

Interreg



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NEXT MED

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

Second call for proposals

INTERREG NEXT MED PROGRAMME 2021-2027

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INTRODUCTION

This document is addressed to all actors involved in the preparation, management and execution of the evaluation and selection of project applications submitted under the Second Call for Proposals, in the framework of the INTERREG NEXT MED Programme 2021-2027.

It will be used as a main reference and complementary material for implementing the evaluation procedure and training the relevant actors before initiating the process, as well as a reference tool during their work. Contents have been developed taking into account the relevant legal framework applying to the implementation and management of the INTERREG NEXT MED Programme, in particular:

- 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;
- REGULATION (EU) No 2021/1060 of the 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, in particular Articles 8, 38, 39 and 40;
- Interreg NEXT MED Programme Document and its annexes adopted on 12th December 2022 - Decision No. C (2022) 9543 and related annexes, and modified on 15.12.2023 EC decision n. 9118 with additional allocation.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Interreg NEXT MED Programme.¹
- Approved Rules of Procedure for the Monitoring Committee.
- Application pack of the Second Call for proposals with specific reference to the Guidelines for Applicants.

This document illustrates the actors involved and their responsibilities (chapter 1) as well as the general principles applicable to the overall evaluation and selection process (chapter 2).

It also introduces and details the evaluation processes, the procedures to be followed and the expected outcomes (chapter 4 and 5). Finally, a comprehensive description of the assessment is provided under chapter 6 while an indicative timetable of the evaluation process is presented under chapter 7.

¹ Available at: [Submit a project proposal - Interreg NEXT MED](#)

1. ACTORS INVOLVED, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Proposals are evaluated and selected through a process consisting of two steps and involving different actors as indicated below:

1.1 Monitoring Committee (MC)

In the context of the evaluation and selection process, the main task of the MC is to decide on the selection criteria for the projects, to adopt the criteria for the selection of the external experts in charge of the qualitative evaluation, the environmental and state aid assessments, and to take the final decision on projects to be approved and amount granted to them.

In addition, it appoints by name the voting and non-voting members of the Assessment Board.

1.2 Managing Authority (MA)

In the context of the evaluation and selection process, the MA chairperson signs the evaluation reports approved by the Assessment Board at each step. In fact, the signature implies approving the reports from a procedural point of view and it does not relate to their contents. In fact, the MA appoints the Chairperson and one or more substitutes among its staff, the Secretary (and substitute) of the Assessment Board among its staff or the JS staff. Other support staff of the MA or of the Joint Secretariat (JS) or of the Branch Offices (BOs) is appointed by name for acting as internal assessors during the administrative check and the verification of eligibility of project proposals. Independent external experts are recruited by the MA - on the basis of criteria approved by the MC - for carrying out the quality evaluation, the environmental and state aid assessments.

1.3 Assessment Board (AB)

In general terms, it has the responsibility to carry out and supervise the entire evaluation process, and to recommend to the MC the list of project proposals on which the MC takes the award decision. The competences of the AB exclusively concern the second call for proposals launched within the INTERREG NEXT MED Programme. The AB will perform its duties during the period of execution of the evaluation process of the call for proposals and it will end its mandate at its closure. Any AB voting, non voting or advisory member who has a potential conflict of interest with any lead applicant and/or partner must immediately declare it and abstain from the single evaluation.

The MC adopts the Rules of Procedure of the AB which include the following topics: composition, quorum for the validity of meeting, functioning (decision making mechanisms) of the AB, specific provision for assessment of proposals.

The AB will be composed by voting members representing all participating countries and appointed by the MC, a Chairperson (and the delegated substitute) and a Secretary without voting right, appointed within the MA staff and JS staff (for the Secretary), and from the EC in advisory capacity.

1.4 Focus on the internal assessors (IA) and external evaluators (EE)

Internal assessors and external evaluators take part in the different phases of the evaluation process. They work under the supervision of the Chairperson of the AB and perform the evaluation of the proposals in accordance with the Guidelines for Grant Applicants. IA/EE must be free from conflict of interest and are deemed to work on a personal capacity. Therefore, in performing their work, they do not represent any organisation and are expected to act impartially, in a totally independent,

objective and confidential manner and to apply the best of their capabilities, professional skills and knowledge in accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants and the time-schedule provided by the Chairperson of the AB. The results of their work shall be checked and approved by the AB voting members, which remains responsible for the evaluation of projects. If requested, they may attend the meetings of the AB to present the results of their work and answer any questions from its members. According to their roles the following actors will be involved in the evaluation process:

- **Internal assessors:** Members of the MA/JS and of the BOs for performing the administrative check of project proposals as well as the verification of the eligibility of the lead applicants and partners.
- **External evaluators:** Independent experts recruited by the MA - on the basis of criteria approved by the MC - for carrying out the operational evaluation.
- **Environmental experts:** Independent external experts recruited by the MA - on the basis of criteria approved by the MC - to provide recommendations for ensuring the compliance with the environmental standards of the approved projects. Selected environmental experts will assist the assessment board and the MA in the evaluation of the proposals submitted under the second call for standard projects.
- **State aid expert(s):** Independent external expert(s) recruited by the MA - on the basis of criteria approved by the MC - to verify that pres-selected lead applicants and partners comply with the State Aid provisions in order to establish if they have to be considered as relevant for public funding granted to State Aid according to art. 20 of the 651/2014 General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) as amended in June 2023 (Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014).

The roles of the external evaluators, environmental and state aid experts is incompatible with:

- being a voting or a non-voting member of the AB and of the Monitoring Committee;
- being permanently or temporarily employed by the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat or the Branch Offices;
- being national contact point/person in charge of giving general information to potential applicants;
- being/having been employed by or providing/having provided (in the past one year) any services to organizations involved in the project proposals (meaning by/to applicants, partners or other subjects involved in project activities as subcontractor).
- being/having been employed by or providing/having provided (in the past one year from the date of publication of the call for proposals) any services, within organizations involved at different levels in the project proposals (applicants, partners, subcontractors, beneficiaries of sub-grants or other) that may be assessed.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO THE EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

All persons involved in the different steps of the evaluation and selection process (from reception of proposals to award decision by the MC) have to strictly adhere to the following principles:

■ **Confidentiality and secrecy:**

- the entire procedure, from the drawing-up the call for proposals to the selection of successful projects, is confidential;
- the AB decisions are collective and its deliberations must remain secret;
- the AB members are bound to secrecy.

