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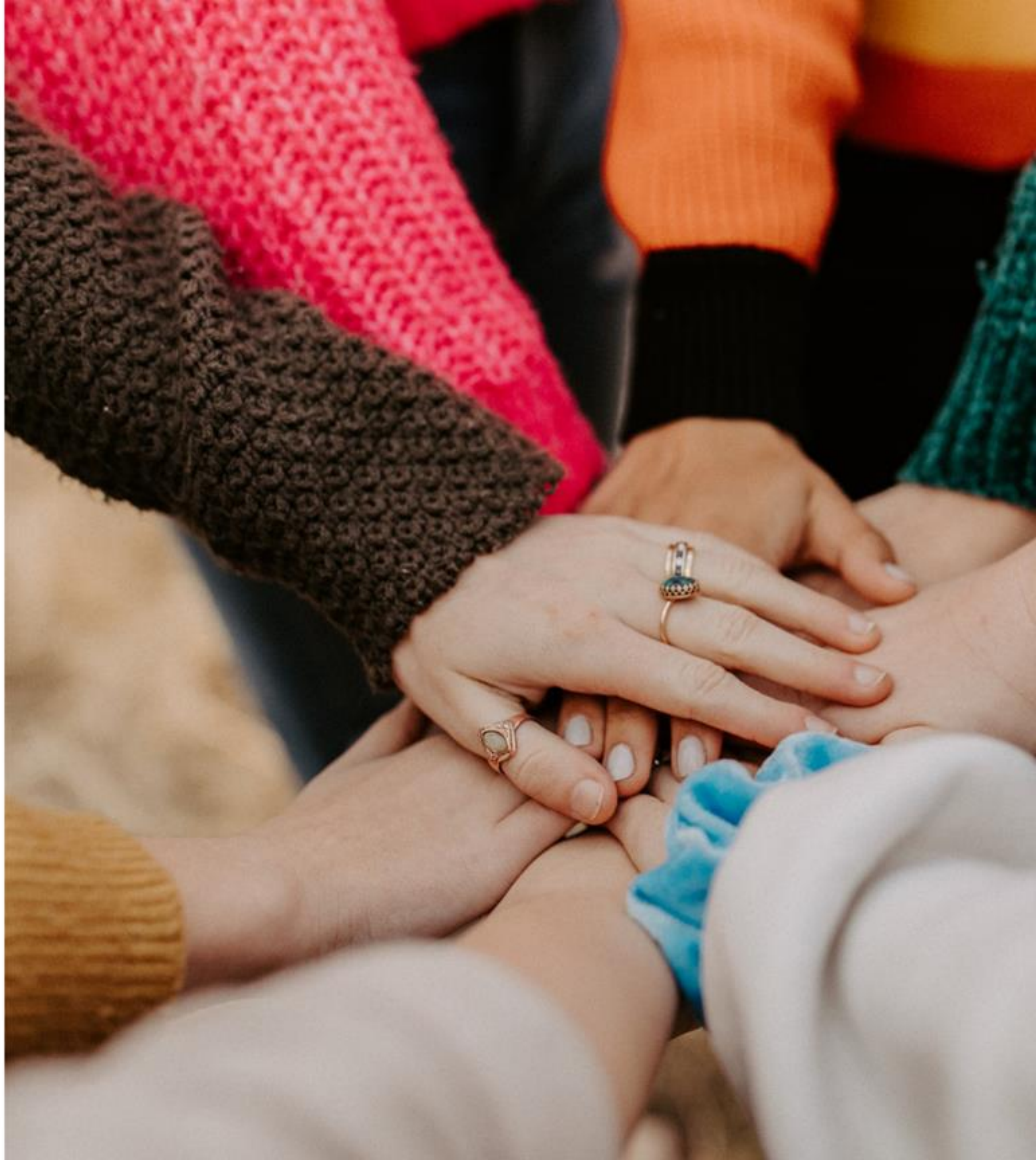

Questions and answers webinar

October 28, 2022

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Programme support

- Programme website https://www.interreg-danube.eu/about-dtp/new-funding-2021-2027/how-to-apply/first-call
- DRP events (thematic webinars, Lead Applicant Seminar):

