European Union
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Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projecks

INTERREG IVA

New Call for Applications

Stage One open from Tuesday 3 January 2012 – Friday 17 February 2012

Successful applicants will be invited to make Stage Two submissions between Friday 23 March 2012 – Friday 11 May 2012

Details of the Call, Application and Approval Process

Information and Guidance for Applicants

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1.0 Overview

The Special EU Programmes Body is issuing a call for applications across all themes of the INTERREG IVA Programme. The call will be open across both priorities and all themes of the programme.

The aim of the INTERREG IVA programme is to support strategic cross border co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable region. The two priorities of the programme are: co-operation for a more prosperous cross border region and co-operation for a more sustainable cross border region.

The call aims to allocate all remaining funding which remains across the following themes and sub-themes:

- Public Sector Collaboration
- Enterprise
- Tourism
- Health
- Roads and Transport
- Telecommunications/ICT
- Energy

In an effort to improve the quality of applications and the processing time for projects, the SEUPB is proposing a new two stage approach for this call. This two stage approach will seek to provide greater project development support to potential applicants at both stages of the process.

The two stage process will be initiated, whereby applicants are requested in Stage One to submit an application addressing eight key questions. These applications will be assessed internally by SEUPB and the Steering Committee and only those applications which meet a set of agreed criteria will be invited to progress to stage two of the process, which will involve submission of a business plan. This business plan, together with the Stage One application will then be subject to the normal assessment process for INTERREG IVA applications.

2.0 Focus of the Call

Applicants are invited to clearly indentify a problem in the cross border territory and demonstrate that this is best addressed through the INTERREG IVA programme. Applicants are advised to refer to the 'Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross Border Cooperation' in preparing their applications. This toolkit has been developed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, as part of an INTERREG IVA funded project and is intended to be a practical guide to assist with planning cross border projects. All applicants will be provided with a copy of the guide and training will be provided. A copy of the toolkit can be downloaded from the SEUPB website at: www.seupb.eu

2.1 Two Overarching Criteria

The call for applications aims to address one of the above areas and in addition, given the current economic crisis and the need for the Programme to responds to current challenges, applications are **only** sought from those organisations that can clearly demonstrate that a project will clearly contribute to one or both of the following overarching criteria:

- ***More efficient delivery of public services***
- ***Clear and measurable economic impact***

3.0 Who can apply?

This call is open to public sector and / or public equivalent bodies. From a corporate governance perspective, the Lead Partner in any application to the INTERREG IVA Programme should be a Public Sector Body or equivalent. Public equivalent means any legal body governed by public or private law that is:

1. Established for the specific purpose of meeting needs of general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;[1]
2. Having legal personality; and
3. Either financed, for the most part, by the state, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law or subject to management supervision by those bodies or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of

[1] This definition does not exclude bodies partly having an industrial and commercial character, which deal with public tasks. Such bodies may be asked to submit a clarification statement issued by regional/local authorities.

whose members are appointed by the state, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law.

The financial requirements of ERDF are such that it is considered that large public bodies, with strong governance, risk management and compliance procedures in place, will be best placed to manage and report on the funding and to deliver on the project outcomes. This non exhaustive list includes bodies such as:

- Local authorities
- Cross border groups
- Government departments
- Regional agencies
- Strategic delivery bodies
- Education institutions

4.0 Location of Applicants

Applicants should be based within the eligible area of Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland. Project proposals will only be eligible on the basis that they are either operated on a Northern Ireland/Ireland or Scotland/Ireland/Northern Ireland cross-border basis.

All project activity should have an impact in the eligible area. However, if the project intends to have a lead partner, project partner or project activity based outside the eligible area, you must demonstrate why this activity/ partner is involved in the project. (i.e. does this partner have specific expertise that is not possible to find within the eligible area) and you must be able to demonstrate that the impact of this activity/ partner's participation is felt within the eligible area.

5.0 Available Budget

Applications of a significant scale are welcome, where they have the potential to make a significant impact in the cross border region.