Therefore, all information made available to persons involved at any title in the evaluation process is to be treated as strictly confidential and specifically:

- no information on the proposals submitted or the preliminary results of the assessment may be disclosed to any other person than applicants;
- under no circumstances may a member of the MC, AB or an EE or an expert attempt to contact an applicant or partner on his/her own account;
- any attempt by an applicant to influence the process in any way (whether by initiating contact with members of the AB or otherwise) may result in the immediate exclusion of its proposal from further consideration;
- the names of AB members, IA, EE and environmental / state aid experts should be kept confidential;
- evaluation reports should be restricted to AB and MC members and to persons assigned to audit the evaluation process;
- copies of proposals and evaluation documents should be restricted to a minimum and paper and electronic proposals should be archived under secure conditions at all times.

- **Objectivity, impartiality and equality of 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 against the evaluation grid in the Guidelines for Applicants and irrespective of where the applicant and its partners originate within the eligible cross-border cooperation area covered by the Programme and their identity. Impartiality applies to AB voting and non-voting members, to internal assessors, external evaluators and environmental and state aid experts, as well as to any other person involved in the selection process; therefore they may not assess applications submitted by institutions or individuals with whom they have a personal link. As far as external evaluators are concerned, any case of possible conflict of interest has to be reported to the AB Chairperson, so that the proposal to assess may be assigned to someone else. Specific requirements for AB voting members are drafted below.

In line with the above mentioned principles, before starting the evaluation and selection process a **Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality** must be signed by all actors involved in the evaluation process, namely:

- Heads of national delegations to the MC and other MC members;
- AB voting members;
- AB non-voting members (including Chairperson and Secretary);
- Internal assessors;
- External evaluators;

- Environmental and state aid experts;
- EC representative in advisory capacity;
- Any other MA/JS staff that may be involved in the evaluation process with support functions.

The Declaration refers to the period before, during and after the evaluation. In signing the Declaration the actors involved in the evaluation and selection process commit themselves to strict confidentiality and impartiality concerning their tasks and they declare not to have any conflict of interest. Therefore, any actor with existing or past links with applicants or partners involved in a project proposal submitted under the call for proposals must declare it and, in case of AB voting members, immediately withdraw from the evaluation process of that project proposal. Persons involved in the evaluation process should also engage themselves not to offer their services to successful project applicants or partners that they have assessed. The Declarations of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality and must be annexed to the AB evaluation reports.

- **Transparency and clarity:** The evaluation and selection process described in the Guidelines for Applicants and the related scoring and ranking system must be strictly kept and therefore administrative, eligibility and evaluation criteria cannot be changed during the entire process. 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.

The AB Chairperson is responsible for ensuring the respect of these rules during the process. The MA, acting as Contracting Authority, after having informed the MC, can decide to cancel a call for proposals procedure in the light of the Evaluation report if there have been irregularities in the procedure, in particular where these have prevented fair competition.

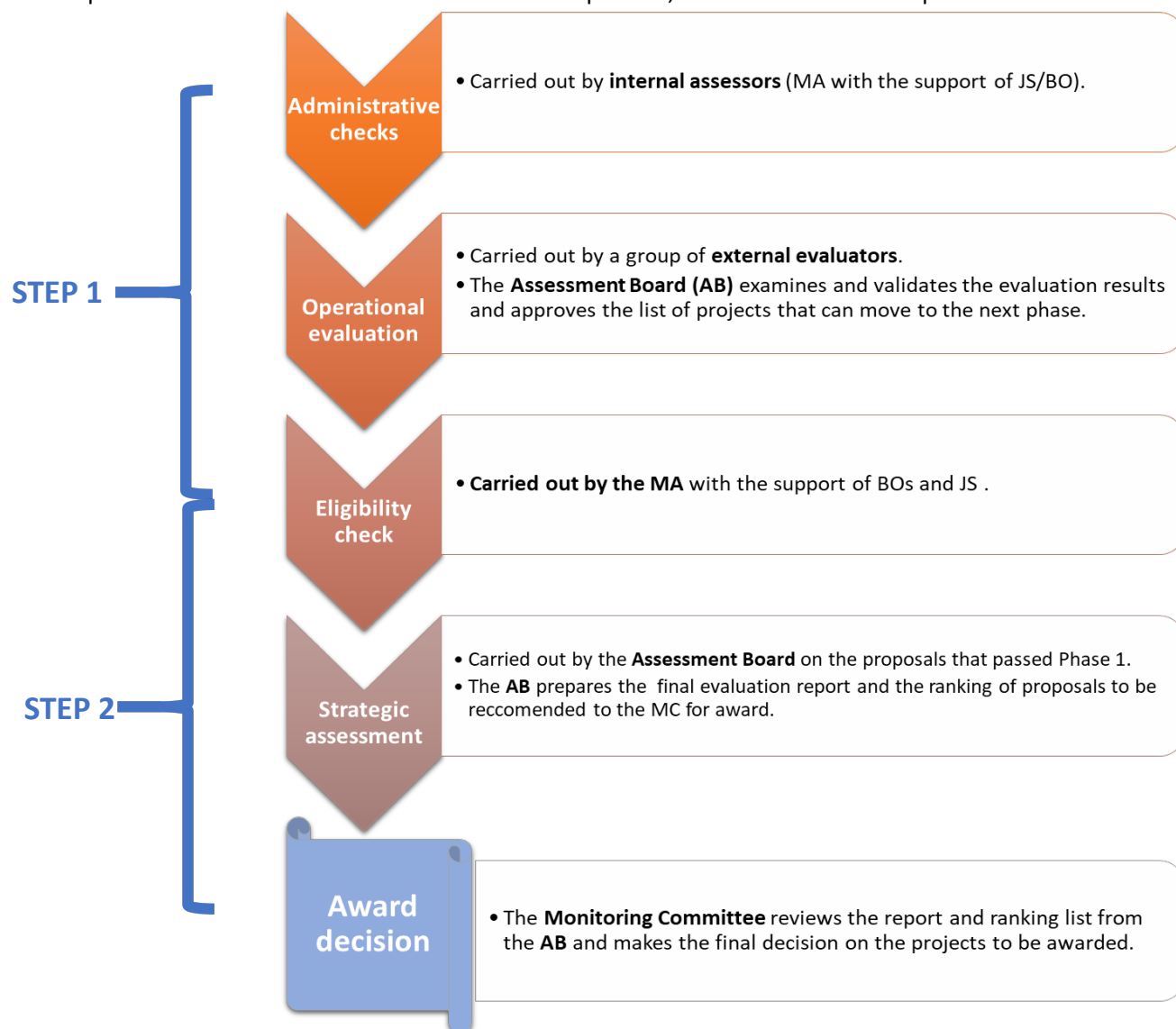
Furthermore, all the actors involved should commit and coordinate among themselves to ensure that the overall process is carried out in a way ensuring:

- **Quality:** Projects selected for funding must demonstrate a high technical and managerial quality and must contribute to achieving the objectives of the Programme and those set out for each Specific Objective. The selected projects should clearly demonstrate compliance with the criteria defined in the Guidelines for Applicants.
- **Efficiency and speed:** The procedures should be designed to be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation and complying with the legal framework within which the Programme is managed. The assessment has to be completed within the deadlines agreed upon and all persons concerned must respect the calendar. The Chairperson should ensure this by supervising the process and making sure that the deadlines are respected.
- **Traceability:** The overall evaluation process should be documented and recorded in the evaluation reports. All documents used during the process (not only project proposals but also evaluation grids, communications with applicants, declarations of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality, attendance sheets, evaluation reports and any other documents) should be kept by the MA for possible controls while ensuring confidentiality. These documents should be kept for seven years after payment of the balance for the Programme.
- **Proportionality:** If a proposal infringes the formal requirements, the AB may decide whether or not it should still be considered during the rest of the evaluation process, while ensuring the equal treatment of lead applicants and in accordance with the principle of proportionality. Whatever the AB decides, this must be fully recorded and justified in the Evaluation Report.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The procedures to be followed as well as the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in the different steps of the evaluation and selection process are introduced below and then described in the following chapter 4. Furthermore, the procedures related to Step 1, namely the administrative check and the operational evaluation, is described under par. 4.1 while the paragraph 4.2 describes the procedures and the outcomes of Step 2 including the strategic evaluation, the eligibility check, the state aid and environmental checks.

The picture below illustrates the whole evaluation process, divided into two main phases:



The following tables provide a simplified overview of the actors involved and their main activities to be carried out for the administrative / eligibility / state aid / environmental checks and the quality evaluation.

STEP 1								
ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK AND OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT								
Steps	AB			Evaluation actors		MA	JS	MC
	Chairperson	Secretary	Voting Members	Internal assessors (JS and BOs staff)	External evaluators/			
<i>Preparatory activities</i>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> carry out	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> carry out	
Admissibility & Administrative check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supervises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> support		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> check and fill in grids				
Request for clarifications (if needed)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signs letters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prepares letters		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> support				
Validation of the outcomes of the Admissibility & administrative check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supervises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> draft lists admitted proposals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> validates the outcomes and decides on contentious cases (if any)					
Information of the outcomes of the Admissibility & administrative check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> informs					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publishes the results	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> informed
Assessment of evaluation criteria through the IT system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supervises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluate, score and fill in grids			
Quality check of the external evaluators' assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supervises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the evaluation grids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update evaluation grids or third evaluation			
Review of the outcomes, approval and signature of the Evaluation Report 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> chairs / signs Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> keeps minutes / prepares and signs the Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> validate assessment (if needed request for a third evaluation) / approve and sign Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> support. They might be invited to attend the meeting to provide clarifications on the evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Submits the report to MC		

Approval of the list of Proposals shortlisted for STEP 2 and invited to submit their supporting documents								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> approves
Publication of the list and shortlisted and rejected proposals. Letter to lead applicants shortlisted for STEP 2 requesting supporting docs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prepares					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports	

STEP 2 ELIGIBILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND STATE AID CHECKS, STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT									
Steps	AB			Assessors	Experts		MA	JS	MC
	Chairperson	Secretary	Voting Members	Internal assessors (JS/BOS)	Environmental	State aid			
Preparatory activities							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> carry out	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> carry out	
Eligibility check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supervises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fill in grids					
Environmental/State Aid assessment					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fill in grids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fill in grids			
Strategic Assessment			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fill in grids						
Request for clarifications (if needed for environmental. State aid, eligibility)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Signs and sends the RfC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prepares RfC		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports					
Check of clarifications provided by lead applicants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supervises			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> update grids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> update grids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> update grids			

FINAL STEPS									
Steps	AB			Evaluation actors		MC	MA	JS	EC
	Chairperson	Secretary	Voting Members	Internal assessors	External assessors/ Experts (state aid/environmental)				
Preparatory activities							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> carry out	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> carry out	
Review the outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> chairs / signs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> keeps minutes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meet and Review						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participates in advisory capacity (optional)
Approval and signature of the Evaluation Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> chairs / signs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drafts minutes / Evaluation report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> review approve and sign	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information on the outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sends the outcomes to the MC		
Final approval of the list of selected projects						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets and approves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports	
Letter to successful and unsuccessful applicants							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drafts and signs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supports	

4. THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND ITS OUTCOME

In order to ensure a smooth and efficient evaluation process, the MA will ensure the following actions before starting the evaluation and selection process:

- Design a secure IT system to carry out the evaluation ensuring confidentiality and secrecy
- Recruit external evaluators and environmental/state aid experts

4.1 STEP 1

4.1.1. Admissibility & administrative check

The first step of the assessment procedure is aimed at verifying the administrative compliance with requirements set in the Guidelines for Applicants. This phase of the assessment is carried out by the internal assessors.

In particular, the admissibility check is aimed at confirming that the proposal has been submitted via the online platform within the set deadline, that the application form is complete, filled-in in English or French and duly signed, and that all mandatory documents required according to paragraph 5.3.1 of the Guidelines for Applicants have been uploaded and duly signed.

During this phase, some checks will be done automatically by the valuation IT system. In fact, all applications can only be received before the deadline using the electronic application form (eAF). Applications sent by other means other than the e-form will be rejected on this sole basis.

As soon as the deadline for submitting the applications is expired, all proposals submitted within the deadline will be automatically registered using a progressive reference number, which will be retained throughout the evaluation process as the sole reference for further communications.

