

Idea Lab: Making your project idea a reality

Please see below for the answer to the question posed during the workshop. You will also find a summary of the characteristics of a quality project, as well as a checklist to help you monitor your progress at each stage of your project lifecycle.

If you have any further questions, join the online Q&A session on 5 June from 10:00 to 12:00. A registration link will be available shortly on the programme website.

Q&A

Relevance

1. Q: Can a project only have outputs with indicator "other"?

A: Yes, this is technically possible. However, as the output indicator “other” does not contribute to the programme targets in terms of output indicators, the performance of the project intervention logic and its contribution to the programme will be affected. Still such a project may tackle effectively a challenge identified in the terms of reference of the call.

Intervention logic

2. Q: Is the Intervention logic of the Programme publicly available?

A: Yes. Please consult [chapter A.2](#) “Required features for quality projects” and [Annex VII](#) of the programme manual. For additional information, also consult the [FAQ](#) and [Glossary](#) section on the programme website.

3. Q: So Specific objective = aim/change after the outputs (list of activities) are done?

A: The specific objective is linked to a work package. A work package comprises activities, deliverable(s) and output(s). The specific objective describes the immediate change that the project ambitions to achieve through the planned activities, deliverable and outputs of a particular work package. Therefore, specific objectives should be precise, realistic and achievable.

Specific objectives should capture what you aim to change or improve through the project, while the results should capture the immediate effect and change compared to the initial situation in the regions subject to cooperation. Finally, the overall objective describes the expected change after the project with the completion of all work packages.

4. Q: Is it necessary to have an output in each work package?

A: No, it is possible to have a work package with no outputs.



5. Q: is there a minimum of pilot actions/solutions needed?

A: In order to provide sufficient contribution to the programme logic in terms of output indicators, a classic project submitted under the current call should at least deliver one “jointly developed solution and one related “pilot action developed jointly and implemented in projects”. Please keep in mind that pilots cannot be dissociated from solutions. If project outputs do not fit the purpose of solutions or pilot activities, applicants must select “other”.

6. Q: Can you better explain the output indicators target values? Pilot actions are considered as 1 in terms of target value even if there are more than 1 pilot areas?

A: With regards to “jointly developed solutions”, the target value counts the number of solution(s) which are contained in the output. For example, in the case of the exercise proposed, O1.2 (Sustainable waste management system) has target value 1 because it is composed of a single solution, namely a digital management tool to track waste types and volumes in real time.

With regards to “pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects”, the target value counts the number of solution(s) tested and validated during the pilot activities, regardless of the number of pilot sites. In other words, projects should count the methodology/ies or tool(s) the partnership will implement in one or more territories.

7. Q: Is the indicator, measurement unit, indicator target value has to follow a pre-defined set of options? I mean what if we say x kg or y % increase?

A: Within the programme intervention logic, the measurement unit of the output target value is the number of solutions tested (for pilots) and delivered (for jointly developed solutions). Therefore, the target value has a baseline value of 0 at the beginning of the project and reaches the value of 1 when the output is delivered. The same logic applies for the result indicator (“solution”) target value.

Beside this, project proposals are encouraged to provide metrics, whether qualitative or quantitative, that demonstrate the impacts of the solutions developed (e.g. in the description of the results).

8. Q: Do you have any criteria related to start and end TRL levels? Specifically for pilots and solutions type objectives.

A: The solution(s) tested and delivered by the Alpine Space project should be ready for use by the target groups. Bear in mind that, in order to provide meaningful results, the solution(s) developed shall be taken up or up-scaled during the project implementation or within one year of its completion.

Please note that the programme does not favour projects with a sole research focus; applied aspects are paramount. Strategic policy development, explorative and piloting activities as well as dissemination and capitalisation activities to encourage policy implementation across sectors and regions are key components of an Alpine Space project. Projects shall apply a result-oriented approach and deliver tangible results,

embedded in a broader strategic context, such as EUSALP or other EU or Alpine-wide policies.

- 9. Q: Isn't it problematic if otherwise good proposals are disqualified because they interpret these technical and not 100% logical details wrong?**

A: Please keep in mind that a good intervention logic is integral part of a successful proposal, and it differentiates between an otherwise good idea and a good project proposal.