  -Records of webinars are available on the website:

  https://www.interreg-danube.eu/about-dtp/new-funding-2021-2027/webinars
- National Contact Points https://www.interreg-danube.eu/contacts/national-coordination-and-contact-points:
- National events (national info days)
- MA/JS Project Officers (bilateral consultations)

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Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 – 1st Call for proposals

Available funds: **91,753,091.38 EUR**

- Maximum project duration 30 months

- Two step procedure:

First step:

✓ opened on 29 September – **closes on 21 November, 14:00 CET**

✓ Submission of the Expression of Interest – short version of the AF with core information

✓ Only electronic submission – **no attachments**

Second step: spring 2023

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Questions and answers

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Partnership

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Question:

What kind of organisations can be partners?

Answer:

According to their legal status, the following types of partners are eligible for funding within the Danube Region Programme:

- Local, regional, national public bodies;
- bodies governed by public law (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013);
- international organisations;
- private bodies (non-profit organisations and private enterprises /private profit-making organisation) e.g. chambers of commerce, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, private enterprises registered in the programme area.

Private profit-making organisation cannot be lead partners.

If not sure, please contact respective NCP in order to make sure whether your organization is eligible or not.

Question:

Can partners from entire territory of Ukraine participate?

Answer:

Yes. Regions like Chernivetska Oblast, Ivano-Frankiviska Oblast, Zakarpatska Oblast, Odessa Oblast are included in the geography of the programme, but **Danube Region Programme will cover the entire territory of Ukraine** provided that the part of the operations implemented outside programme area (the UA regions not officially involved in the programme) **directly contribute to the objectives of the programme.** (Reg. (EU) 2021/1059, Art.37).

Thus, applicants from the entire territory of Ukraine can participate but only as PP in the 1st CfP, provided that the involvement of the organization is important for the partnership and the activities implemented in the region will benefit the objectives of the programme.

Question:

What is an optimal size of partnership? Can non-EU countries be lead applicants? What is the maximum number of participants from one country?

Answer:

Each project has to involve **at least three directly financing partners from three different countries of the programme area**: the lead partner and at least two project partners. At least **one partner** must be a beneficiary **from a EU Member State** of the programme area.

The number of partners may considerably vary between the projects depending on the character of the project as well as the territories addressed. The project partnership should be comprised in a strategic manner and well adapted to its purpose. Keeping this in mind, the partnership should always reflect on the optimal number and role of partners to be involved. **No maximum limit of partners is fixed at the programme level.**

Potential applicants **from non-EU Member States can also be lead applicants**, except for Ukrainian applicants which can be only project partners in the 1st CfP.

- The project partnership should be **set up in a strategic manner** and well adapted to its purpose.
- The competences of partners should be **closely linked to the project objectives** and all partners should be **relevant for reaching the project outputs and results.**
- The partnership should be **balanced** regarding the number of actors involved per country, distribution of project activities and responsibilities as well as related budgets.
- **Policy relevance:** decision makers (e.g. ministries, etc.) should be either directly included in the partnership or involved as ASPs, or project partners should have the capacity to create strong links to relevant policy drivers.
- The **partnership size** shall reflect the **transnational character** of the DTP, yet having a large partnership shall not be the ultimate goal. Too large, a partnership might cause significant organisational, communication and coordination problems and thus be cost inefficient, thus the size of the **partnership should be manageable.**
- **Multi-level governance:** In order to apply integrated territorial approach the partnership should not only consist of one administrative level (e.g. only local). The project should build on effective linkages across sectors (e.g. transport-environment) and governance levels (vertical cooperation).

Question:

Can an Institution without any experience in Interreg Projects apply as a lead partner?

Answer:

The lead partner is recommended to have **some experience in the management of EU funded projects**; experience in the management of international, transnational cooperation projects is recommended but it is not mandatory. The Programme is also supporting Lead Partners that are new to Interreg projects.

Lead partner should also possess: sound institutional capacity, sufficient financial, technical and human resources; awareness of the administrative burden which implies the lead partner role; In-depth knowledge of the DRP rules; High level of commitment of both lead partner organisation and project management team; Intercultural sensitivity and pro-active management approach of the project management team.

Question:

How to find partners?