The Chairperson and Secretary of the AB will supervise the work of internal assessors during the admissibility checks and prepare the list of the proposals submitted within the deadline using the eAF.

For each proposal verified, IA must fill in online check grids containing the results of the assessment. Clear comments on the criteria which have not been fulfilled or requiring clarifications shall be provided by the internal assessor.

Some admissibility & administrative criteria are of a “knock-out nature” thus questions in the check lists shall be clearly answered by YES or NO. Failure to meet these requirements leads to the rejection of the proposal. In this case MA shall not bear any responsibility for missing or misleading information causing the rejection of the project.

- Any major inconsistency or non compliance with the **administrative requirements** will lead to the immediate rejection of the proposal.
- In case of minor errors or inconsistencies in the submitted documents to be evaluated with regards to the **administrative requirements** (i.e. see Annex 1 administrative check grids), applicants will be given **14 calendar days** - after notification of the AB Chairperson - to provide the requested clarification /according to the Guidelines for Applicants).

All requests for clarification shall be sent in writing by the Chairperson to the concerned applicants.

Clarification will be requested only via email at the email address of the **lead applicant contact person** indicated and to the email address of the legal representative.

In addition, for the sake of transparency and equal treatment, the same rules shall apply to every lead applicant and project. All communications will be archived in the online platform and each assessor will update the check grid created for each project and including the verification of all criteria applied and, in case, relevant comments.

On the basis of the clarification received and under the supervision of the Chairperson, the corresponding check grid is updated by the internal assessor recording whether the clarification provided satisfies the request or not.

Applicants can send the answer by e-mail only, according to what is specified in the request for clarifications; the effective date of dispatch will be considered as evidence of the respect of the deadline.

Clarifications can only be requested to conclude the administrative check of the applications and not to improve the content of the project proposals.

The output of the administrative check is the list of proposals meeting all administrative requirements as set up in the Guidelines for Applicants (see paragraph 5.3.1). Proposals that will not fulfill one of the admissibility & administrative criteria will be considered as inadmissible and will not enter the subsequent assessment phase.

4.1.2. Operational evaluation

The operational evaluation is performed by the external evaluators selected and contracted by the MA according to the criteria approved by the MC. In particular, during this phase, the operational, quality and budgetary aspects of the proposal and its overall design will be assessed by the external evaluator, according to the evaluation criteria published in the Guidelines for Applicants. Other technical elements such as addressing the needs of the territories involved and of those of the identified strategic target groups and final beneficiaries and the compliance with the horizontal principles of the Programme will be evaluated as well.

Each proposal will be assigned to two external evaluators who will perform their evaluations independently, via the online platform; the criteria for the assignment of the project proposals to the evaluators will take into account the thematic knowledge of the expert, the languages skills and the geographical composition of the partnership.

The operational evaluation will be entirely performed on the online platform, where external assessors will have to complete the check list, by including appropriate comments in coherence with the scores assigned to the evaluation criteria.

A final grid² is settled onto the evaluation IT system including, for each proposal, an average score of both evaluation grids filled in by the two external evaluators, cumulative comments for all sub-criteria as well as a final evaluation summary summing up both assessments.

In case of discrepancy between the scores of the two evaluations:

- If it **is equal or above 16 points**, the proposal is automatically submitted to a third external evaluator, who will have to carry out a evaluation and fill in a third check list. The final score assigned to the reassessed proposal is the average of the scores assigned by the three EEs.
- If it is between **12 and 15 points**, the Chairperson will ask the two EEs to reconsider their assessment. Each EE may also confirm his/her evaluation.

Following the operational evaluation carried out by two external evaluators³, the AB meets in order to examine and validate the results of their evaluation and approves the list of projects that can move to the next step.

The number of projects having passed the minimum score of **60 points** as quality threshold that pass to the Step 2 will depend on the financial envelope of the call (the total requested budget of the proposals should not be more than twice the amount available for the call at priority level, on the basis of the allocation at Specific Objective in the call for proposals).

The eco-youth projects will be included in a separate list. The allocation of funds will be per priority while the non absorbed amount will be allocated to finance additional “Green Transformation Projects”. In particular, the unused funds will be allocated at priority level following the criteria of the distribution per specific objective of the call. The additional “Green transformation projects” will be recommended by the AB according to the ranking list per specific objective.

Should there be any remaining budget in the list of the “Green Transformation Projects” at specific objective level after the reallocation of the unused funds from the list of the eco-youth projects, it will be the Monitoring Committee to take a decision on the allocation of the remaining funds at priority level, including any shift of funds among specific objectives or priorities to finance additional “Green transformation projects” .

² The evaluation grids templates are attached.

³A focus on evaluation is provided chapter 6.

In order to ensure the quality of the work carried out by the external evaluators, the AB Chairperson - with the support of the Secretary and the internal assessors - will check all completed evaluation grids in order to detect any discrepancies between the scores given and the comments made by the external evaluators. In order to ensure a smooth evaluation process, the Chairperson may intrast his/her substitute and the Secretary to have exchanges with the external evaluators.

In case the AB Chairperson detects that the quality of evaluation is not in line with the evaluation methodology (explained during the training), he/she may ask to the EE to revise and/or integrate their comments within 3 calendar days. Reasons for this request include, among others: failure to apply the rules set out in the present document, numerical inaccuracies, inconsistencies between the scores given in the evaluation grid, if comments are poor showing superficial consideration of proposals on one or more sub-criteria etc.

The results of the evaluations carried out by the external evaluators will be made available to the AB. In checking the evaluation results, the AB can never change the external evaluator's scores, comments or evaluation summary including recommendations. In the event of major inconsistencies, the AB may request the appointment of a third evaluator for a third assessment.

The AB will approve a list of projects to be admitted to STEP 2 according to the ranking list that will be recommended to the MC for approval. The minimum number of projects to be admitted should be not less than twice the EU contribution requested in relation to the the available financial envelope for the call at priority level.

4.2 STEP 2

4.2.1. Eligibility check

The eligibility check will be carried out by the internal assessors on the proposals ranking higher after the Operational evaluation carried out by the external evaluators, according to the Section 5.4.2 of the Guidelines for Applicants (Eligibility of the Applicant and Partner organisations). In particular, the compliance with the eligibility rules set in the Guidelines for Applicants , in terms of legal status and geographical eligibility of the Lead Applicants and partners will be verified by analysing the supporting documents listed under paragraph 5.4.2 of the Guidelines and requested by the MA only to Applicants and partners whose proposals have been admitted to STEP2.