6.0 How to apply

The SEUPB is proposing a two stage application process. The stage one application process will consist of the following:

- Submission of a Part A on the database
- Submission of a Part B on the database

Applications can only be made by visiting the official EU grants site www.eugrants.org**.** The application forms (Part A and Part B) cannot be obtained without first registering on the www.eugrants.org website. This site provides information on all Structural Funds including INTERREG IVA.

For each individual project application, the applicant must complete and submit an on line Part A application form. When this is saved, a unique **application reference number** will be generated on the database and this must be included on the Part B downloadable application form (available as a word document).

Any application which does not complete and submit a Part A form with the Part B form will not be seen as a full application and will thus be deemed ineligible.

You must follow the three steps below to apply:

Step 1 - Registration

A new applicant must complete a simple on-line registration process in order to make an application. Once completed, this will allocate you with a **username** and a **password**, which you can use again for future applications.

Step 2 - Save your project application

The Part A application form is a short on-line form which captures basic information (such as the programme, priority, theme you are applying to; applicant organisation, project details, additional information). It is not possible to move forward through the form until all the mandatory fields are completed.

Once your basic details have been filled in, the system will automatically save the information online. At this stage a unique application reference number will also be automatically allocated.

Continue filling in the mandatory fields and download the Part B application form. The Part B application is available as a word document, with word limits for each question. **Please Note**: In order to complete the word document, you may be required to 'enable content' on your computer. (A security warning may appear stating that some active content has been disabled. Please click on options and enable content.)

Do not forget to include the unique application reference number onto the word application form.

Step 3 - Submit your project application

Once you have completed your on-line project application, you must not forget to submit your application by hitting the submit button. Do not forget to include the Unique Application Reference Number onto the Part B application form when you submit your application in hard copy. The Part B application should be submitted by post, hand delivered, via e-mail or by uploading it onto the database.

Note: make sure you submit your completed Part B application form **on time** and **fully completed** when you send it in as a hard copy, via e-mail or as an upload.

Completed applications should be submitted to:

Special EU Programmes Body, M:TEK II Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, Ireland
Or email to: interregapplications@seupb.eu

6.1 Guidance Notes

IMPORTANT – Applicants are expected to acquaint themselves with the Programme Guidance Notes as set out below prior to submitting an application:

- Guidance Note 1 - Project Selection
- Guidance Note 2 - Project Review
- Guidance Note 3 - Fraud

- Guidance Note 4 - Procurement and Tendering
- Guidance Note 5 - Information and Publicity
- Guidance Note 6 - Eligibility of Expenditure
- Guidance Note 7 - Payments
- Guidance Note 8 - Exchange rate usage (not yet issued)
- Guidance Note 9 - Monitoring Expenditure Outside the Eligible Area
- Guidance Note 10 - First Level of Control (not yet issued)
- Guidance Note 11 - Pre-contract Checks
- Guidance Note 12 – Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation
- Guidance Note 13 - Treatment of Irregularities
- Guidance Note 14 – Asset Management
- Guidance Note 15 – Income Generation
- Guidance Note 17 – Guidance on the Adoption of Indirect Costs on a Flat Rate basis

These documents are electronically available on the SEUPB website – http://www.seupb.eu/programmes2007-2013/interregivaprogramme/INTERREGIVAreportsanddocuments/guidancenotes/seupbguidancenotes.aspx

The SEUPB has designed a number of practical project guidelines which are essential reading for all project promoters. These guidelines contain the most important information on each stage of project implementation and clarify the working procedures you should abide by in order submit and to implement a successful project.