Answer:

In order to build a strong partnership, the network of National Contact Points should be used. They can offer first hand support in project development, besides advising on potential interested and committed partners in their countries. LinkedIn group and Keep database can be used:

- National Contact Points (https://www.interreg-danube.eu/contacts/national-coordination-and-contact-points)
- LinkedIn group (https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12685170/)
- Keep.eu

Question:

Must ASPs be located in the Danube area?

Answer:

ASPs can come outside the programme area in the EU. And they can be from the non-EU countries of the programme area.

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Question:

Is there a limit in how many project proposals an organisation can be LP/PP?

Answer:

No, there is no limit. However, the Lead applicant and also the PPs must have sufficient cash-flow capacities, institutional capacities - technical and human resources.

Question:

Can a SME be Lead Applicant of the project?

Answer:

No, SMEs cannot be Lead Applicants, only Project Partners or ASPs.

Question:

Is a consortium of several partners required?

Answer:

Yes, minimum 3 partners from 3 different countries are required (one shall be EU-an Member state). Please check also the Applicants Manual.

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Question:

Is it eligible to have a consortium of partners from one country?

Answer:

No, it is not eligible. Danube Region Programme is a transnational programme. Minimum 3 partners are needed from 3 different countries (out of which one shall be EU-Member State).

Question:

Can ASPs be added to the partnership after the first stage?

Answer:

Yes, not only ASPs, but also further PPs can be added to the project, however the intervention logic shall not be changed between the two phases.

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Question:

Can project leader participate as a project partner in other project proposal?

Answer:

Yes, it is possible. Please make sure to have enough cash-flow, technical and human resources capacities for all projects.

Question:

In the first step when submitting a project idea, is it necessary to provide information about the partners as well?

Answer:

Yes. The information about PPs and ASPs must be provided in EoI:

The identification of the LP/PP, data related to address, contact details, contact persons.

Partner details: abbreviated name of the organisation, name of the organisation in original language, name of the organisation in English and department/division/unit (if applicable). Legal and financial information shall also be filled in: the type of partner and the legal status of the partner shall be selected from a drop-down menu. VAT number and information about VAT recovery (yes, no, or partially) shall be indicated.

Address details shall be inserted in the corresponding fields in EoI. Information about NUTS codes. In the contact tab title, first and last name of the legal representative and title, first and last name, E-mail address and telephone number of the contact person shall be inserted.

Applicants will have to describe the structure of the partnership and explain why such partners are needed to implement the project and to achieve project objectives. What is the contribution of each partner to the project?

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INTERVENTION LOGIC

Question:

What is meant by „transnational dimension/impact” of a project?

Answer:

transnational dimension:

the project topic, the addressed challenge and the contributing project activities have transnational, broader territorial and/or thematic character and relevance

transnational impact:

based on the planned activities and outputs the impact of the project can be considered relevant on transnational scale and not only on local level in different parts of the region

A collection of different local actions of PPs under one „umbrella” is not yet transnational

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Question:

Pilot activities - role and investment costs

Answer:

Pilot action

Jointly developed pilot action has an experimental nature either testing of innovative products, methodologies, tools etc. or demonstrating the application of existing products, methodologies, tools to a certain territory/sector; the feasibility and effectiveness of procedures, new instruments, tools, experimentation or the transfer of practices.

A project activity carried out in a "pilot area" is not yet a pilot action, but only in case something (e.g. a solution developed by the project) is tested, or (an existing solution taken over by the partnership in a new area) is demonstrated.

A pilot action is not necessarily an investment, it can be related also to testing a methodology, software tool, etc.

Question:

Do all the partners/countries need to implement a pilot action in the project?

Answer:

Not all the partners/countries have to implement a pilot action, however, it has to be ensured that the transnational dimension of the pilot action and the of the solution still remains, even if not all the PPs/countries are implementing it.

Question:

How shall participants be calculated for trainings?

(RCO82 Participations in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion)

Answer:

Participants shall be counted for each type of training only once.

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Question:

What type of project activites can be financed by DRP?

Answer:

improving policies and institutional capacities (e.g. joint strategies, action plans, policy & sectoral dialogs, networks, trainings)

developing solutions (e.g. tools, methods, processes, services, database) that are also pilot tested within the project

pilot actions (testing demonstrating viability and applicability of solutions)

Information, communication, dissemination activites (supporting the thematic activities)

transnational small-scale investments (no major infrastructure)

reasonable mix of activities with clear thematic focus

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Question:

Is there a limit how many project specific objecives can be defined?

