

Factsheet N°4

Project application: applying in the 2 Seas Programme through a 2 step approach

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I. Concept Note

A. Rationale

The 2014-2020 programming period brings 2 key novelties in the application procedure, namely:

1. **A 100% paperless application** process through the use of an Electronic Exchange Platform (EEP);
2. **A 2 step procedure** with the submission of a Concept Note followed then by a full Application Form.

As a first step, applicants will be required to submit a **Concept Note** (CN), prior to the submission of a full **Application Form**. In this Concept Note, project applicants will outline the main challenge, overall objective, outputs and expected results of their project and how these elements fit with the Programme priorities.

The reasons for this step are twofold:

- It should enable Member States to implement the Programme Strategy by steering projects at an earlier stage in their development. Their assessment will result in recommendations for the project applicants to take into account in the eventual development of a full Application Form.
- It should reduce the administrative burden for applicants as it will reduce the chance of filling in an entire Application Form for a project that does not fit the new Programme Strategy. The sections included in the Concept Note will be identical to some of the sections of the Application Form.

The Programme authorities will issue strong and clear guidance and it will be up to applicants to decide on submitting a full AF or not taking into account the recommendations received.

B. Template

The submission of the Concept Note is to be done via an **Electronic Exchange Platform** (EEP), although a courtesy **working document** in Word will also be available on the Programme Website.

Guidance on how to fill in the form and on what is expected from the questions is inserted in the EEP itself.

C. Procedure

First of all, applicants wishing to submit a Concept Note have to **create a login** for the Electronic Exchange Platform by providing some basic contact information including name and email address. The EEP will provide an activation link by email. Upon activating the account by clicking on the link, the EEP will send a unique password to your email address that users can change later on at their discretion.

To start the registration process, the EEP can be accessed through the following link <http://eep.interreg2seas.eu/>.

The **CN has to be submitted in English, French and Dutch**. The submission of the CN will be subject to determined **deadlines**. Applicants will have an average of one month and a half to submit a Concept Note from the opening of the call (this may however vary from call to call). Once the deadline of a given call has passed, the Lead Applicant having submitted a CN will receive a **notification**.

At the end of the process relating to the CN submission, the Concept Notes are made available to the Member States. All Member States evaluate all received Concept Notes. The JS issues opinions for each CN to support the Member States in their evaluation. **Recommendations will be issued following this.**

The evaluation process of the CN lasts on average 1 month and a half (the duration may however vary from call to call).

The Lead Applicant will receive the recommendations through the EEP.

Applicants will have an average of 2 months to submit a completed Application Form starting from the day of the notification of the Programme feedback (the duration may however vary from call to call).

II. Application Form and annexes

A. Rationale

A second and final step in the application procedure consists of the submission of a **full Application Form** (AF). In the AF, applicants will provide all **operational aspects** of the proposal (including the detailed workplan and budget). The AF should take into account the recommendations of the Member States on the Concept Note. The submission of the Application Form constitutes the end of the application phase.

B. Templates and annexes

In line with the Concept Note procedure, the submission of the Application Form is to be done **through the EEP**. A courtesy **working document** will however be available on the Programme website.

Guidance on how to fill in the form and on what is expected from the questions is inserted in the EEP itself.

In line with the need for a harmonisation of templates and procedures, the 2 Seas Application Form is largely based on a common template developed with many other Interreg Programmes across Europe with the help of Interact.

In order to submit a full Application Form, the submission of some accompanying annexes is required. The annexes are to be submitted (in a scanned signed version, if required) only through the EEP and no paper version is required. More specifically, the following annexes are required:

- **Scan of the signed Letters of Commitment for each formal Partner** contributing to the project: the amounts reported in the letter have to correspond to the amounts stated in the Application Form. The Lead Applicant will be able to export PDF files (already stating the correct amounts as per submitted AF) for his/her respective Partners. These forms are then to be signed by the Partner organisations' legal representatives, scanned and thereafter uploaded in the EEP.
- **Scan of the signed Observer Letters** (only if one or more observer(s) participate in the project)
- **Scan of the signed De Minimis Aid Form** (if applicable).
- **Scan of the signed AF confirmation page.** After having successfully submitted an AF, the Lead Applicant will be able to export a PDF outlining the most important information of the AF. This confirmation page is then to be printed, signed by the Lead Applicant legal representative, scanned and thereafter uploaded in the EEP.

Additional documents other than the officially required annexes listed here above will not be taken into account when assessing the project.

C. Procedure

To submit an AF, applicants will have to **log into the EEP using their credentials** generated when filling in and submitting the Concept Note. The AF will only need to be submitted in **English**.

The submission of an AF will be **subject to set deadlines** (according to the calendar of the Call for Proposals). Project applicants have an average of 2 months to submit the filled in Application Form starting from the moment they receive the feedback on their Concept Note. Once the deadline has expired, no Application Form can be submitted for that given call.

Once the deadline of a given call has passed, the Lead Applicant having submitted an AF will receive a **notification from the Programme**.

At the end of the process relating to the submission of full AF, the Joint Secretariat and the Member States assess the compliance of the submitted AF with the formal admissibility and eligibility criteria and perform a quality assessment. Please refer to the factsheet "Project selection" for further information on the admissibility, eligibility and quality assessments.

The 3 types of assessments (eligibility, admissibility and quality) are done in parallel and last 2 months on average (duration may however vary from call to call).

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III. Where to find assistance during this stage of your project?

The **Territorial Facilitator** of your area can provide you with assistance and advice. More specifically:

- He/she can assist you in filling in a Concept Note and Application Form;
- He/she can provide you with help on the technical issues linked to the filling in and submission of a Concept Note and an Application Form;
- He/she can also help you take into account all the recommendations from the Member States once the assessment has been finalised in order to develop further your final Application Form;

In parallel, the **Joint Secretariat** can also support you during the project application phase. Their assistance consists of the following:

- They can answer technical questions (i.e. eligibility and admissibility rules, requirements regarding the partnership etc, publicity requirements);
- They can provide technical assistance if you face issues with the online submission of the Application Form on the EEP (Electronic Exchange platform);
- They coordinate the receipt of the Application Form submitted online and deliver acknowledgment of receipt.

However – in order to avoid any conflict of interest – their assistance is limited to the above as they are involved later on in the assessment of your project upon receipt of the Application Form.