “weak”, assessors should always provide clear evidence explaining on which aspect this conclusion is based;
- to provide feedback to applicants in order to help them to improve their proposals in an eventual later call by clarifying the reason(s) for the proposal's failure. They should always be formulated in a clear but diplomatic and constructive way and must be based on facts in order to minimize possibilities of contestation. In particular, for scores below the eliminating thresholds it is essential to provide a clear justification for the corresponding recommended rejection;
- as inputs to the MA/JS to understand on which aspects to insist more when providing information to potential applicants in order to strengthen quality of the proposals in the future.

Comments and scores must be coherent and consistent. Therefore a high score combined with critical or negative comments or a low score accompanied by positive comments would be incomprehensible

and rather confusing for the MC to appreciate. The Head of JS supervising the work done by the assessors shall ensure coherence and possibly request a re-assessment.

Assessors can give recommendations to the project proposals. Such recommendations should be clearly indicated in their comments and will be the subject of the MC decisions.

Recommendations may concern, among others:

- excluding certain elements (equipment, activities) which are not relevant to the achievement of the project objectives;
- budget reductions (overall or for certain budget lines), because the proposed budget is unrealistic or inefficient;
- cutting ineligible expenditure;
- modifying the proposed schedule of the projects (if activities can be implemented in a shorter time or may require a longer period);
- involving additional stakeholders if the partnership in the project can be improved.

Assessors will make final conclusions on each application in the “COMMENTS” section at the end of each evaluation grid. They will consist of a short critical analysis of the proposal, followed by a list of the main strong and weak points for each section of the evaluation grid. They will also contain concrete and objective reasons for the pre-selection or the rejection of a given proposal and they must be coherent with the final score and justify it in a relevant way. If specific recommendations for a project proposal were given by the assessor, they should also be included in this section. The conclusions and recommendations must be formulated in a clear and concise way so that they may be presented to the MC and applicants.

How to understand the assessment criteria?

1. Strategic assessment criteria		
Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	
1. Project's context (relevance and strategy)	a) The problems and needs that justify the necessity of project implementation are precisely defined and described	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does the project clearly identify the problems and needs for partners in each country? Are these challenges and opportunities common and cross-border? – Is the situation of each partner (in terms of defined problems) similar and comparable? – How real is the demand for the project? – To what extent does the project make use of the available knowledge and build on existing results and practices? – Is the point of view of the project target groups / final beneficiaries reflected in the presented needs analysis?
<i>How well is a need for the project justified?</i>	6 p.	
30 p.	b) The project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ is relevant to the particular identified problems/ needs; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How clear is the connection between the problem and solution suggested in the AF? – Is the project a substantial contribution to the solution of the problem?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ is relevant to particular constraints of the target regions (references to regional strategies); ▪ is likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups <p>3x4 p. (12 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the solution proposed by the partners reasonable or there might be other more effective option which could have been proposed in the AF? Is the solution proposed innovative? – Is the entire project and its activities devoted to the solution of the identified problems/needs? – Does the project take into account the constraints of the area covered by the proposal? – To what extent the target group profits from the project? Is its impact supposed to be substantial for the defined target groups on both sides of the border? Please refer to their perspective on the situation tackled (if analysed in the description). Shall the benefits for target groups be tangible on both sides of the border in a balanced way? – Does the foreseen impact on the target groups/final beneficiaries relate also to the persons with disabilities? Will they be able to equally benefit of the project? – Will the project impact only the project participants or perhaps also the wider scope of beneficiaries?
	<p>c) The project will contribute to achievement of the selected Programme priority and specific objective and demonstrates added value to implementation of the Programme strategy</p> <p>6 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How coherent is the project in terms of its objectives and activities and the selected thematic objective? – How relevant is the project, its objectives and activities, for the selected priority? – How precise is the coherence of the project with the Programme strategy? Is there any reference to specific points/objectives/assumptions of this document?
	<p>d) The project is complementary and brings added value to other initiatives in the field – it adds to the so far achievements and builds on them. The results of other initiatives are used in the project</p> <p>6 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How does the project fit in similar initiatives? – Can it be considered as complementary and somehow innovative or it only repeats already implemented actions? – Can the project outcomes possibly create a part of a larger whole together with other initiatives or the outcomes of other actions will be used within the project?
<p>2. Cross-border cooperation potential and partnership</p> <p><i>What added value does the cross-border cooperation and that</i></p>	<p>a) The project contributes to strengthening of cross-border cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ it has objectives of common interest important for both sides of the border; ▪ the results shall benefit both sides of the border (the project's focus is not on individual country or region) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the importance of the cross-border approach to the issue addressed clearly demonstrated? – To what extent can the planned results be achieved without CBC cooperation? – Is there a clear benefit from cooperating for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all of the project partners, • target group(s), • the programme area? – How does the project demonstrate implementation of the new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries? To what extent do the partners share their experience and knowledge?