Although some parts of it can be rather technical (e.g. indicators and target values), a good formulation of (overall and specific) objectives, outputs and results, as well as selection of the correct indicators in the first step of the application process, demonstrates how solid and clear each “building blocks” of a project are. Specifically, why and for whom the project is developed, how will it reach its objectives and what change will it bring.

Exercise

- 10.Q: In fictional project, would the development of this „digital management system “(tested in O1.1) and the “digital management tool” (O 1.2) be separate work packages?**

A: The composition of the work packages is not fixed, and applicants can develop the work plan as it suits better to tackle the identified challenge and deliver the developed solution. It is therefore possible to deliver the pilot output and the solution output in two different work packages (building blocks).

- 11.Q: Digital Management System (O1.2) - where do the project partners have to implement it? Will the JS give the IT infrastructure and the development environment to the project?**

A: It is task of the project partnership to develop the proposed solution. Therefore, it should possess the necessary complementary capacities, skills and experience to implement it. The Interreg Alpine Space grants the selected projects with an ERDF co-financing of 75% of the project budget, but does not offer specific infrastructure or development tools.

- 12.Q: Who owns the management system (O1.2) at the end of the project (IPR)?**

A: All products (material and intellectual) that derive from a project will be the joint property of all project participants. Please keep in mind that all the outputs and results produced by the project are in the public interest and shall be publicly available. They should be accessible and available to the general public in a usable format and free of charge.

- 13.Q: Specific objective formulation proposal for WP1: training clever animals like squirrels and raccoons to pick up trash (preferably in tiny uniforms).**



A: Nice try ☺. However, this formulation does not capture the aim/immediate goal of the work package (To enhance the effectiveness of waste collection systems), but rather lists the activities (e.g. A1.1: design and sew tiny costumes, A1.2: develop a capacity building for clever animals, A1.3: train the animals etc.) that you aim to implement to reach your goal. Once all activities are in place and the animals are collecting waste, you will have (hopefully) improved the effectiveness of the waste collection. This is a common mistake, pay attention to this aspect of the intervention logic while developing your proposal!

Topics

14.Q: To what extent can education be included in these projects?

A: Projects focusing solely on information exchange are discouraged under the programme. However, education can play an important part in a project, for example delivering capacity building to target groups in how to use the developed solution to foster its uptake, reinforcing the skills of the target groups or improving awareness on the challenge addressed.

Moreover, under the current classic call, one of the thematic focuses to be addressed under SO 3.2, mention the education sector as a possible field for developing, testing or mainstreaming digital solutions.

15.Q: Under S.O.1, can we fund pilots for innovative urban green infrastructure concepts with perhaps high implementation costs?

A: Unfortunately, infrastructure investments cannot be co-financed by Interreg Alpine Space and are therefore not eligible costs in a project budget. Projects can purchase specific equipment needed for the implementation of the activities, with the limitations and rules outlined in chapter B.3.8 Equipment costs of the programme manual.

Partnership

16.Q: How can smaller organisations with limited financial funds be involved?

A: Smaller organisations are welcomed to participate to an Alpine Space project, provided that they demonstrate sufficient financial and operational capacities, which are verified at national level. If you are in doubt, please contact timely your National contact point for a consultation.

Please keep in mind that, if an institution with whom you would like to cooperate cannot be involved as a partner, it can participate as observer or external expert in the project.

Moreover, in classic calls for proposals, the programme grants a lump of maximum EUR 17.250 ERDF (corresponding to EUR 23.000 total eligible costs) for preparation costs, if the project is approved.

17.Q: Does the number of countries involved influence the success?



A: For classic projects, partners from at least 4 different countries of the programme area shall be involved. There is no ideal number of countries to involve, but a project partnership shall provide a good geographical coverage of the programme area.

More generally, the applicant shall demonstrate that the partnership includes key/competent actors able to address the defined project objectives. The partnership size is determined by the objectives of the projects and the competences needed to implement the project. A good balance should also be sought in terms of territory and type of partners (e.g. administrations from different levels, business support organisation, research institutes, NGOs.).

