

**Interreg**



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## **Summary of the decisions**

### **Monitoring Committee**

**Catania – Palazzo della Regione Siciliana**

**10 december 2024**

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### Premise

This document summarises the key points discussed during the meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme, held in hybrid format on 10 December 2024 at the Palazzo della Regione Siciliana in Catania.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Italian and Maltese authorities involved in Programme implementation, the Joint Secretariat, the European Commission, and other members of the Committee.

Several aspects related to Programme progress were examined, with particular focus on the evaluation of project proposals submitted under Call 01/2023, spending forecasts related to the n+3 targets, the closure of the 2014–2020 programming period, and the definition of new perspectives for action under the Governance Priority.

During the session, critical issues, corrective measures and operational guidance were shared to improve project quality and ensure effective implementation of resources. Below is a concise summary of the main points discussed.

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### Discussion of the Agenda Items

#### 1. Call 1/2023 – Review and evaluation of the qualitative assessment grids for proposals under Specific Objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 3.1

The Monitoring Committee (MC), after reviewing the correctness and completeness of the assessment process of the 17 project proposals submitted under SOs 1.1, 1.2 and 3.1, unanimously approved the following lists:

- **SO 1.1:** 3 projects conditionally approved; 7 projects rejected
- **SO 1.2:** 1 project conditionally approved
- **SO 3.1:** 3 projects conditionally approved; 3 projects rejected

The Committee also acknowledged the following weaknesses in the project proposals submitted:

- Low level of innovation
- Weak cross-border character
- Projects not ready for implementation and with poor feasibility
- Lack of SMEs in SO 1.1 proposals
- SO 3.1 projects often based on initiatives already funded (2014–2020)
- Overestimation of budgets, especially for services and consultancy

Regarding the conditions for conditional approval, the MC established the following:

- Application of State Aid rules to private partners, where applicable
- Respect of the DNSH principle, which will be verified during implementation through the expenditure reporting process
- Revision of output and result indicators to ensure greater coherence with the Programme and EU guidance
- Budget reductions between 5% and 25%, depending on the score achieved
- Elimination of ineligible costs (e.g., consumables already covered under “administrative expenses” and/or communication activities that do not comply with green and inclusion principles; and additional communication website costs)

After extensive discussion, the MC established the following timeline to ensure contract signing by 31/12/2025:

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- By 15/12/2024: conditions to be sent to lead partners
- By 20/12/2024: submission of signed letters of acceptance and contracts
- By 31/12/2024: publication of approval decree for contracts
- By 31/01/2025: submission of updated Application Forms
- By 15/03/2025: completion of evaluations for SOs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3
- 28/03/2025: new MC meeting for approval of projects under SOs 2.x

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### 2. Overview of funds to be committed under Call 01/2024 and spending forecast up to December 2025 to meet n+3 targets

- **Total ERDF allocation for SOs 1.1, 1.2, and 3.1:** €11,384,017
- **Commitment to be activated with 8 approved projects:** €7,133,393.58
- **Remaining budget:** €4,250,625.42
- **Spending targets:**
  - 2025: €3,504,064.06
  - 2026: €8,270,455.31

→ A new call is needed, also covering SO 4.1 (Governance).

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### 3. Timeline for the evaluation of Specific Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3

- By 15/12/2024, if the MC approves the project list, the MA will notify lead partners with the “conditionally approved” status and send:
    - the MC-approved evaluation grid
    - the acceptance letter (to be signed by both lead partners and project partners)
    - the draft Grant Contract and Partnership Agreement
  - By 20/12/2024: Lead partners must return the signed acceptance letter, Grant Contract, and Partnership Agreement
  - By 31/12/2024: The MA will publish the decree approving the Grant Contracts
  - By 31/01/2025: Lead partners must send the updated Application Form aligned with the conditions
  - By 15/03/2025: Evaluation of SOs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 will be completed
  - By 28/03/2025: A new Monitoring Committee meeting will be held to approve the related projects
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### **4. Closure of 2014–2020 Programming Period (absorption of certified expenditure to the EC)**

- It was confirmed that total certified expenditure under the INTERREG VA Italy-Malta Programme amounts to €47,942,833.71

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### **5. Update on ongoing audits for the 2014–2024 Programme**

- Update on the joint audit by the Italian and Maltese Courts of Auditors
- Update on the system audit and final audit for the 2023–2024 accounting period

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### **6. Any other business**

- Ongoing dialogue with cross-border stakeholders on priority themes (health, environment, early warning)
- Objective: define impactful and sustainable projects, also through the increase of the maximum eligible budget per project