It is important for those applicants that are submitting an application for a **capital project** to comply with the following guidelines:

Background information - 7 Capital Checklist for projects applying to the INTERREG IVA Programme. This can be found at: http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/INTERREG_IVA_Documents/IIVA_090811__Background_information_-_7_Capital_Checklist.sflb.ashx

Any applicant requesting that **eligible activity outside core eligible area** be included in an application must state the rationale for inclusion of such activity. A detailed memo on the rationale for expenditure outside the eligible area can be found at: http://www.seupb.eu/programmes2007-2013/interregivaprogramme/background-information.aspx

7.0 Stage One - Application Form (Part B)

The Part B application form at Stage One comprises the following questions:

1. What's the problem
2. Why does this problem have to be addressed on a cross border basis
3. What is the general objective of this project
4. What are the specific project objectives
5. What are the specific actions (or policy approaches) that will be implemented to ensure that the objectives are achieved
6. What social, economic, environmental and~~or~~ cooperation impacts do you expect to achieve
7. How much will the project cost
8. Outline how you intend to deliver your project within two year time

No supplementary information will be accepted with Stage One applications; however applicants can list in the application form what additional information is available, E.g. planning approvals, job description etc. Applicants will be requested to submit stage one applications by **17 February 2012.**

7.1 Stage One - Project Development Support

The SEUPB will organize a series of project development workshops during January 2012 and applicants are expected to attend one of these workshops. The workshops will outline in more detail what is required for the stage one application and will assist applicants in the using the cross border impact assessment toolkit to develop good quality projects. These workshops will be held throughout the eligible region.

Dates are as follows:

Northern Ireland
09h30 – 13h00 on Thursday 12 January 2012
Dunadry Hotel, Templepatrick

Border Region of Ireland
09h30 – 13h00 on Friday 13 January 2012
Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan

Scotland
09h30 – 13h00 on Wednesday 25 January 2012
Glasgow, venue to be confirmed

7.2 Stage One – Admissibility Process

When the Stage One application is submitted, it will be subject to a robust admissibility check. This check has been developed to ensure that applications contain all of the relevant information to allow for the stage one assessment process to be undertaken in an effective manner.

The admissibility check contains the following questions:

a) Was the application form submitted on time? (Part A and Part B)
b) Is the application form fully complete?
c) Is the project activity eligible as identified by the ERDF Regulation and in line with the INTERREG IVA Operational Programme?
d) Is the Lead Partner a public body and does it meet the criteria of Lead Partner as set out in Article 20 of Regulation 1080/2006?
e) If applicable, is match funding in place? Scottish partners must demonstrate availability of match.
f) Is there sufficient information included in the budget to allow for a value for money assessment to be carried out? (i.e. if estimates are provided without supporting evidence, it is not possible to carry out a VfM assessment). Supporting rationale and benchmarked figures should be provided. Are the costs outlined proportionate to the activity?
g) If a capital build project, does the project follow the Capital Build Guidelines?
h) Are the indicators clear and measurable?
i) Is the timeframe for implementation within the 2 years outlined in the application form?
j) Are the declarations signed by an appropriate member of staff from the Lead Partner organization (senior management, director, CEO)?

If the JTS deem that the application is admissible, the application will then progress to full scoring at Stage One.

7.3 Stage One – Selection, Assessment and Approval

The scoring process for Stage One will consist of applications being scored out of 20 for each of the five criteria:

- Clear demonstration of need for project (20 marks)
- Quality of cross border co-operation (20 marks)
- More efficient delivery of public services and / or clear and measurable economic impact (20 marks)
- Value for money (20 marks)
  - Economy – cost of resources versus the value of the outputs delivered
  - Efficiency – maximum outputs achieved with minimum inputs
  - Effectiveness – objectives of the project are achievable
- Deliverability of project within timescale (20 marks)

Applications will need to score at least **65%** overall. However, **applications must score at least 9 out of 20 (evident band) in each of the above five criterion** to be successful in stage one. The applications at Stage One will be assessed scored and ranked by the JTS and a Steering Committee (which includes the Accountable Departments) will be organized to finalize the recommendations of the JTS.

Only those preliminary applications which score over 65% and for which resources are available will be <u>invited</u> to proceed to Stage Two of the process. If the value of the budget requested for those projects which score above the threshold exceeds the availability of the budget, the threshold may be raised.

Applications should not change significantly in budget or scope between stage one and stage two.