In the event additional information are required to perform a proper assesement, the Chairperson may ask the Lead Applicant to provide clarification/documents within 14 calendar days. Failure in providing the clarification may lead to the rejection of the proposal.

The results of the eligibility check are reported in the check lists filled in by the internal assessors via the evaluation IT system.

4.2.2. Compliance with environmental and State aid rules

In the same phase, the compliance with environmental and state aid rules will be assessed by the environmental and state aid experts on the same proposals, who are required to fill in a checklist for each reviewed project, according to the models provided by the MA. The experts will be also asked to give justification of their assessment and specific recommendations that may be used to adjust the selected project proposal before signing the Grant Contract.

In checking the compliance with the State Aid provisions, EU Regulation no. 1059/2021 (Interreg Regulation), aid granted under the Interreg NEXT MED Programme 2021-2027 shall comply with the

applicable Union rules on State aid within the meaning of article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (applicable for organisations from EU Member States only) , the provisions of any bilateral agreements between the MPCs and the EU (e.g. the aid should not distort or threaten to distort competition and trade between the European Union and that specific Mediterranean Partner Country) should be taken into consideration. Therefore, Applicants and partners from Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Türkiye are required to provide information on State aid relevant activities, by using the specific self assessment grid to be uploaded onto the e-AF.

The concerned organisations involved in the proposals selected for funding, in the event the assesment of the expert identifies State Aid relevant activites, will need to sign a declaration on the benefit received under the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER 651/2014 as modified by Reg, 2023/1315, art. 20), granted by Italy.

As far as the environmental checks are concerned, in line with the “do no significant harm (DNSH)” principle, the six environmental objectives covered by the EU Taxonomy Regulation should be considered as follows:

- The project proposal is considered to do significant harm to climate change mitigation if it leads to significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
- The project proposal is considered to do significant harm to climate change adaptation if it leads to an increased adverse impact of the current climate and the expected future climate, on the activity itself or on people, nature or assets;
- The project proposal is considered to do significant harm to the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources if it is detrimental to the good status or the good ecological potential of bodies of water, including surface water and groundwater, or to the good environmental status of marine waters;
- The project proposal is considered to do significant harm to the circular economy, including waste prevention and recycling, if it leads to significant inefficiencies in the use of materials or in the direct or indirect use of natural resources, or if it significantly increases the generation, incineration or disposal of waste, or if the long-term disposal of waste may cause significant and long-term environmental harm;
- The project proposal is considered to do significant harm to pollution prevention and control if it leads to a significant increase in emissions of pollutants into air, water or land;
- The project proposal is considered to do significant harm to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems if it is significantly detrimental to the good condition and resilience of ecosystems, or detrimental to the conservation status of habitats and species, including those of Union interest.

If the project proposal is expected to have negative environmental impacts based on the selection criteria and the six environmental objectives covered by the Taxonomy Regulation, the application should be sent to the applicants for clarification and possible revision in order to ensure that projects with potential negative environmental impacts would not be selected and funded.

All contentious cases concerning the compliance with State Aid rules have to be submitted and discussed during the AB meeting. A check with National Authorities may also be carried out, in order to get more information on the status of each concerned partner.

All recommendations made by the environmental and state aid experts will be reported in the Evaluation report.

4.2.3. Strategic assessment

Each proposals having passed the STEP 1 will be assigned via online platform to two AB members who **independently** in order to assess their strategic relevance towards the Programme objectives and the transnational added value, i.e. criteria 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 of the Evaluation check grid – section Relevance.

The assignment of the proposals to AB members will be made taking into account the geographical composition of the partnership as to ensure an impartial evaluation (see 6.1 for details). A consolidated evaluation grid, including the assessment of both AB members will then be presented to the entire AB.

For the concerned criteria, under section Relevance, the score given by the AB members will be added to the one given by the external evaluators under Step1. The total score that the AB members can give is 12 points (maximum 4 for each of the three sub-criteria).

The results of the evaluations performed by the AB members will be shared, discussed and approved by the whole Assessment Board during its meeting.

5. FINAL RESULTS AND EVALUATION REPORT

5.1 AB review and final ranking lists

Following the conclusion of the two phases, the AB meets in order to discuss and approve the final results of the evaluation process; to this end, for all phases, check lists of internal assessors and external evaluators are made available through the IT system. The following lists are also drafted by the MA and transmitted to the AB before the meeting:

- the ranking lists of the assessed applications, one for each Specific Objective, according to the scores assigned by the external evaluators and the AB members;
- the list of ineligible applications;
- list of contentious cases (i.e. related to administrative, eligibility, environmental and State Aid issues).

As foreseen by its rules of procedure, the AB in finalising its recommendations may:

- Reject the proposal(s) which has (have) been awarded a lower score, if 2 proposals submitted by the same applicant are already recommended for financing accordingly to the following rule: an Applicant may not be awarded more than two (2) grants under this Call for Proposals. In case more than 2 proposals from the same Applicant are selected according to the rules for this Call, only the 2 best ranked proposals will be retained in the list of recommended projects to be financed.
- Not to allocate all the available funds if it finds that there are too few applications of the quality required to receive a grant;
- Reject an application if it has selected another which is of a similar nature, but has been awarded a higher score to support diversity of actions;

The description and the final results of the whole evaluation process are included in the Evaluation Report, drafted by the MA and transmitted to the AB members for their review, before meeting in order to approve the final results of the evaluation process.

Once the voting members of the AB have agreed on the outcomes of the whole evaluation process, they approve and sign the Evaluation Report. Per each Specific Objective and according to its financial envelope, a ranking list of the proposals recommended to the MC for funding, a reserve list

of proposals that cannot be funded for budgetary reasons and a list of rejected applications will be drafted. proposals In particular the Evaluation Report must include:

- 9 lists of recommended proposals (one per Specific Objective) of, ranked according to their total score calculated as sum of the total score of Step 1 plus the total score of Step 2) and within the available financial envelope as well as a reserve list following the same criteria; recommendations on State Aid and environmental issues made by the experts on selected proposals are also reported;
- The list of the proposals not recommended after the strategic evaluation: e.g. the proposals that have not reached the minimum threshold set by the evaluation grid as per the Guidelines for Applicants.

