

Terms of Reference for the Interreg 2 Seas 2nd Call for Proposals and for the referred back projects in the framework of call 1

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Published on the 14/03/2016

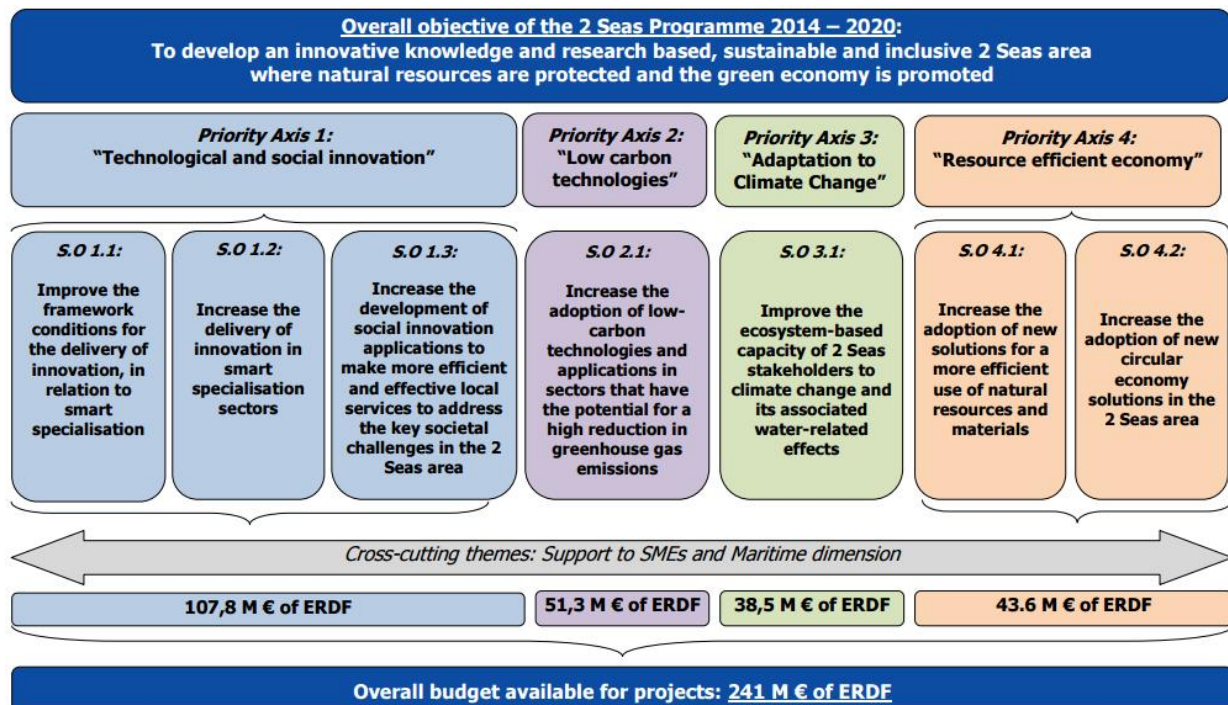
1. Introduction

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) strand is central to the construction of a common European space, and a cornerstone of European integration. It has clear European added value: helping to ensure that borders are not barriers, bringing Europeans closer together, helping to solve common problems, facilitating the sharing of ideas and assets, and encouraging strategic work towards common goals. The Interreg 2 Seas Programme is one of the ETC crossborder cooperation programmes between the coastal regions of 4 Member States: France, England, Belgium/Flanders and the Netherlands.

The 2 Seas Programme Authorities are inviting the submission of project proposals under its **2nd Call for Proposals** for the 2014-2020 programming period. This document sets out the requirements and process to follow for the 2nd Call. It should be read in conjunction with the 2 Seas Cooperation Programme (CP) as well as the 2 Seas Programme Manual.