Answer:

Maximum 3 project specific objectives to be defined in a project

Investments

To each specific objective investments can be linked, if applicable.

Please note that in the DRP investments are eligible only in case:

Follow a transnational physical or functional link over the national border which has been analysed from transnational point of view and has a clear impact over the national borders

or

Create a transferable practical solution through a case study in one area, which is jointly evaluated by the project partners and transferred for testing in at least two other participating countries.

Applicants have to indicate the number, the title of the investment and have to justify, why this investment is needed and have to describe the transnational relevance of it as well. Applicants shall indicate the objective of the investment in correlation with the project objectives and the involvement of the partners. Location and ownership of the investment shall be indicated. Applicants shall provide a thorough justification for the investment explaining its necessity for the implementation of the project and achievement of the project objectives, its transnational character of transferability to at least two other participating countries, in accordance with the Programme specific requirements.

Question:

Does a solution coming from pilot activities mean that the pilots do not need to be specified in advance? And if yes, to what extent? /Do pilot actions have to be pre-defined in the intervention logic or can they be defined later, during the project implementation?

Answer:

It is recommended to have at least a concept of the pilot. It is understandable that in some cases it is difficult to define all the details. However, if the applicant can estimate how many pilots will be performed, and in what environment they will be piloted, then, some general information should be provided for the pilot as far as it is a basis for project assessment.

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Question:

How communication and dissemination, and management activities should be described under EoI, especially when it comes for common activities under several project specific objectives, e.g. establishment of SCOM, SCOM meetings, project management and project reporting? It is also not clear how to proceed with the budget for those general activities.

Answer:

Management and communication activities bear a horizontal character in DRP. The budget for communication activities has to be integrated along other project activities.

When describing activities always provide a description of who will be responsible for what. In case of communication activities, you may describe them more specifically when tackling certain activities.

Management related activities are not to be described in the work plan of EoI (in 2nd step, in full AF there will be a dedicated field).

Question:

Does the support for inter-institutional relations also mean financing exchanges of experience between partners?

Answer:

Exchanging experience between the partners is relevant in each project, but this activity shall be only an element of the project that is complementing the other activities, outputs and results.

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Question:

Can you confirm that no signed declarations are required from partners / ASP in Step 1?

Answer:

In the "First step", applicants are requested to submit electronically, through the Joint Electronic Monitoring System (Jems), an Expression of Interest (EoI), outlining mainly the intervention logic of the proposal and its strategic relevance for the DRP. No additional supporting documents are to be delivered at this stage.

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JEMS

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Question:

When will be JEMS available to submit the application form? Is there a user manual for JEMS? Where can we find it?

Answer:

Jems is available.

- Guidelines for filling in the EoI in Jems

(https://www.interreg-danube.eu/about-dtp/new-funding-2021-2027/how-to-apply/first-call)

Web-Site: New Funding 2021-2027 – Calls for proposals – 1st Call – DOCUMENTS

- Webinars on future funding - How to use Jems

Search...

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JEMS

The Joint Electronic Monitoring System (Jems) is a programme monitoring system and a communication portal. It is a tool for project applicants to create and submit application forms. It is also used for reporting of project implementation process.

Jems replaces the electronic Monitoring System (eMS), created by Interact and used in programming period 2014-2020.

Jems - Login

- Jems Accessibility Statement

- Jems Terms of Use

Question:

How to assign roles for PPs in Jems.

Answer:

The lead applicant (LA) can grant access rights for opening the EoI to the project partners or collaborators. In order to receive access rights a third party should register in Jems and provide the LA with the email address of the registered user.

The access right is enabled in the „Project privileges" section:

Users can be granted either:

read-only rights , edit rights ("edit") or lead applicant rights ("manage").

ATTENTION:

It is possible for different users to work at the same time on the same EoI. When working in parallel, users have to make sure that they are not working simultaneously in the same section or sub-section as there is the risk to overwrite information or data loss. MA/JS does not take responsibility for such data loss in Jems.

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BUDGET

Question:

Will there be a grant for preparation costs once a project has been approved by the programme?