8.0 Stage Two - Application Process

Stage two will involve the submission of a full detailed business plan, based on the approved application from stage one. It must contain sufficient information for a robust economic appraisal to be carried out in line with the Northern Ireland Guidance to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE). This will particularly focus on the need for the project, detailed costings and the added value of the project. See Annex 1 for the template for a business plan. **All applicants must complete their business plan following this template, step by step.**

An invitation to make a Stage Two submission is no guarantee that funding will be approved.

8.1 Stage Two – Admissibility Check

This additional information supplied in stage two must meet the admissibility check for INTERREG IVA projects. The admissibility checklist for Stage 2 includes the following:

a) Was the applicant successful at Stage One of the process?
b) Was the business plan submitted before the closing date for Stage Two?
c) Did the Lead Partner attend a Stage Two project development workshop?
d) Does the business plan include all information as outlined in the business plan template, including all annexes.
e) Is the quality of the business plan sufficient to enable an economic appraisal to be carried out?
f) Has the applicant sufficiently addressed the specific queries raised after Stage 1?
g) Has the scope and scale of the project remained the same as the Stage One application?
h) Does the business plan include partner cost budgets?
i) Does the partnership meet the minimum requirements for cross border working and is the role of each partner outlined to ensure a true cross border partnership project?
j) Does the application provide evidence of co-operation in at least two of the following four areas – joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing
k) If applicable, is match funding in place?
l) Is there sufficient information included in the budget to allow for an Economic Appraisal to be carried out?
m) If a capital build project, does the project follow the Capital Build Guidelines and have the necessary statutory approvals been sought to allow for the project to deliver outcomes in the timeframe outlined?

n) Does the Lead Partner have a robust corporate governance structure?
o) Are the financial arrangements for the Lead Partner robust?
p) Does the Lead Partner organization have a strong financial standing?

q) Is there a clear, strong and robust rationale included for any expenditure outside the eligible area?

8.2 Stage Two - Assessment and Approval Process

Those which are deemed admissible will then be subject to full economic appraisal and the agreed approval process for INTERREG IVA projects. When the Economic Appraisal is received and is finalized, the JTS will undertake a robust assessment of the project. The scoring will be as follows:

Criterion	Maximum Score	Weighting	Weighted Final Score
PROGRAMME, PRIORITY AND THEME SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES			
Programme Specific Objectives	20	x3	60
Priority and Theme Specific Objectives	20	x3	60
EFFICIENCYAND EFFECTIVENESS			
Value for Money / Added Value	20	x1	20
Need	20	x1	20
CROSS CUTTING THEMES			
Equality	20	x0.5	10
Sustainable Development	20	x0.5	10
Impact on Poverty	20	x0.5	10
Partnership	20	x0.5	10
TOTAL			200
QUALITY THRESHOLD (65%)			130

8.3 Stage Two - Project Development Support

SEUPB will organise a series of project development workshops for those applicants that have progressed to stage two and this will involve specific training and advice on the requirements of a business plan, which will allow a full economic appraisal to be carried out. It will be mandatory for all those applicants that have been invited to submit a Business Plan to attend a workshop. The workshops will be located throughout the eligible region. Details will be confirmed following decisions on Stage One applications.

In addition, SEUPB will also organize individual project surgeries for stage two applicants to discuss the specifics of each application, to ensure that all applicants are aware of the detailed requirements for their application. Dates will be confirmed over the coming months.

9.0 Overall Timescale

An indicative timescale for this the entire process is as follows:

3 January 2012	Call Opens
January 2012	Project Development workshops for stage one
17 February 2012	First Stage application process closes
By 16 March 2012	JTS assesses first stage application
By 23 March 2012	Successful applicants invited to submit stage two business plan
April 2012	Project Development workshops for Stage two Project surgeries
By 11 May 2012	Second Stage applicants submit full business plan
By 18 May 2012	Assessment process begins / Economic Appraisals commissioned
	Economic Appraisals completed
	Accountable Department approval
	Assessment reports finalised
November / December 2012	Steering Committee scheduled
By end of December 2012	Letters of Offer issued

ANNEX 1

Stage Two – Overview of Business Plan requirements

Applicants that are invited to make a Stage Two application will be asked to address specific requests, in relation to their application following Stage 1. In addition, it will be expected that the applicant submit a business plan which **must** contain all of the following information in the following format:

1. **Executive Summary (750 words only)**
2. **Explain the Strategic and Policy Context for your project**

- How the project fits with the INTERREG IVA programme and other relevant policies across the eligible area

3. **Define the Aims Objectives and Constraints**

- Objectives should be set out in terms of outcomes, outputs and specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-dependent (SMART) targets.
- Outline the risks associated with your project
- Outline any technical, legal, financial or timing constraints

4. **Outline the Need and Demand for your project**

- Where will your project be delivered
- What is the deficiency / gap in provision of current services, or in the assets or other resources used to deliver them
- How is your project additional to ongoing work in the region
- How it complement existing initiatives
- Provide evidence to demonstrate that there is a cross border need
- Provide evidence of the expected demand for the proposed service (Projections of the future nature and levels of demand for services over time should be provided and historical evidence of the development of need (figures for the previous 3-5 years)?
- How is your project innovative
- How will you ensure buy in for the project

5. **Marketing Plan**

- Outline how you intend to market your project

6. **Who will manage the project**

- Define the partnership and the role of each partner
- Detail how your project has been jointly developed, will be jointly delivered, jointly staffed and jointly financed?
- If any elements of your project are outside of the eligible area, demonstrate why participation / inclusion outside the eligible area is necessary
- Describe briefly the background and experience of partners

7. Cross Cutting Themes

- Outline how the project will meet the cross cutting themes:
    - Equality of opportunity
    - Sustainable development
    - Contribution to combating poverty
    - Partnership

8. Provide an Operational Plan for your project

- Please provide specific details on each of the individual elements/ sub projects identified, including the following: scale, duration, frequency, participant numbers, target groupings, staffing, delivery model, content, location aims and objectives etc.
- Specific detail should be applied to all programmes outlined in the application e.g. focused training, study trips, personal development courses, classes, open days, training volunteers, drop in services etc.
- Clearly illustrate in which year of the project each of these activities/ programmes will occur.
- Please provide specific detail on the number of participant estimates. Have the participants been identified, where will they come from and evidence of the demand.
- Please provide a clear communications plan for your project.

9. Communications Plan

- Please provide a communications plan for your project, in line with the Communications Plan template on the SEUPB website: http://www.seupb.eu/programmes2007-2013/interregivaprogramme/background-information.aspx

10. Budget for your project

- Provide further details of the overall budget for your project and a breakdown of all partner budgets
- Detail the detailed cost of your project and what is included in each cost category (e.g. full breakdown of salaries / staff costs detailing the individual's position, annual salary and expected time to be spent on the project)
- Detail the costs associated with the activity areas, travel and subsistence, publicity etc.
- Detail all capital costs
- Provide a rationale for all costs and an understanding as to the reasonableness of the costs provided
- What are the underlying assumptions on which your costs are based
- If appropriate, please provide relevant benchmarks and comparators for each element of the project which have used in determining the scale, specification and costings for the proposed project.
- It will be expected that the budget within stage two will not differ significantly from that outlined in the stage one application form.

11. Financial Projections

- Provide details of the financial position of the Lead Partner organisation, including any information on the ability of the organisation to contribute own funds to the project.
- Provide details of other sources of funding, including, if applicable, match funding from Scottish partners
- If your project is revenue generating, detail projections over the lifetime of your project
- Detail the state aid implications for your project

12. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

- Provide details of the proposed arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. Please review SEUPB Guidance Note 12 on monitoring and evaluation.

13. Demonstrate how you have addressed any specific queries raised after Stage 1 for your specific application

14. Annexes

- Audited Accounts (3 years required)
- Recent Bank Statements
- Legal Status – Copy of Governing Document
- Organizational chart (two versions – one for the Lead Partner and one for the project management structure)
- Job Descriptions (where relevant)
- Supporting documentation for capital proposals
- Details on Tax Clearance / VAT information
- Detailed Partner Budgets (if applicable)
- Signed Declaration (by Director/CEO or equivalent)