The deliberations of the Assessment Board are collective and they must remain secret.

Not later than 5 calendar days from the signature of the final evaluation report by the AB, the Chairperson shall transmit it to the MA that will attest the regularity of the procedure, by countersigning the Evaluation report. The Evaluation report is sent to the MA Director General for the transmission to the MC in charge of the final approval.

In its advisory capacity role in the Monitoring Committee, the European Commission will receive the final evaluation report. The Commission will provide comments, if any, to the Monitoring Committee.

5.2 Monitoring Committee final award decision

Following the approval of the Evaluation report by the AB, the MC meets to take the final award decision according to the recommendations of the AB and the budget available for each Specific Objective.

If the MC decides to follow the recommendations of the AB, the MC will issue a decision concerning the approval of the lists and the amount granted to those resulting as successful projects. If, when taking decisions on projects and on the amounts granted to them, the MC decides not to follow all or part of the recommendations of the AB, it must explain its decision in writing.

The final MC decision is notified to the MA which will then inform all Applicants whether their project has been:

- selected for funding;
- rejected;
- included in a reserve list.

In case one or more selected projects fail in signing the Grant Contract with the MA, this will immediately inform the MC on the cancellation of the Grant and the possibility to replace the project with the first one on the reserve list according to the highest score obtained per Specific Objective.

Finally, Applicants of the rejected proposals will be informed of the reason(s) for rejection. Copies of the eligibility check grids and the strategic assessment grids may be requested to the MA by Applicants whose proposals have been rejected.

6. FOCUS ON EVALUATION

6.1 Evaluation Steps: detailed procedure

This Call for Proposals consists of two main steps (i.e. STEP 1 - Operational evaluation and STEP 2 - Strategic evaluation). Only Applicants whose project proposals have been pre-selected under STEP 1 will be assessed under STEP 2.

STEP 1: Operational evaluation

As soon as the number of the proposals admitted to the Operational evaluation as well as their distribution by Specific Objectives are known, following the information provided by the Chairperson, the MA Responsible unit in charge of the procedure contracts an adequate number of external evaluators chosen from a roster established through an open call and approved by the MC.

Criteria for the composition of this roster are defined below and approved by the MC, in order to ensure the high quality standard for the assessment of project proposals. Specifically, among others, minimum requirements for admission in the roster are:

- At least 5 years of professional experience in the selected specific objective(s);
- prior experience in technical and financial assessment of project proposals of EU/international cooperation Programmes;
- good command of the official languages used by applicants (English or French).

Before starting the assessment, all external evaluators will be requested to examine and understand the following documents:

- The present Evaluation Guidelines and related annexes;
- The Guidelines for Grant applicants;
- Questions and Answers section of the website.

The number of external evaluators to be contracted will depend on the number of received proposals. However, this number is reduced as far as possible considering that the higher the number of evaluators is the less harmonised the overall assessment will be. The Chairperson attributes proposals to EEs while the Secretary keeps track of the distribution of the proposals. **Each proposal will be evaluated independently by two EEs.** In allocating the proposals the Chairperson tries to match EEs' CVs to the skills, experience, language.

In particular, considering the number of project applications to be assessed, EEs are assigned in an adequate number to them and invited to perform their tasks at their place of work using a secure IT remote system. External Evaluators will have to sign the Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality and the Chairperson will check any conflict of interest in order to guarantee the impartiality of the evaluation of each proposal. Further to the signature of the Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality by all concerned actors, the IT system will hence provide a restricted access area to data management and transmission.

Each EE will have access only to those proposals assigned to him/her by the Chairperson and he/she will work independently without knowing the name of the other EE assessing the same proposal. They will receive detailed information and assistance during the overall duration of their work and might also be invited as observers to the meeting of the AB in case further explanations are needed.

The internal sections of the IT system are controlled by the MA and divided into user friendly functional areas accessible according to the different users' role in the evaluation process. AB

members have access to all relevant documents and check grids for each project proposal (administrative check, operational evaluation).

Further details on how to use the IT system will be provided to all external evaluators through a one day training session. Above all, information on the basic principle of the evaluation and practical information on how to assess each criterion will be provided during the training. The Chairperson of the AB will coordinate and monitor such activities and provide assistance during the overall evaluation process.

Each proposal must be assessed on its own merits without regard to other proposals or views of any parties. Based on the “four eyes principle” **each proposal will be assessed by two independent evaluators for all the criteria included in the Evaluation grid**, even though for one or more evaluation sections (see § 6.3 below) it fails to meet the minimum threshold settled in the Guidelines for Applicants. Indeed, the final score for each criterion is defined considering the arithmetical average between the score assigned by each EE.

In case the discrepancy between the scores of the two evaluations is equal or **above 16 points**, the proposal is automatically submitted to a third external evaluator, who will have to carry out a evaluation and fill in a third check list.

In case the discrepancy between the scores of the two evaluations is between **12 and 15 points**, the Chairperson will ask the two evaluators to reconsider their assessment. The external evaluators may confirm or review them.

STEP 2: Strategic evaluation

The main objective of the Strategic evaluation is to assess the strategic relevance towards the Programme strategy of the proposals having passed the operational evaluation (STEP 1) and admitted to STEP 2 according to the ranking list (see above). Being the number of these proposals limited to the amount of EU contribution requested by the project proposals that should be at least twice the financial envelope of each priority available for this call, the proposals will be assigned to each member of the AB in order to ensure a balanced number of proposals to be assessed.

The Chairperson assigns proposals to Assessment Board members while the Secretary keeps track of the distribution of the proposals. **Each proposal will be evaluated independently by two AB members.** In allocating the proposals the Chairperson tries to avoid to assign the proposal to the member having the same nationality of the Applicant and, if possible, of any of the project partners. Moreover, the language of the proposal should also be taken into account, in order to allow the AB member to formulate the comments in the same language of the proposal.

In particular, project applications to be assessed are assigned to AB members who will perform their tasks at their premises using a secure IT remote system. Since the AB members will have to sign the Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality, the Chairperson will check any conflict of interest in order to guarantee the impartiality of the evaluation of each proposal. The IT system will hence provide a restricted access area to data management and transmission.