Answer:

Projects approved by the DRP Monitoring Committee are entitled to receive the reimbursement of the preparation costs in a **form of a lump-sum**, except for those projects that already received financial support for the project preparation under the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), Seed Money Facility or on any other EU fund.

18,500 EUR per project represents the total budget for the preparation costs (Interreg Funds and national co-financing) and the EU contribution part of this amount (which is 80% according to the programme rules, i.e. 14,800 EUR) will be **reimbursed to the lead partner.**

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Question:

Can the budget be changed between the first and the second step and to what extent? By budget change, I mean changes between partners and changes between activities.

Answer:

Yes, the budget can be changed.
Only the Lead Applicant and intervention logic cannot be changed between the two steps.
Max. 4 PPs from EoI can be withdrawn (with, or without replacement) for second step.

Question:

We need more detail about how to construct the project budget?

Answer:

In the EoI the LA shall only indicate the **total budget of each partner** without detailing it on cost categories. However, this has to be based on realistic calculations connected to the activities proposed.
Basis for calculation is the project work plan and the respective activities and tasks of the specific PP, how much of those activities are to be covered by the staff of PP organisation, what tasks, services and for how much are to be sub-contracted, how many trips of project staff are to be planned, for how much; if any equipment might be necessary.

Question:

What can be the minimum and maximum cost of the project?

Answer:

No minimum or maximum cost of the project is defined on the programme level.

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Question:

What are the conditions for co-financing? Is the applying institution expected to finance the rest of the 20% of the funds or will it be provided through other funds?

Answer:
DRP projects are co-finaced by Interreg funds. Co-financing rate for **EU contribution is 80%** for directly financed PPs. **20% of partner's contribution** can be covered by **state contribution** (where applicable) and/or **own sources** (can be public or private) of the directly financed partner and/or other contribution (e.g. regional/local/other sources)

An overview on the national co-financing systems of the DRP Partner States is available on the programme website.

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Question:

I would like to ask you for the explanation of cost categories and principles of their calculation.

Answer:

Cost categories:

1. Staff costs
2. Office and administrative expenditure
3. Travel and accommodation costs
4. External expertise and service costs
5. Equipment expenditure
6. Infrastructure and works

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Question:

for staff costs category, will it be estimated as before taking into account all project activities, or will it be a lump sum as it is the Office & administration?

Answer:

Staff costs may be reimbursed in the Danube Region Programme using two methods.
The method eligible for each call will be specified in the Call announcement for the 2nd step.
A. on a real cost basis ; or
B. as a flat rate up to 20% of direct costs other than staff costs

Question:

Do travel and accommodation costs of ASPs fall under external budget line or travel and accommodation budget line?

Answer:

Travel and accommodation costs of ASPs shall be planned and reported under Travel and accommodation cost category.

Question:

Is VAT ineligible cost in every case, if it is recoverable under national legislation whether is amount of total costs of operation below, equal or under 5.000.000,00 EUR?
For example in Serbia by the Law on VAT, VAT can be exempted of paying in case when it is foreseen in the donation or subsidy contract.
Does it mean that Serbian partners shall calculate project costs in net amount without VAT ?

Answer:

At the programme level, VAT is non eligible cost, except:
- for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
- for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation

All the questions related to the national VAT legislation shall be addressed to the relevant NCP.

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Question:

Will funds be reimbursed for the entire project, or in equal parts, or in part of completed projects plans.

Answer:

Timeframe of reimbursement

Reporting period
6 months

Submission of the PPR and AfR by LP
3 months

Checking the PPR and AfR by MA/ JS
30 days

Payment procedure CA
10 days

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Question:

Is there advance payment from the programme to the project when the project approved by the DRP?

Answer:

No advance payment of Interreg funds contribution

Reimbursed on periodically reported and validated PP's cost-basis

Project partners need sufficient cash-flow capacities

Question:

What are the most common mistakes when submitting these projects?

Answer:

- needs and challenges are not defined for the target area of the project, but refer to EU level, global level etc.
- choosing the partners for quantitative and not qualitative reasons.
- connection of project proposed outputs and results to programme indicators (output and result indicators).
- project stems out of local needs and each partner has a different local need.
- overestimation of the budget and unbalanced distribution in line with partners involvement.

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Thank you for your attention!