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# Understanding award criteria for a successful project design: “dos” and “don’ts”

# STEP 1

## A. Administrative Check

## B. Strategic Evaluation

- RELEVANCE (30 points) **Threshold: 18/30**
- QUALITY OF DESIGN (20 points) **Threshold: 12/20**

# STEP 2

## RELEVANCE

(30 points)

## A. Operational evaluation

- OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY (20 points- **12/20**)
- EFFECTIVENESS (20 points)
- SUSTAINABILITY (15 points)
- COST EFFECTIVENESS (15 points)

## B. Eligibility verification – Hard Copies

Only the highest ranked proposals = total EU funds corresponding to twice the budget available will be admitted to STEP 2

**TOTAL: 100 POINTS**



## The evaluation process at a glance

One procedure - Two step evaluation

### 700/800 proposals

- Publication of the call
- Submission of Application Forms
- Administrative check
- Strategic evaluation (relevance + design)
- PSC meeting
- JMC decision

### About 65 proposals

- Submission + verification of supporting documents
- Operational evaluation
- PSC meeting
- EC consultation
- JMC decision

About 35 projects  
to be approved

Step  
1

Step  
2



JMC  
award  
decision

**6 months**

**4 months**

**Month 10**

# Focus on recommendations: what are the most challenging award criteria from the applicant's perspective?

## Foreword

- Lessons Learned (LL) from selection process carried out under the ENPI CBC Med Programme provided the ground for these recommendations
- The 25 recommendations address MAINLY the criteria with the lowest scores in the previous ENPI CBC Med selection process
- Numbers in brackets refer to the sections of the courtesy form



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## Step 1A: Administrative check of project proposal (1/1)

### Administrative check

**LL: Under the ENPI CBC Med Programme, a relevant percentage of proposals failed in this step. The eAF is expected to reduce the number of applications rejected for administrative criteria, but you should:**

R1. Devote a dedicated staff member in your team to check and collect requested documents (declarations). **DON'T WAIT UNTIL LAST MINUTE;**

R2. Read carefully the **Joint Operational Programme and the Guidelines** and share constraints with your potential partners BEFORE the final decision on the composition of the partnership: are the potential partners in the position to provide the requested information and documents?



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## Step 1B: Strategic evaluation (1/5)

### Relevance – Max score 30 points (threshold 18/30)

#### 1.1 Coherence with the Programme

Analysis of the **problems and needs** at Mediterranean Sea Basin level to outline **how the project contributes to the selected thematic objective(s) and priority**

#### 1.3 Target groups

**Needs of selected target groups and final beneficiaries are well addressed to get them fully involved**

#### 1.5 Synergies

The **existing knowledge and results achieved** in the same sector / territories are considered to **foster synergies**

#### 1.2 CBC added value

**The cross-border added value is clear as why cooperation is needed; what will be changed**



Cross-border added value criterion counts double!

#### 1.4 Innovation

**Valuable, new and innovative solutions that go beyond the existing practices**



## Step 1B: Strategic evaluation (2/5)

### 1. Relevance

**LL: This award criterion is a key to success**

R3. Explain the “**Cross-Border Cooperation**” (CBC) added value (1.2): **ENI is a CBC Programme**, not a development cooperation initiative. Therefore, rather than clarifying only “why the project is needed” in a given area, **focus on common needs and how to share ideas and solutions**

R4. Identify your **final beneficiaries** and explain how their needs are detected (1.5), instead of including general statements (i.e. search for reliable source of information and include quantitative data)



## Step 1B: Strategic evaluation (3/5)

### 1. Relevance

- R5. Describe the expected changes (1.3) and how the **institutional capacity building** and people-to-people cooperation will contribute to the achievement of your objectives (1.4) *e.g.: “by the end of the project, the mayors of the villages will be able to launch calls for proposals for the identification of new private houses to be part of the Community Hotel created under project X*
- R6. Describe and **quantify your target groups** and select their needs
- R7. Explain the **operational synergies with other projects** *e.g.: the survey carried out by project “X” will be helpful for ..., since ...* instead of providing a list of project names (1.8)
- R8. Describe the **role of each partner** (2.3), and do not draft a simple list of partners without highlighting their complementarity





## Step 1B: Strategic evaluation (4/5)

### Quality of design – Max score 20 points (threshold 12/20)

#### 2.1 Outputs, needs

Consistency of foreseen project outputs with the needs of the target groups

#### 2.2 Result indicators

Quantification of the results indicators is realistic; results must be achievable with the planned financial resources

#### 2.3 Partnership

Coherence of each partner's competences, experience and expertise with its planned contribution to the objectives, expected results and outputs

#### 2.4 Outputs, results, planning

Output contribution to the achievement of the expected results and desired impact; time-frame for the delivery of the proposed outputs logically connected and realistically planned; external conditions / potential risks described



## Step 1B: Strategic evaluation (5/5)

### 2. Quality of design

LL: Successful projects **think out-of-the-box** to design their logical frameworks. Focus on the Programme expected results and choose your innovative outputs

R9. Describe your outputs and consider that they must contribute to the Programme indicators (i.e. **at least one Programme expected result** and one output indicator)

R10. Explain the **competences** of each partner with respect to the EU and MPC scenario, and highlight complementarity within the partnership (2.3.3): The assessor of your proposal should be able to grasp: *“why this partner is necessary for the project”*

R11. Ensure **coherence** between **project outputs** and identified **needs**



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### 3. Environmental screening (1/2)

Under ENPI CBC Med environmental screening was required at the Programme level.  
In ENI CBC Med, it is requested at project level.

