

Project application: The two-step application procedure

➔ Background Information

As laid down in section 4.2.2 of the Operational Programme (OP), depending on the availability of funds at least one call for project proposals shall be launched per year. Projects will normally be selected in a two-step application procedure:

- + step 1 is the submission of the Expression of Interest (EoI);
- + step 2 is the submission of the application package: the complete Application Form (AF) along with the Partnership Agreement (PA).

The procedure comprises a pre-selection of the submitted EoI, this pre-selection marks the end of step 1. The pre-selected EoIs are invited to enter step 2 and therefore to submit the full application package (including the AF and the PA).

➔ Guidance

To be eligible, the project shall comply with the Terms of References (ToR) for each call, outlining the framework of the call and the specific expectations of the programme in terms of content (e.g. open priorities, topics to be covered and type of results) as well as on operational and technical aspects (e.g. budget, partnership). Project applicants should acknowledge the eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria described in factsheet 4 when drafting their proposal.

The whole procedure, from the publication of the call until the decision of the Programme Committee (PC), shall last approximately 30 weeks. The procedure will generally be as outlined below:

- + publication of the call and ToR by the programme,
- + opening of the call,
- + step 1 - the submission of the EoI by the applicants within the deadline,
- + information from the programme on pre-selection to the project,
- + preparation of the AF and PA (see also factsheet 5.1 *Partnership Agreement*) and submission of the application package within the deadline for closure of the call,
- + information from the programme on approval or rejection to the project,
- + signature of the Subsidy Contract (SC) between the Lead Partner (LP) and ERDF Lead Partner (ERDF LP) (if there is one) and the Managing Authority (see also factsheet 5.2 *Subsidy Contract*).

STEP 1 - Expression of Interest (Eol)

➔ Background Information

In step 1, an Eol shall be submitted to the programme. The responsible programme bodies will assess the Eol based on the requirements as set out in the OP and the ToR. The final decision and pre-selection of the Eol for entering step 2 is taken by a Task Force (TF) nominated by the PC. The pre-selected applicants will be invited to step 2: to submit the application package which will be the basis for the selection of projects.

➔ Guidance

The Eol is based on a template containing key information about the project. It will be available for download on the Alpine Space website and will have to be uploaded online (www.alpine-space.eu) before the announced deadline. Please be aware that only one single version can be uploaded. Only the first version submitted will be taken in to account, any further version of the same project will not be considered as valid and will not be assessed.

The Eol presents the objectives of the project, the foreseen budget, the activities, their location and the cooperation area covered as well as the foreseen outputs and results and the structure of the partnership. The information filled in the text boxes shall be in English and be precise and concise as the number of characters is limited. In the Eol form every section is well described by a series of questions that all have to be answered. Answers shall be formulated as clearly as possible. Once the e-version of the document is submitted no changes are possible.

It is essential that the applicants get in contact with the Alpine Space Contact Point (ACP) of their country. The Alpine Contact Points (ACP) support the potential partners in the preparation of the Eol and give detailed information during the national information events (info days).

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and ACP perform the assessment of this step. After the pre-selection by the TF the applicants will receive an official letter from the Managing Authority (MA) on the results of the process. If appropriate, applicants will be given recommendations by the TF on how to further elaborate the project proposal to meet the expectations of the programme.

STEP 2 - Application Form (AF)

➔ Background Information

In step 2, a complete application package (AF and PA) has to be provided. The AF is a binding document which describes the project and gives detailed information on the work plan and financial figures. It is the reference document for the whole implementation period and the closure of the project. Together with the AF, the applicants have to submit the signed PA (see also factsheet 5.1 *Partnership Agreement*).

➔ Guidance

In step 2 of the application procedure, the AF which is available for download on the Alpine Space website, will have to be uploaded online (www.alpine-space.eu) before the submission deadline. In addition, one paper copy stamped and signed by the legal responsible of the LP's institution has to be sent via ordinary mail to the JTS before the submission deadline. Once the e-version of the document is submitted no changes are possible. Please be aware that only one single version can be uploaded. Only the first version submitted will be taken in to account, any further version of the same project will not be considered as valid and will not be assessed.

During step 2 of the application procedure, project applicants will be given technical support by the JTS and ACP. A transnational seminar on project preparation explaining in detail the AF and the PA will be organised by the programme. The contact with the ACP is obligatory for each project participant.

The assessment of the AF will be carried out by the JTS supported by the ACP. The final decision on the selection of projects is taken by the PC. The applicants receive an official letter on the results of the selection process from the MA. Details on the selection of projects are explained in the related factsheet (see also factsheet 4.1 *Project Assessment, Evaluation & Selection*).

Once the AF is approved by the PC, no more changes are possible unless an official request to the programme is made (see also factsheet 5.2 *Subsidy Contract* and factsheet 6.9 *Project Changes*). The AF will be the reference document to monitor the project implementation.

The AF is composed of several sections and focuses on:

- + the specific objectives and priorities of the Alpine Space Programme,
- + the partnership and reasons for transnational approach,

- + details about the project's actions for each single work package. (a minimum of six and a maximum of eight work packages shall be defined by the project, three of them are predefined by the programme),
- + concrete and quantified results and long lasting effects of the project,
- + the project financing.

In addition, should your project foresee the implementation of Pilot Activities as part of the Work Packages in the AF, you will be requested to submit a list describing the planned Pilot Activities with the first progress report as an extension of the AF (see also fact sheet 6.10b *Pilot Activities*).

The European Regional Development Fund Regulation and the OP explicitly mention relevant ways of cooperation for the projects, as the following:

- + joint development: all project participants should contribute to the project and define the objectives and outcomes, the budget, the responsibilities and activities of each participant through preparation meetings and/or focused sessions,
- + joint implementation: the Lead Partner bears the overall responsibility for the project, all project participants take responsibilities for different parts of the implementation,
- + joint staffing: all project participants have a defined role and allocate staff to fulfil this role, staff members coordinate their activities with others involved in the activity or work package and exchange information regularly,
- + joint financing: the project has a joint budget with funding allocated to project participants according to activities they are carrying out (the budget split reflects partners' responsibilities).

The information filled in the text boxes (in English) shall be precise and concise as the number of characters is limited.

➔ Reference Documents

- + Operational Programme "Alpine Space", sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3
- + Article 19 and 20 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999.
- + Terms of References

➔ Annexes

- + Expression of Interest Step 1 with guidance
- + Application Form Step 2 with guidance
- + Eligibility Rules of the Programme
- + Partnership Agreement
- + Subsidy Contract