2. 2 Seas Programme and Content

The 2 Seas programme overall aim is 'To develop an innovative, knowledge and research-based, sustainable and inclusive 2 Seas area, where the natural resources are protected and the green economy is promoted'. The Programme has 4 Priority Axes, which in turn are broken down into 7 specific objectives. There are 2 cross-cutting themes: support to SMEs and the Maritime dimension. This constitutes the basis of the Programme Strategy. The Programme has a total ERDF allocation for the 4 mentioned Priorities of € 241 249 780 ERDF split between them. Projects will be able to apply in the 2nd Call for **60% fixed ERDF contribution** (unless state aid applies). **All Priorities, Specific Objectives and funding** are available for the 2nd Call for Proposals, although it is planned to have several calls for proposals over the coming years.



The Programme has a range of **targets**, captured in the form of output and result indicators, to measure its success. These targets are divided by Specific Objective.

The challenge is:

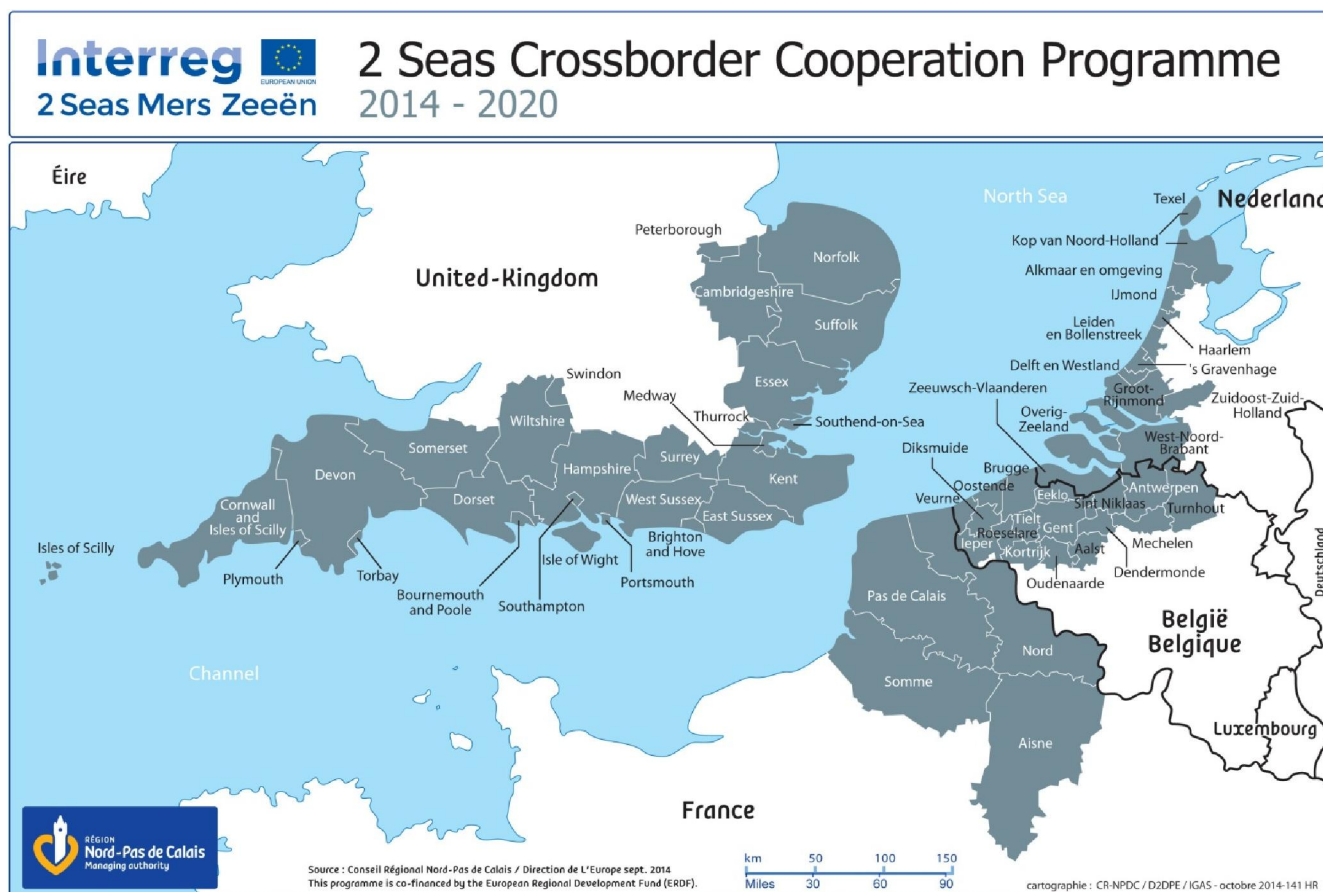
- to build projects that demonstrate a credible contribution to the specific objectives and results of the 2 Seas Programme 2014-2020
- to consider from the start of project generation and development the:
 - thematic angle of the project
 - partners that can really make a change
 - types of actions
 - contribution to the change in the crossborder area
- to make sure that the aims, actions, outputs, results and indicators of the project are in tune with those of the Programme