Remember that there are up to **4 levels of environmental checks** (see next slide)

Proposals including **an infrastructure with a unit cost of > 1M€** are immediately required to submit the detailed check list available as annex C in the courtesy form / eAF

**R12. Start ASAP to collect the required documents** for environmental permits, if needed. They may require months to be released



# Environmental screening (2/2)

## What is needed?

<b>1 st LEVEL</b>	<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>	All proposals are required to identify the output(s) that might have a positive/negative impact on the environment. The MA reviews the content and may ask further information/documents, or to fill in checklists A, B or C as the case may be.
<b>2nd LEVEL</b>	Environmental screening - <b>Checklist A</b>	Proposals submitted under one of the following priorities: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4 <b>must fill in the Check list A.</b> The MA may ask to fill in this check list for any proposal submitted under other priorities.
<b>3rd LEVEL</b>	Environmental effects - <b>Checklist B</b>	Proposals requiring a more detailed assessment (e.g. Infrastructures) <b>must fill in Checklist B.</b> Based on the information provided, the MA may require to also fill in the Checklist C.
<b>4 th LEVEL</b>	Environmental Report - <b>Checklist C</b>	Proposals needing a more detailed assessment and those including an infrastructure of at least 1 million euro (according to art. 43 of the IRs) are required to submit the Checklist C.

## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### Operational and financial capacity – Max score 20 points (threshold 12/20)

#### 3.1 Role and tasks

**Clear distribution** of tasks within the partnership and **active contribution** of all partners to the achievement of the project objectives

#### 3.2 Expertise

**Complementarity of competences and expertise** within the partnership

#### 3.3 Management

**Adequate management capacities (staff, requirement)** of the Applicant and the partners to implement the project

#### 3.4 Financial capacity

Adequate financial resources to ensure **cash-flows** throughout the project; consistency between the sum to be managed and actual financial capacity



## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### 4. Operational and Financial Capacity

#### LL: The criterion with the lowest success rate in the ENPI CBC Med Programme

R.13. Demonstrate that **each** partner has a stable and sufficient financial capacity (FC) to ensure a positive cash-flow. Partners with insufficient financial capacity affect project evaluation; evidence of financial capacity is a self-statement do be uploaded in the “Document section” of the e-Form.

R.14. Provide information on how partners complement each other (2.3.3), and what kind of working relations will be established (**who does what**)



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## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### Focus on Financial Capacity (FC) (1/2)

#### Key messages:

- FC is scored on the basis of four “demanding” criteria related to criteria 3.3 and 3.4 of the evaluation grid: 2 for profit and 2 for non-profit organisations
- FC will be assessed at partnership level as arithmetical average of the FC of **each** applicant and partners (max. score 3 out of 5 points per each of these 2 criteria)
- Public bodies and international organisations will get by default max. score
- Profit, NGOs and non-profit organisations existing since less than 3 years at the date of the launch of the call must provide a bank reference



## Step 2A: Focus on Financial Capacity (FC)

**Profit organisation: Two Ratios to score: Profitability (criterion 3.3) and Financial independency (criterion 3.4)**

**(Note on financial capacity to be published soon on the Programme website)**

**Profitability ratio (criterion 3.3)** = Net Income (profit or loss) / Total Annual Income

- ✓ Ratio < to 0% = 0 points (loss)
- ✓ Ratio from 0 to 2% = 0,5 points
- ✓ Ratio from 2,01 to 4% = 1 points
- ✓ Ratio from 4,01 to 6% = 2 points
- ✓ Ratio > 6,00% = 3 points

**Financial Independency ratio (criterion 3.4)** = Own funds / Total liabilities

- ✓ Ratio < to 20% = 0 points
- ✓ Ratio from 20 to 30% = 1 points
- ✓ Ratio from 30 to 40% = 2 points
- ✓ Ratio > 40% = 3 points





## Step 2A: Focus on Financial Capacity (FC)

**NO-Profit organisations: Two Ratios to score: Grant dependency ratio (criterion 3.3) and Donor' s Dependency Ratio (criterion 3.4)**