<p><i>partnership bring?</i></p> <p>24 p.</p>	<p>but rather on cooperation and shared ownership within and between neighbouring countries);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the cross-border cooperation generates synergy effect (thanks to the partners' cooperation, the results of the project may have stronger impact, which would not be possible without their cooperation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there provisions in the project regarding plans to develop the established cooperation and the created outputs beyond the project? How feasible are they?
	<p>3x4 p. (12 p.)</p> <p>b) The partnership proposed is adequate to the addressed problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ it is proven that partners have sufficient experience, expertise and competences in the field as well as sufficient capabilities (financial, personnel, etc.); ▪ there is a clear benefit from cooperating in the proposed project partnership (the results cannot be fully achieved without it), partners share their experience, methods, models, data, ideas, know-how, knowledge etc., each partner plays an important and well defined role in the project, the division of tasks between the cross-border partners is balanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the partners competent enough to ensure the appropriate implementation of the project in the suggested scope? - Is there a clear description of particular experience, capacity, know-how of each of the involved partners to achieve the expected results? - Do partners possess the authority required to make sure that the activities shall bring the forecasted results? - Is the composition of partnership relevant in terms of project location? Is it wide enough to ensure that project reaches the target group without any support needed from other entities? - If partners from the outside of the Programme area are involved – are they necessary to achieve the project's results? How important/unique are their role and responsibilities? Is it possible to implement the project with institutions from the eligible area only? - Is the distribution of tasks between partners properly defined? - How clear is the description of tasks given to the each partner? - Has it been proved that each of the partners will get real benefits from the project? How has it been justified and explained? Has it been proved with some specific data or figures? - Are these benefits reliable and reasonable in terms of each partner? - To what extent is the partnership composition necessary to achieve the forecasted results? - Are the partners appointed to the roles which are coherent with their previous experience and background? - Is the statutory goal of the partners coherent with the planned theme of the projects and activities?

	2x6 p. (12 p.)	
<p>3. Project's contribution to the Programme's expected results and outputs</p> <p><i>To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of the Programme's objectives?</i></p> <p>6 p.</p>	<p>The project's contribution to the achievement of the Programme output and result indicators is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant, • realistic • well proven in the description <p>3x2 p. (6 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Will the project contribute to achievement of the result indicator relevant for selected priority? – Will the project contribute to achievement of the output indicators given in the Programme Document? – If so, to what extent will the project help the Programme to reach the values estimated in the Programme Document? – Will the project contribute to achievement of other output indicators given in the full list of indicators (annex 9 to the Programme Manual)? – Are there any risks for the indicators achievement, and if so, are these properly described?

