


Overview of changes to the Programme Manual V.3

Location of change	Introduced changes	Justification of changes
<p>The Programme Manual: page 37, Section II, sub-section 3 Priority 3 – Attractive South Baltic – activate the tourist and cultural potential of South Baltic Area.</p>	<p>The Measure supports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the visibility of the South Baltic area as a tourist-attractive area and strengthen its common tourist and cultural offer. 2. Improvement and development of sustainable touristic offers, products, and services as well as cross-border networks and cooperation links between regions and countries to reinforce the touristic sector. 3. Use of the potential of cultural and creative sectors and natural resources as a means of strengthening the tourist attractiveness, mitigating seasonality, and transitioning towards sustainable, all-year-round tours in the SBA. 	<p>Description of the fields of intervention supported by Programme Measure 3.1. was amended to outline the most relevant areas of development.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 40, Section III, sub-section 1.1 Project phases.</p>	<p>It should be noted that project partners will be getting a lump sum in the amount of EUR 13 400 per project to cover all costs of activities related to the closure phase of the project. No real costs can be reported in the closure phase, meaning after the defined project end date (please see Chapter IV, Section 3, sub-section 3.8. Project closure costs).</p> <p>Please note that costs for closure can be granted only for regular projects financed by the Interreg South Baltic Programme. The lump sum for closure costs is applicable for projects starting from the second call for proposals and is the only way to declare these costs. Projects approved in the first call for proposals declare closure costs on the basis of real costs.</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was introduced.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 57, Section III, sub-section 6 Project activities and work packages</p>	<p>Additionally, the projects shall define the following technical work packages connected to simplified cost options. These work packages are necessary for administration and financial purposes and thus their description shall be limited.</p> <p><...></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Project closure: Projects have to define project closure work package in order to claim the lump sum for project closure (please see Chapter IV, Section 3, Sub-section 3.8. Project closure costs). 3. Costs settle by flat rate: Projects should define a work package for costs settle by flat rate to claim the flat rate for office and administration expenditures (15% of staff costs), the flat rate for travel and accommodation expenditures (15% of staff costs) and the flat rate for staff costs if this option is applied (20% of direct costs) (please see Chapter IV, Section 3, Sub-sections 3.2. Staff costs, 3.3. Office and administration and 3.4. Travel and accommodation). 	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was updated.</p>

<p>The Programme Manual: page 61, Section IV, sub-section 1 General rules on cost eligibility</p>	<p>Double financing Double financing of expenditure is prohibited, in particular: <...> • Claiming real costs for those categories that are exclusively covered by a flat rate or lump sum (e.g., preparation costs and closure costs).</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was updated.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 62, Section IV, sub-section 2 Project Budget Structure</p>	<p>The budget structure also includes lump sums for project preparation and closure costs.</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was updated.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 64, Section IV, sub-section 3.1. Project preparation costs</p>	<p>The lump sum covers all costs related to the project preparation – flat rate for staff, flat rate for office and administration and flat rate for travel and accommodation are not calculated from its amount.</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was introduced.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 68, Section IV, sub-section 3.4. Travel and accommodation for project staff</p>	<p>Each partner who receives a flat rate for travel and accommodation costs must provide proof of travel at least once during the duration of the project, e.g., attendance list, recording of a meeting or similar evidence (the document will serve only to confirm travel, it will not be verified financially). Confirmation of travel must come from the implementation phase.</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was introduced.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 76-77, Section IV, sub-section 3.8. Closure costs</p>	<p>Closure costs of the project are declared only by a lump sum in the amount of EUR 13 400. (* Not applicable for the 1st call for proposals. Projects approved in the 1st call for proposals declare closure costs on the basis of real costs). Lump sum covers all costs related to the project closure - flat rate for staff, flat rate for office and administration and flat rate for travel and accommodation are not calculated from its amount. The catalogue of closing costs covered by a lump sum remains closed and includes: 1. Staff costs – costs related to the works of project staff exclusively related to the closure phase. 2. External expertise and services – costs of the external First Level Control to the final progress report preparation and verification, costs of preparing the final progress report outsourced to an external company. 3. Office and administration costs – related to the closure phase. Payment of the lump sum is due if the product indicator is achieved and proved by the submission of the final progress report. The amount of the lump sum is paid out to the lead partner. The granted amount of the lump sum may be distributed by the lead partner between the project partners based on an internal agreement between the project partners. Due to the use of the lump sum, there is no possibility to declare any expenses related to closure costs as real costs.</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was updated.</p>