Each member of the AB will have access only to those proposals assigned to him/her by the Chairperson and he/she will work independently without knowing the name of the other member assessing the same proposal. They will receive detailed information and assistance during the overall duration of their work. The AB members will be able to read the full proposal and the evaluation grid STEP 1.

Further details on how to use the IT system will be provided to all the AB members through a training session during the first meeting of the AB. Above all, information on the basic principle of the evaluation and practical information on how to assess each criterion will be provided during the training to be delivered during the first meeting of the AB or on-line. The Chairperson will coordinate and monitor such activities and provide assistance during the overall evaluation process.

Each proposal must be assessed on its own merits without regard to other proposals or views of any parties. Based on the “four eyes principle” **each proposal will be assessed by two members of the AB for the three criteria of section “Relevance” (1.1, 1.2 and 1.4) included in the Evaluation grid.** Indeed, the final score for each criterion is defined considering the arithmetical average between the score assigned by the two members.

The evaluation of each proposal will be presented by the two members of the AB to the entire board during its meeting and the final score will be approved by the entire AB. The names of the two members assigned to each proposal will not be shown in the evaluation grid and the approval of the grid will be considered as a collective decision of the AB.

In the event there is a significant disagreement (in the comments and/or in the scores or more than 6 points of discrepancy) between the two appointed AB members, the AB will review the assessment by confirming one of the two evaluations or will carry out a collegial evaluation. In the latter case, the final score will be the arithmetical average of the three evaluations.

6.2 Assessment: Basic requirements

Both Operational and Strategic evaluations are based on the information provided in the e-form only and all relevant documents uploaded in the online platform, as indicated in the Guidelines for Applicants. Each criterion has to be assessed considering the relevant sections of both documents as indicated in the Guidelines for Applicants.

In carrying out the evaluation both the EEs (for STEP1) and the members of the AB must evaluate and score proposals exactly as they are described and presented. In particular they must:

- work individually and independently when examining a proposal without making any assumption about the project in addition to what the applicants themselves have written in their proposals;
- always use the approved evaluation grids available onto the IT system;
- carefully consider all relevant aspects in the Application Form and carry out the assessment in a professional manner. Their comments combined with the scores assigned make the difference for approval or rejection and shall always be clearly justified.

In addition to comments explaining the reasons behind the assigned scores for each criterion, an evaluation summary including specific recommendations shall be given for each project.

Each External Evaluator and each member of the AB must entirely fill in the respective on-line evaluation grid (STEP 1 and STEP 2) for each proposal assigned and shall finalize (save as “final”) those he/she has evaluated according to the given time schedule.

If an application appears to be clearly ineligible EEs should inform the Chairperson of the AB as soon as possible. The Chairperson will then inform the AB voting members for a final decision.

The EEs and members of the AB shall strictly comply with any rule defined by the Programme for ensuring impartiality and confidentiality of the evaluation process.

Therefore they are requested:

- to sign the declaration of absence of conflict of interest and confidentiality before assessing any proposal;
- to ensure their independence without discussing any proposal with any other persons;
- to avoid any contact with applicants and partners on issues related to the evaluation. No clarifications, information on results of the whole evaluation process shall be delivered to any external actor;
- to erase or destroy all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation, as the case may be.

The above mentioned rules shall be observed at any time during the overall evaluation procedure. Failure to comply with them will result in the exclusion from the assessment procedure and cancellation from the roster (for the External Evaluators) or from the AB (for the members of the AB). In case the Chairperson finds out that the above mentioned prescriptions have not been followed, he/she can re-assign the evaluation to another external evaluator or to another member of the AB, as the case may be.

It is also essential that the EE immediately informs the AB Chairperson if during the evaluation she/he discovers being directly or indirectly connected with a proposal which she/he has been asked to assess.

The AB Chairperson will take all necessary steps to remove the conflict of interest on a case-by-case basis.

6.3 Proposal scoring, comments and evaluation summary

All EEs and members of the AB have to carry out the assessment of the proposals assigned to them in a consistent and reliable manner, applying the same methodology, interpretation and understanding of the Guidelines for Applicants. This does not necessarily mean that the scores of two different EEs or members of the AB have to be identical, but rather that each one applies the same standards and provides a well substantiated opinion supporting his/her individual scores.

As mentioned above, scores will be assigned according to the respective parts of the project evaluation grid published in the Guidelines for Applicants. The External Evaluators and the members of the AB will have temporary and limited access through the IT application to the assigned proposals and the related documents.

The web application will include the possibility to fill in the evaluation grids scoring and commenting each sub-criterion and completing the evaluation summary. Once the grid is completed, within the given time schedule, it shall be saved as “final” in the restricted area and an email will be automatically sent to the AB Chairperson as notification.

Complete assessment for each EE includes: scoring and drafting comments for sub-criteria (advisable max 1000 characters each) as well as concise evaluation summary (advisable max 2000 characters).

Each sub-section will be given a score between **1 and 4** in accordance with the following rating:

1. **Poor.** The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination. The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses more important than strengths.

2. **Adequate.** The proposal shows adequate features with regards to the evaluation criterion although some notable weaknesses are detected. Improvements would be necessary.
3. **Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible. Identified features demonstrate a good overall quality.
4. **Very good.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are assessed as minor.

Decimal scores or zero cannot be attributed by the external evaluators.

Consistency of the proposal with the specificities of the call for proposals:

While assessing the proposal, EEs and members of the AB shall take into account the some key questions for each criterion to be assessed (that are available in the respective parts of the evaluation grid). Key questions are drafted taking into account the instructions provided to the Applicants to fill in the application as well as the section/s of the application where to find the relevant information. E.g. have target groups identified and quantified?

Specific methodology on how to score, will be provided during the training sessions. The training is compulsory therefore, no EE will be contracted if he/she has not attended the training session.

Comments shall be included in each sub-section in order to allow the Applicant to understand scores and have a comprehensive overview defined by the two EEs in the final grid. Comments have to be clear, concise and precise and consistent with the scores attributed to each sub-criterion. In addition to that, comments have to be evidence-based and cross checked with information available – or not available - in the operational WPs. For example, if the applicant declares that a “Environmental territorial analysis” is needed for understading the project scenario, the related activity (Implementation of the “Environmental territorial analysis”) has to be described in the operational WPs. If this is not the case or the activity description is poorly described, the EE will give a low scoring. Furthermore, a high score combined with critical or negative comments or a low score accompanied by positive comments would not be coherent and rather confusing.