2. Operational assessment criteria		
Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment	
<p>1. Overall logic of the project</p> <p>6 p.</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall design of the project is coherent. • There is a clear link between problem addressed and proposed activities, results and objectives. • The intervention logic and project plan are clear and feasible. <p>3x1 p. (3 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is the quality of the project design? Is it coherent and justified in terms of the activities planned? – How clearly have the project activities been described? – Are the project activities feasible in the given legal and social background of the partners? – Will the partners themselves be able to implement all the suggested activities? – To what extent is the work plan consistent and coherent? – Are the suggested activities logically resulting in the subsequent parts of the project? – If applicable: what is the quality of the attached (brief) feasibility study? Is it coherent with the project activities?
	<p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project's indicators have been properly chosen, they are coherent with the addressed problem and expected project impact. • Foreseen products will lead to achievement of the results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How coherent is the logic of applied indicators – are the selected indicators related with project activities? – How correctly are the values of output and result indicators measured? Are the provided values realistic or over-/underestimated? Is the calculation method as well as sources and means of verification for each indicator provided? Are they clear, reliable and adequate to the selected indicator? – Is it justified and proved that the estimated value of output and result indicators shall be really achieved? – Shall the activities planned in the project really result in the selected output indicators? Are these values in line with activities presented by the partner?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output and result indicators cover all main parts of the project and they are properly calculated. <p>3x1 p. (3 p.)</p>	
<p>2. Action plan and project organisation</p> <p>7 p.</p>	<p>a) Proposed activities ensure achievement of the expected deliverables and results. They are practical and consistent with the project's objectives and expected results.</p> <p><u>If applicable</u> - activities outside the Programme area are duly justified and clearly benefit the Programme area</p> <p><u>If applicable</u> - a detailed description of the infrastructure investment(s) and its (their) location is/are included in the application</p> <p>3 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the suggested project activities consistent with the defined overall and specific objectives? - Are the suggested project activities consistent with the planned outputs and results? - Are there any activities planned to be implemented outside the Programme area? - If so, shall these activities bring real benefit to the Programme area? - Is/are infrastructure investment(s) described in details, including location?
	<p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of activities is planned effectively and will enable their implementation on time, in consistence with the whole project. • Adequate time is foreseen for each activity's implementation <p>2x1 p. (2 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the timeframe realistic? Shall the assumed implementation period of the project be shorter/longer? - Shall the suggested project activities be ex-ante consulted with wider audience? - Is it feasible to implement the forecasted activities in the given timeframe? Is there an appropriate contingency included? - Are there any risks defined in the application which can lead to possible delays? - Are there any mitigation measures described?
	<p>c)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational issues crucial for the project are clearly described in the application. • They are adequate for implementation of the project, taking into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the logic of subsequent activities/stages of the project kept? - Are the partners equally and adequately involved in implementation of the project? - Are the managerial and administrative capacities of the partners sufficient to ensure the smooth implementation of the project?

	<p>account its size and complexity.</p> <p>2x1 p. (2 p.)</p>	
<p>3. Budget</p> <p>10 p.</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial plan and the project budget are in line with the principles of sound financial management. The budget presents well ratio between costs and expected effects. <p>2x2 p. (4 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the budget coherent and adequate to the scope of proposed activities? To what extent are the expenditures reasonable and justified in terms of the forecasted outputs and results (value for money)? Are the costs within Simplified Cost Options adequate to the project scope?
	<p>b) All costs are necessary and clearly linked to the activities planned</p> <p>2 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the specific budget lines transparent? Are the suggested expenditures really necessary to implement the forecasted activities? Are all of the expenditures eligible in terms of the Programme requirements? To what extent are the forecasted expenditures in line with the market prices? Shall it be anyhow possible to reduce the suggested level of expenses? Are all the infrastructure-related expenditures connected with works to be done in the Programme area? Are all investments to be done in the Programme area?
	<p>c) The project budget appears proportionate to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposed action plan and project outputs the project's contribution to the Programme indicators. <p>2x1 p. (2 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the budget coherent and adequate to the scope of proposed activities? To what extent are the expenditures justified in terms of the forecasted outputs and results (value for money)? Are there any expenditures to be incurred outside the Programme area? If so, are these expenditures in line with the Programme requirements? Are there any expenditures to be incurred by the partners registered outside the Programme area? If so, are these expenditures in line with the Programme requirements?
	<p>d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The costs are properly calculated and included in appropriate categories SCOs are applied in line with the rules <p>2x1 p. (2 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the presentation of costs calculation sufficiently detailed? Is the method of costs calculation presented? Are the costs presented in relevant budget lines? Aren't the same costs presented in different categories/ budget lines (including administrative costs, staff costs)? Are all the applicable thresholds observed? Are there any risks that some of the planned expenditures may be covered from other sources? Shall there be any income generated in the project? Are the partners planning to use the simplified cost options? If so, are they correctly indicated and, if applicable, justified? If applicable, is the flat rate for administrative costs calculated correctly and efficiently?