**(Note on financial capacity to be published soon on the Programme website)**

**Grant dependency ratio (criterion 3.3)** = (Requested Grant / Project duration)/ Total Annual Income

- ✓ Ratio > 30% = 0 points
- ✓ Ratio from 20% to 29% = 0,5 points
- ✓ Ratio from 15% to 19% = 1 points
- ✓ Ratio from 10 to 14% = 2 points
- ✓ Ratio < 10% = 3 points

**Donor' s Dependency Ratio (criterion 3.4)** = Incomes from Donors / Total Annual Income

- ✓ Ratio from 90% to 50% = 0 points
- ✓ Ratio from 40% to 49% = 1 points
- ✓ Ratio from 30% to 39% = 2 points
- ✓ Ratio < 30% = 3 points



## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### Effectiveness – Max score 20 points

#### 4.1 Methodology

**Clear and effective** management and coordination methodology

#### 4.2 Indicators

**Realistic quantification** of results indicators in relation to activities, concerned territories and target groups

#### 4.3 Action plan

**Logical (sequence), realistic and feasible** action plan

#### 4.4 Communication

**Communication strategy effective (also from the financial point of view)** to raise the **awareness** of target groups and the general audience



## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### 5. Effectiveness (See WPs)

#### LL: Poor project design means worse project management

R.15 Focus on **technical AND financial management** of your partners (e.g.: double entry bookkeeping system) . Who is in charge for timely reporting?

**Golden rule: no timely reporting = no money!**

R.16 Identify **staff in charge of procurement procedures**. Limited attention to this task may severely delay project implementation

R.17 Describe the **internal monitoring arrangements** foreseen (5.1), who is in charge of it and how the monitoring influences the decision making system



## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### 5. Effectiveness (See WPs)

R.18 Identify the **PPs/staff in charge of ALL WPs** and able to support all reporting tasks (i.e. draft of the intermediate/final reports), up to the end of the project implementation period (WP1)

R.19 Details the structure of the **communication strategy**, bearing in mind the new functionalities of the ENI CBC Med web site, cost effectiveness, the network of journalists you will involve, and the evaluation tools that you will apply to the communication strategy (WP2)

R.20 Explain the communication plan and **capitalization of results** in concrete terms: e.g. the launch of an association, membership to existing networks, the transfer of the management of infrastructures to local authorities, etc. (WP2)



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## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### Sustainability – Max score 15 points

#### 5.1 Multiplier effects

Scale of multiplier effects (local, regional national, Mediterranean).  
Effective actions to **transfer and capitalize** on the results

#### 5.2 Sustainability

At financial, institutional, policy and environmental level



**This criterion counts double !**

## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### 6. Sustainability (6.1 – 6.3)

LL: Projects tend to approach the **sustainability process** at the implementation phase rather than during the design

R.21 Describe the **multiplier effect at BOTH EU and MPC** level (6.1), rather than only on one side of the Mediterranean basin (6.2)

R.22 Explain the **practical arrangements** you envisage to implement, instead of making general statements without tangible evidences



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## Step 2A: Operational evaluation (1/10)

### Cost effectiveness – Max score 15 points

#### 6.1 Work packages

**Financial allocation** per work package **consistent** with foreseen activities and **outputs**. Costs **realistic, necessary and justified**

#### 6.2 Expected results

**Satisfactory ratio** between **expected results** and **costs**

#### 6.3 Design of the budget

**Logical distribution** of budget among partners and along the project **to achieve the expected results and ensure cash flows**



## Step 2A: Operational evaluation

### 7. Cost effectiveness (Budget and Financial plan)

LL: Project designers tend to over-estimate project budget

R.23 Compute human resources allocation according to a “reasonable” balance with project activities. Keep in mind that under the ENI CBC Med Programme, **only ONE major amendment is allowed in project life time**

R.24 Allocate **financial resources** in relation to **outputs**, and NOT to activities



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## Step 2B: Verification of eligibility

### Verification of eligibility – only for short listed proposals

**LL: Some partners failed** to fulfil the requirements declared in the previous steps, so affecting the entire partnership. The result was that some good project proposals were non-eligible due to this unfortunate last-minute short-coming

R.25 Before starting the application process, **make sure that your partners are able to timely deliver the supporting documents.** It is taken for granted that a dedicated professional in your team has already explained these requirements to the partners BEFORE the start of the application process



# Supporting documents needed for the eligibility check

Upon request of the Managing Authority, only for shortlisted project proposals:

**Legal entity sheet**, duly completed and signed by the Applicant

**The statutes or articles of association** of the **applicant** and the **partner organisations** proving their legal status

Composition of the **Management Board** or other relevant documents

**The Financial Identification form**, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank must be located in the country where the Applicant is registered

**The Partnership Agreement** signed by the Applicant and all partners

**The external audit official report** on Applicant's annual accounts for the last 3 financial years \*

\*This does not apply to public administrations, public bodies (including bodies governed by public law) and international organisations.



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# Any questions?

ENI CBC Med Programme - Managing Authority  
Regione Autonoma della Sardegna