Clearly positive and negative aspects might be combined but they must be defined in connection to the score of sub-criteria and relevant aspects of the application form.

The **evaluation summary** for each proposal shall shortly present the identified strengths and weaknesses of the project for all sections of the evaluation grid. It contains objective reasons for the aggregate scoring justified in a pertinent way. These conclusions must be drafted in such a way to provide a clear understanding of the scores and may be used for informing the applicants about the global assessment of their application.

Moreover, the External Evaluators may recommend in the evaluation summary that one or more features of the proposal is/are closely monitored and/or further enhanced, in case the proposal is selected for funding. These opinions / recommendations are expected to be indicated in the evaluation summary and they should be discussed by the AB. Considering that proposals must be evaluated as originally submitted, EEs should not assume that any opinion / recommendation will be successfully accepted or completed. Nevertheless, this would help to detect on which points the preselected projects should or might need to be closely monitored, listing the elements on which the Programme should remain sharp.

The recommendations accepted by the AB and confirmed by the MC will be taken into account during the contracting phase for the awarded applicants. Applicants of provisionally selected projects might be requested to follow a list of these recommendations and minor corrections.

6.4 Evaluation grids and scoring system

The enclosed annexes -with guidances -have been developed for evaluation purpose including:

- questions that must be considered;
- sections for each criterion to be completed listing strengths and weaknesses;
- the overall score to be indicated;
- a short summary of the analysis;
- the list of recommendations prior to the Grant Contract signature that could be considered by the AB.

The final score attributed to the proposal is the average of two evaluation grids. Therefore, the assessment shall always be completed by both the EEs and by the two members of the AB as regards scores and comments plus the evaluation summary.

According to the Guidelines for Applicants, exclusion thresholds have been set for the evaluation sections as follows:

STEP 1

Minimum threshold of **60/88** under the total score of the evaluation.

STEP 2

Minimum threshold of **16 out of 24 points** for the RELEVANCE section.

Any project proposal failing to achieve the threshold indicated above, calculated as average between the 2 evaluation grids, will be automatically rejected.

The final score attributed to the proposal is the average of two evaluation grids. Therefore, the assessment shall always be completed by the assessors both as regards scores and comments plus the evaluation summary.

Each assessment carried out by the AB will be shortly presented by the two members during the plenary session.

In case of significant discrepancies, during STEP 1, in the scores assigned by the two external evaluators - namely the difference between their total score is equal or above **16 points out of 88**, the Chairperson will assign the proposal to a third external evaluator, who will have to carry out the evaluation and fill in a third check list. The final score assigned to the reassessed proposal is the average of the scores assigned by the three EEs.

The AB will be informed about the proposals assessed by a third assessors, in order to view and acknowledge the results. The final results will be adopted by the whole Assessment Board.

The ranking list of approved / rejected project proposals will be reported in in the Evaluation Report as well as a clear indication of the project have gone through a third assessment.

During STEP 2, in the event there is a significant disagreement (namely the difference between their total score is equal or above **6 points out of 12**) between the two appointed AB members, the AB will review the evaluation by agreeing on a third collegial evaluation.

6.5 Specific guidance on the assessment of budgets and financial capacity

It is of outmost importance that in case the external evaluator deems a budget item/line as not realistic as over calculated or under estimated he/she shall list this as specific comment in the evaluation summary and consider this feature in the assessment of the concerned section of the evaluation grid.

The EE must verify if the proposed costs comply with the eligibility rules as indicated in the “Guidelines for Applicants”, ensuring that they are necessary for the project and that the principle of **“value for money”** is applied. To this respect, the EEs shall ensure that:

- the budget forms provides reasonable justification of costs according to the proposed outputs/activities (e.g. the proposed costs or units rate correspond to market prices).
- all outputs are budgeted.

In order to minimize the risk of financial difficulties in further project implementation from the side of the private partners, the verification on their financial capacity takes place.

During the application phase, each private partner both profit and no-profit entity shall fill-in a self-assessment Financial Capacity grid through the e-form. The self-assessment financial capacity is aimed at verifying if the private partner:

- a. Has the ability in managing the project budget;
- b. Has the capacity in incurring expenditure in advance;
- c. Has the ability in managing the project along the whole project duration.

During the Operational evaluation, the external evaluators are required to consider the results of the Financial Capacity by assessing the potential risks linked to the implementation of project activities. In particular, the external evaluators should consider, for risky partenrs detected on the basis of the information contained in the Financial Capacity form, both previous experience and budget managed in previous projects and the current portion of activities and budget.

In accordance with Article 198 com. 5 of the EU Financial Regulation (N. 1046/2018) *"the verification of financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies or international organisations"*. Therefore, the above-mentioned organisations will be considered as having the necessary financial capacity and they will be considered as compliant with the criteria by default.

During the eligibility check the correctness of the information reported in the Financial Capacity form is checked by the pool of internal assessors, on the basis of the documentation (i.e.: balance sheets or signed declarations by the legal representative) required to prove evidence of the financial information provided during the application phase.

In the event the results of the Financial Capacity prove to be different from those resulting from the data indicated by the Applicant when filling in the e-form, the AB will need to take into account the updated results in order to make recommendations.

7. INDICATIVE CALENDAR

The indicative calendar is based on maximum 800 proposals to be received. After the award decision, the negotiation of the grant contracts will last around two months (to be completed around mid-March 2026).

STEP 1	Completion by	Indicative n. of months
Administrative check	end of June	1
Operational evaluation	end-September	3
Assessment Board analysis and approval of results	mid-October	0,5
Monitoring Committee decision on projects to be admitted to STEP 2	end of October	0,5
STEP 2	Completion by	Indicative n. of months
Strategic evaluation carried out by the Assessment Board	End of November	1
State aid, environmental and eligibility checks	End of -November	1
Assessment Board analysis and approval of results	En mid-December	0,5
Monitoring Committee decision on projects to be awarded	January	1
TOTAL = 8 months		

8. ANNEXES

1. Administrative check grid with guidance
- 2.a Operational evaluation grid with guidance
- 2.b Strategic evaluation grid with guidance
3. Eligibility check grid with guidance
4. Environmental assessment grid
5. State aid assessment grid
6. Declaration of confidentiality
7. Declaration of absence of conflict of interest