All indicators are applicable for the 2nd Call for Proposals.

3. Eligible Applicants

All target groups and **types of beneficiaries** as defined in the CP are applicable in the 2nd Call for Proposals. Conditions on eligibility of organisations are defined in the Programme Manual.

All 2 Seas geographical areas are concerned. Applicants outside the Programme area can participate under the conditions defined in the Programme Manual.



The Legal status of partners can be either **public or private bodies**. The “Lead Partner” principle applies. A project will consist at least of the following in terms of **partnership**:

- 2 partners
- 2 Member States represented
- 1 UK partner

It is recommended that projects last up to 3 to 4 years maximum. There are no minimum or maximum budget limits. However, projects will be required to follow the following key principles of project costs and resources:

- Value for Money
- Balanced and reasonable budget
- Financial resources in line with the project's objective

In the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, ERDF aims to create a leverage effect on a project, but also to fill-in the funding gap. The ERDF investment contributes to a project budget under the limits that it is necessary, to fully achieve the project objective through real cross-border cooperation. Where projects will generate revenue, ERDF funding may be reduced to take account of future income and ERDF grants may be recovered if future income exceeds the original estimates. More information on revenue generating projects can be found in the Programme Manual.

4. Project selection Criteria

The call is a competitive process and applications will be assessed on the way in which they deliver the CP. Project proposals will be considered against the criteria listed below. More information regarding the criteria can be found in the Programme Manual.

A. Eligibility and Admissibility Criteria

- The Application Form has been submitted electronically via the EEP before the deadline set by the Programme.
- The Application Form is completely filled out.
- The project fulfils the minimum partnership requirements: at least two partners of two different Member States and of which one is English.
- Time limits are respected: start and end dates of the project respect the call and Programme Requirements.
- Upload of a scan of the signed AF confirmation page to the EEP **by 13/06/2016 23:59 (Brussels time)**.
- Upload of all obligatory annexes to the EEP **by 13/06/2016 (23:59 Brussels time)**:
 - scans of the signed Letters of Support for each of the partners
 - scans of the signed Observer Letters (only if one or more observer(s) participate in the project)
 - a scan of the signed De Minimis Aid Form (if applicable)

B. Quality Criteria

1. Project's context (relevance and strategy): How well is a need for the project justified?
2. Cooperation character: What added value does the cooperation bring?
3. Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs: To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of the programme's objectives?
4. Partnership relevance: To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?
5. Management: To what extent are management structures and procedures in line with the project size, duration and needs?
6. Communication: To what extent are communication activities appropriate and will they reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?
7. Work plan: To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?
8. Budget: To what extent does the project demonstrate value for money and is it coherent and proportionate?

The following 4 cooperation criteria apply. Partners of projects shall cooperate in at least 3 of these fields:

- **Joint development:** joint project preparation involving project development meetings
- **Joint implementation:** joint project management and joint implementation of the activities
- **Joint staffing:** joint staff within the project team
- **Joint financing:** each partner contributes to the project budget

Projects must also comply with **tendering and procurement** rules and will be asked to describe the procedures that apply to their organisation.