18.Q: What are the situations in which an actor that is located outside the alpine space geographical limits can be partner? Or external contributor?

A: Organisations from countries other than those covered by the programme area are not eligible to take part in projects as project partners, unless these organisations are located outside the programme area in France, Italy or Germany. In other words, partners located in Paris or Berlin are eligible to take part in the programme, as long as at least one of the following two prerequisites is met:

- The project participant has a competence covering the whole country or participating region (e.g. national/ regional ministries located in the capitals/ regional capitals of France, Germany and Italy) and this is demonstrated in the relevant sections of the application form.
- The contribution of the project participant is for the benefit of the cooperation area and this is demonstrated in the relevant sections of the application form.

AI

19.Q: To what extent can AI be used in proposal development? How will it influence project evaluation if AI is used?

A: AI tools have become increasingly accessible and used worldwide. You can make use of these tools if they can provide help in the proposal development. However, you should not rely on AI tools to fill in the application form and for instance draft your work plan, outputs and results. From our experience, this leads to poorly drafted project proposals.

20.Q: Is there automatic screening systems or AI tools that pre-screen the applications or all applications are manually assessed?

A: Currently there are no standard automatic pre-screening of project applications. The quality assessment is performed by the Joint Secretariat of the programme, following a “four-eyes” principle. Moreover, to submit your proposal, Jems will make you run an automatic pre-submission check. This automatic check will allow you to avoid basic missing information or inconsistency with the basic project requirement.

TIP: it is available anytime in section “Check&Submit” and can be run without submitting the proposal. It is recommended to run it sometime ahead of the submission to countercheck basic errors.



Characteristics of a good proposal

Need-Driven Approach:

- You identified a problem or challenge.
- This problem affects more regions, requiring a joint solution.
- You identified and engaged target groups to determine the best course of action.
- The solution you deliver responds to the needs of your target groups and is up-taken.

Relevance:

- You analysed the **terms of reference of the current call** and identified the relevant **thematic focus** under one of the specific objectives of the programme that matches your challenge.
- You are building on existing/past projects and using good practices.

Result Orientation:

- Your team has agreed on clear, **measurable**, and **sustainable** results.
- The planned changes are long-lasting and provide real benefits to the target groups.

Need for Cooperation:

- Transnational cooperation is clearly needed to reach the expected results.
- Your project delivers meaningful impact on target groups and the programme territory.
- All partners contribute meaningfully to the project.

Partnership:

- The partners bring **complementary skills, knowledge and experience**, relevant to address the objectives of the projects.
- The minimum requirements in terms of transnationality (4 countries represented) are met.
- It has a good geographical coverage and involves different sectors and administrative levels.

Quality communication:

- Is integrated in every step of your project
- Is focusing on results/change
- Is based on a good understanding of the target audience
- Is in the form of stories rather than facts and figures

➔ Put yourself in the other person's shoes: Why do we need this project? What is in for them?



Checklist for main activities at project's lifecycle stages in Interreg

Project idea generation

- ☐ Establish the need for a project
- ☐ Determining if the project fits within the programme strategy
- ☐ Involvement of key stakeholder
- ☐ Partner search

Project Development

- ☐ Understanding application requirements
- ☐ Developing of in-depth project content
- ☐ Prepare the project budget (To be submitted in step 2)

Contracting and start-up (within first month of project)

- ☐ Contracts and agreements
- ☐ Project kick-off
- ☐ Set up smooth monitoring and reporting procedures
- ☐ Set up the project coordination and decision-making structures

Project implementation

- ☐ Ensure eligibility of expenditure
- ☐ Certification of partner claims
- ☐ Project modifications, if needed
- ☐ Carry out quality controls of the outputs
- ☐ Coordination of activities

Project closure

- ☐ Ensure retention and storage of project records and documents
- ☐ Draft the final report about the achievements

Horizontal (=part of every step)

- ☐ Communicate and promote project work and achievements



Further guidance



Visit the “[how to apply page](#)” of the programme website to consult the Terms of Reference of the call and all the resources and support available for the applicants.



Get timely in contact with your [National Contact Point](#) for a first feedback on your project idea.