	<p>Activities related to the project implementation phase are not allowed to be implemented in the project closure phase. As a rule, payment for expenses related to the project implementation phase should be paid before the end of the project implementation phase.</p> <p>NB: In justified cases, costs related to activities carried out in the implementation phase paid after the project's end date are eligible if the accounting documents were issued during the project implementation period and are not considered as closure costs. In this situation, the beneficiary is obliged to clearly describe such expenditures. In the description of the accounting document the project partner should clearly add annotation: the expenditure concerns the implementation phase.</p>	
<p>The Programme Manual: page 85, Section V, sub-section 9.2. State aid in the Interreg South Baltic Programme.</p>	<p>The State aid in the Programme is awarded based on the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 20 GBER up to the amount of EUR 2.2 million per undertaking, per project (direct State aid); • Article 20a GBER up to the amount of EUR 22 000 per undertaking, per project (direct and indirect State aid). 	<p>The amendment of GBER published on 23 June 2023 (for articles 20 and 20a).</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 85, Section V, sub-section 9.2. State aid in the Interreg South Baltic Programme.</p>	<p>The footnote no 44: On 9 March 2023, the European Commission endorsed the EN version of the amendment of the GBER. The revised rules among others increase the thresholds in the GBER Articles 20 and 20a to 2.2 million EUR and 22 000 EUR respectively. The consolidated text of the regulation is available at the official website of the EU.</p>	<p>The amendment of GBER published in the Official Journal on 23 June 2023.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 96, Section V, sub-section 5 Assessment of applications.</p>	<p>Each project proposal is assessed against the Admissibility and eligibility criteria determined by the Programme including the partners' financial, administrative, and operational capacities. When forming partnership consortiums, it is recommended to pay special attention to the financial and operational capacities of project partners that are private actors. It is recommended to consult the formed partnerships with the Contact Points of the Programme before applying.</p>	<p>The information was supplemented by the specification of the assessment process that includes, inter alia, assessment of the financial, administrative, and operational capacities of the project partners.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 101, Section VI, sub-section 3.1 Communication obligations for project partners. Obligations under regulations.</p>	<p>Item b): publishing a short description of the project on each partner's respective website or social media sites (if the partners have one), including:</p>	<p>Technical correction.</p>

<p>The Programme Manual: page 105, Section VI, sub-section 3.3. Programme logotype.</p>		<p>The logotype was changed to correspond to all relevant communication requirements and visibility rules in force.</p>
<p>The Programme Manual: page 123, Section 6, sub-section 1.</p>	<p>NB: According to Article 74 of Common Provisions Regulation, management verification shall be carried out based on the proportionate risk analysis prepared by the MA ex ante and in writing. It means that FLCs will focus their verifications on those reports where the risk of irregularities is high. The assessment of the risk is done by the FLC and is used for both: administrative verification and on-the-spot checks.</p>	<p>Technical specification.</p>
<p>Annexes to the Programme Manual: page page 6, Annex 2 Additional obligation, eligibility rules and guidance for Polish partners</p>	<p>As to the project's closure, partners should use a lump sum to cover all costs of activities related to the closure phase of the project. No real costs can be reported in the closure phase, meaning after the defined project end date. In justified cases costs related to the implementation phase can be paid in closure phase (applicable for projects starting from the second call for proposals, please see the provisions of the Programme Manual).</p>	<p>Information on closure costs represented in a form of a lump sum was introduced.</p>
<p>Annexes to the Programme Manual: page 31-32, Annex 6 Project selection process and criteria</p>	<p>Note: According to the Programme Manual, each project partner should have sufficient financial, management and organisational capacities in order to be deemed eligible to participate in the project co-financed by the Programme. For project partners that are private entities, data on financial capacities is requested to the provided in the Application Form. Please note that besides the provided data information from other sources can be used to support the assessment results. The following metrics shall be reviewed and assessed during the verification process:</p> <p>Private organisations (SMEs): Annual turnover / Own contribution: annual turnover is assessed against the partner's own contribution concluding if the project partner has the capacity to cover the own contribution within the project duration.</p> <p>Annual turnover / Partner's budget share: annual turnover is assessed against the partner's total budget share concluding if the project partner has the capacity to finance the planned project activities and ensure their smooth and timely implementation.</p> <p>Staff headcount / Partner's budget share: staff headcount is assessed against the partner's budget share concluding if the project partner has sufficient personnel to</p>	<p>Assessment of the financial, administrative, and operational capacities was described in detail, identifying relevant metrics, and the verification process, as well as supplemented by recommendations and general information.</p>

	<p>implement the project (carry out financial, administrative, and operational tasks within the project). Operating profit The indicated operating profit is assessed to be positive or negative as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive operating profit reflects the overall health of the organisation within the given time period. • A negative operating income reflects the fact that the operating expenses outweigh its total revenues within the given time period. <p>Private organisations (non-profit oriented organisations): Total annual income / Own partner's contribution: total annual income is assessed against the partner's own contribution concluding if the project partner has the capacity to cover the own contribution within the project duration.</p> <p>Total annual income / Partner's budget share: total annual income is assessed against the partner's total budget share concluding if the project partner has the capacity to finance the planned project activities and ensure their smooth and timely implementation. Sources of financing: sources of financing are reviewed in terms of their stability and contingency to implement planned activities within the project lifespan.</p> <p>It is recommended to consult the formed partnerships with the Contact Points of the Programme before applying.</p> <p>NB: The decision on the financial, management and organisational eligibility of private project partners is taken by the National Authority of the respective Programme Member State!</p>	
<p>Annexes to the Programme Manual: page 41, Annex 6 Project selection process and criteria</p>	<p>Apart from presenting the points, the consolidated assessment also includes the main arguments justifying the points given and the overall evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project proposal. If significant differences in points are given, the JS moderates the process of finding a common view on the project among the assessors.</p> <p>The projects will be placed in the ranking list of projects and presented to the Monitoring Committee according to the sum of consolidated points calculated.</p> <p><...></p> <p>The ranking list of projects and the projects' consolidated assessments shall serve as supporting documents for the Monitoring Committee decisions.</p> <p>If a project fails to meet any of the above thresholds, it will be presented to the Monitoring Committee in the separate ranking list.</p>	<p>Description of the assessment process was revised for clarity highlighting the ranking of projects based on given points and overall assessment.</p>