

Environment – Improving Water Quality in Shared Transitional Waters.

1. Summary of call

The INTERREG VA Programme is making a call for applications under the specific objective: Improving water quality in transitional waters.

The total value of call is €30 million ERDF

Opening Date: 5 August 2015

Closing Date: 30 October 2015 (14:00)

The result indicator: The percentage of the shared transitional waters in the region with good or high quality. The current baseline is 0% and the target for 2023 is 100%.

The output indicators:

- 10,000 people benefiting from improved wastewater treatment
- 2 sewage network and wastewater treatment projects completed to improve water quality in shared transitional waters

2. Essential information

This call for applications should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Cooperation Programme, and associated Citizens' Summary
- The Programme Rules;
- Guide for Applicants.

Please consult these documents before completing the application form as they contain essential information to assist you in making the best application possible.

Applicants may also find it useful to consult 'Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross Border Cooperation'. 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. A copy of the toolkit can be downloaded from our website.

3. Project Selection Criteria.

The following selection criteria will be used:

- a. Contribution of the project to the defined results and outputs of the programme. Your project must provide specific information on how it will meet the output indicator targets in full. Applicants who cannot deliver the output indicator targets in full need not apply.
- b. Quality of the project design and in particular;
 - i. All projects activities must align with the EU Water Framework Directive requirements;
 - ii. Activities involving urban wastewater treatment plants must have a strategy for the disposal of sewage sludge;
 - iii. Climate change impacts on wastewater treatment should be given attention, in particular in terms of storm water management;
 - iv. Alternative innovative solutions should be taken into account where appropriate (e.g. in particular in remote areas/small villages);
 - v. The financial sustainability of projects has to be considered and pertinent information such as proposed tariffs should be given due consideration;
 - vi. Operational costs (including maintenance) have to be considered;
 - vii. Since wastewater collection and treatment is not compulsory below 2 000 population equivalent, any public investment there should be duly justified technically and economically, compared to the alternative of individual septic tanks; and
 - viii. Proposed investments have to be able to meet current and future needs, without becoming oversized.
- c. Quality of project team and implementation arrangements;
- d. Value for money;
- e. Quality of cross border co-operation with demonstrable added value;
- f. Contribution towards sustainable development;
- g. Contribution towards equality.

4. Background to INTERREG Programme

The INTERREG VA 2014-2020 Programme is one of approximately 60 programmes across the European Union designed to promote greater levels of cross-border cooperation.

Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland share a number of common features with other border areas across Europe where developmental problems are exacerbated by the existence of borders. Borders can distort infrastructure and communication networks resulting in reduced economic development and different policy approaches which hinder joined-up service delivery.

The INTERREG VA Programme has been designed to address many of these issues in order to promote greater economic, social and territorial cohesion across the region.

5. Eligible Region

The eligible area for the INTERREG VA Programme is:

- Northern Ireland;
- The Border Counties of Ireland (Monaghan, Leitrim, Cavan, Louth, Sligo and Donegal); and
- Western Scotland (Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire mainland; South Ayrshire; Lochaber, Skye & Lochalsh, Arran & Cumbrae and Argyll & Bute and Eilean Siar/Western Isles).

Projects must comply with the cross border requirements of Article 12 of 1299/2013 as detailed in the Programme rules.

6. What is the theme “Improve Water Quality in Transitional Waters” going to achieve?

Within the programme area, Ireland and Northern Ireland share the following transitional water bodies;

1. Carlingford Lough (located between County Louth in Ireland and County Down in Northern Ireland).
2. Lough Foyle (located between County Londonderry in Northern Ireland and County Donegal in Ireland).

Cross-border collaboration is essential to improve the water quality of these shared transitional waters and thus efficiently address the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. In particular this specific objective will seek to achieve a good or high water quality status for these two shared transitional waters. Modelling of cross-border waters can identify the potential sources of pollution and the optimum way to achieve and maintain good water quality status. Such modelling will identify the most effective interventions and improvements required for the sewage network and waste water treatment works that impact upon the shared transitional waters.

7. Anticipated Actions

It is anticipated that the programme will fund the following types of actions;

Research and development in wastewater treatment technologies, including the use of sustainable technologies with direct relevance to the shared transitional waters. The creation of demonstration sites in the catchment areas to illustrate best practice wastewater treatment methodologies. Sewerage network and wastewater treatment projects to protect and enhance the WFD classification of the transitional waters.

8. Budget and co-financing rate

€30m million ERDF is available under this call. Successful projects will be offered a grant in Euro.

The maximum intervention rate that can be applied is 85 %

This means that applicants are required to bring a minimum of up to 15% match funding to the eligible project costs over the lifetime of the project. Please see programme rules for further details on match funding

However, please be aware the intervention rate (grant rate) may decrease depending upon the state aid implications of your project. It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner to ensure that State Aid cover and compliance is in place. The application should clearly outline the process to ensure and demonstrate State Aid compliance.

The level of grant aid may also be adjusted to take due account of anticipated future revenue streams. Please consult the Programme rules for further details.

Grants and payments may take any of the following forms:

- Reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred and paid;
- Standard scales of unit costs
- Flat rate financing , available for overhead costs or salary costs

The above options may be combined only where each option covers different categories of cost or where they are used for different projects forming a part of an operation or for successive phases of an operation. Flat rate financing for overheads is available for this call at a rate of 15% of staff costs.

9. Application process.

A two stage process will be in place for this call as detailed in the Guide for Applicants. Full details of the assessment process, including admissibility criteria are available in the Guide for Applicants.

You can apply on line through the SEUPB website. (Note: the on-line process will not be fully operational until the end of August 2015, in the interim an application form is available from the SEUPB).

10. Contact Us

For general enquiries about this call please contact the SEUPB on: Tel: +44 28 82 255750.

Contact Name Paul Boylan, INTERREG VA Programme Manager

Special EU Programmes Body

Email: paul.boylan@seupb.eu