5. Decision making process and timeframe

The **opening of step 2 of call 2** will be on the **14/03/2016**.

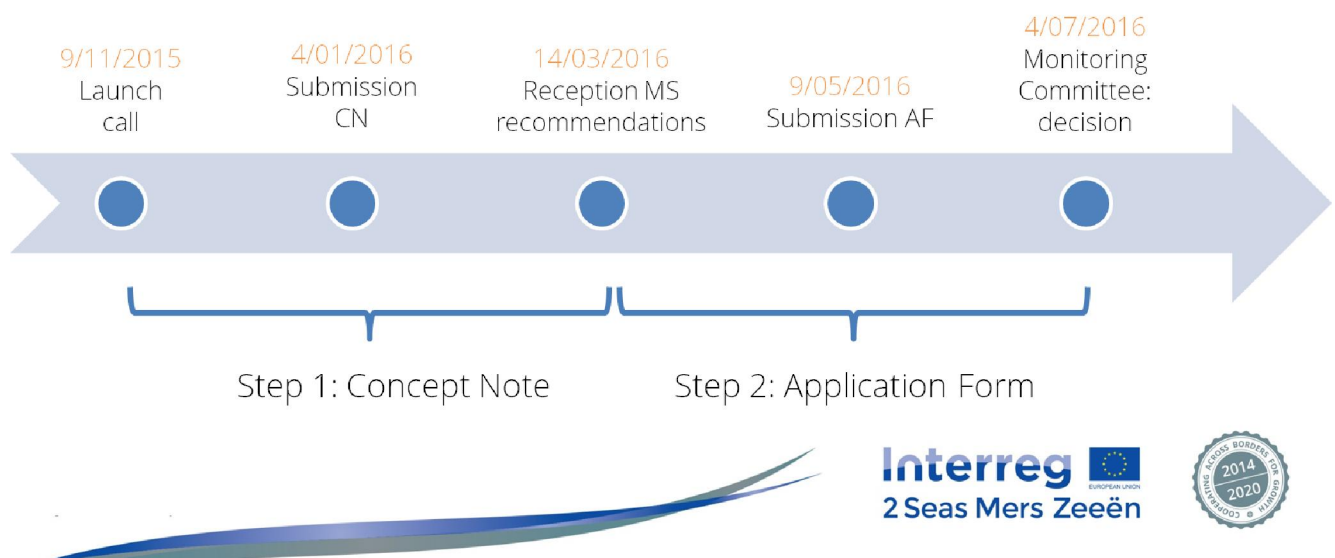
The submission of an **Application Form** has to be done via the EEP **by the 09/05/2016 (23:59 Brussels time)**. Only CN submitted in time in step 1 allow for the submission of a full Application Form in step 2.

To be deemed admissible, the Application Form confirmation sheet as well as all relevant annexes must be completed and uploaded to the EEP by 13/06/2016 (23:59 Brussels time)

The Application Form will include all operational aspects of the project. A final decision will be as follows: approval, rejection, referral back for operational reasons, or referral back for strategic reasons. The Application Form will only need to be provided **in English**.

A decision is expected by mid July 2016.

Call 2 - Timeline



6. Project referred back in call 1 and not yet submitted

These Terms of Reference apply in full also to all projects that were referred back in call 1 and that have not been resubmitted yet.

Please note that for this category of projects the current call represents the last possible option to resubmit a full Application Form in the framework of call 1. If not seized, the project will need to go through the entire application process (starting from the Concept Note).

7. Next Steps

More information regarding the Application phase and Project selection phase can be found in the Programme Manual.

The completion and submission of the Application Form will have to be done online through the EEP (<http://eep.interreg2seas.eu/>). However, Word versions of the documents are also made available in the form of an Application Pack to help with the drafting process (<http://www.interreg2seas.eu/>).