<p>4. Sustainable development principle</p> <p>3 p.</p>	<p>Is the project in line with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental protection requirements arising from applicable EU and national law? In case an environmental impact assessment has been carried out for a project, is the result positive (it must be such for the project to receive co-financing)? • the principle of sustainable development? Does, and if yes how, the project take into account the principle of sustainable development at the stages of its preparation and implementation, and the stage of use of the project's products following the completion of its implementation? • the <i>Rules for implementing actions in projects with infrastructure elements to ensure their compliance with the "do no significant harm" principle?</i> (applies to projects with infrastructure elements) <p><u>For investments in infrastructure with an expected lifespan of at least five years – how have the risks associated with climate change, considerations regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation, and natural disaster resilience been taken into account?</u>¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the project environmentally friendly (neutral)? Does it respect the values of natural heritage? – Does the project abide by the EU and national requirements on environmental protection? – Has the environmental impact been assessed for the project in question? – Does the project meet the principle of sustainable development? Was it clearly shown and explained?
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¹ "Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027" (2021/C 373/01).

	3 p.	
5. Horizontal principles 2 p.	<p>The project has positive impact on horizontal principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination², (including accessibility for persons with disabilities), ▪ the principle of equality between women and men. <p>2 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does the project positively contribute to the horizontal principles in terms of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, accessibility for persons with disabilities countermeasures? How reliable and feasible is its declared contribution?
6. Readiness 3 p.	<p>The project is ready for implementation.</p> <p>Documents necessary to start implementation are in the possession of the partners</p> <p>3 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the project ready for implementation? – Do the activities require any permissions? If so, how do they determine the project implementation? Are they attached to the application? If not, when the applicants declare the permissions/other required documents will be ready?
7. Durability 5 p.	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project is likely to have a long-lasting impact on its target groups. The project main outputs will be further used once the project has ended. <p>The expected results of the proposed project are durable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ financially – there are sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs during the period of project results durability, for financing of follow-up activities etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How detailed and how realistic is the description of the project durability provided in the application? – Is the provided description related to the partners on both sides of the border? – To what extent shall the project outcomes be durable and shall have a long-lasting impact on the Programme area and the project target groups? – How wide (territorial, subject, object-wise) is the possible group of future users of the project results? – How clearly has it been described what is the financial sustainability of the project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it been indicated who shall finance the maintenance of the project outcomes after the project ends? • Has it been indicated from which sources shall the project outcomes be maintained after the project ends? • How realistic these plans are? • Are these plans elaborated in relation to the outcomes on both sides of the border? – How clearly has it been described what is the institutional sustainability of the project?

² According to Article 9(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and EU Partnership agreement with Poland, the projects with partners representing municipalities that have taken discriminatory measures such as signing the anti-LGBT declarations **cannot be granted**.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ institutionally – there are structures that would allow the results of the project to be continued after the end of the action – local “ownership” of project results <p>3x1 p. (3 p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it been precisely indicated who shall be responsible for the maintenance of the project outcomes after the project ends? • Are there already structures ready to take responsibility for the project outcomes? • How realistic these plans are? • Are these plans elaborated in relation to the outcomes on both sides of the border? • Are there any plans to transfer the ownership of the project results? If so, how justified they are? • In terms of any investment project or project with infrastructural component – how realistic are the plans to ensure the sustainability of results for the period of at least 5 years?
	<p>b) Project is likely to have multiplier effects (including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the project and dissemination of information)</p> <p>2 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Can it be assumed that the partners will continue their cooperation after the project ends? Shall this cooperation lead to further development of the elaborated outcomes? – How likely is it that the project outcomes may be used in the other fields (multiplier effect)?
<p>8. Communication</p> <p>4 p.</p>	<p>a) Communication plan and goals are consistent with the scope of the project and its objectives</p> <p>2 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are the communication tools appropriate and reasonable in terms of the scope of forecasted activities?
	<p>b) Communication activities are feasible and effective in achieving the communication goals. Communication tools and target values are adequately defined. Target groups for the communication activities are properly specified and they are linked with the project</p> <p>2 p.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How detailed is the information and communication plan? – Is the communication plan feasible? – Will they promote the project in a way that will ensure reaching the public opinion with the information about the project, Programme and the EU? – Are there any innovative methods of information and promotion of the project planned? – Will the communication activities be equally conducted on both sides of the border? – Are the communication activities in line with the Programme requirements? – Will the information about the project reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders? – Will the communication activities promote not only the project itself but also the Programme and the EU?