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Italia - Malta

**Public Notice “targeted call” 2/2025 for submission of cooperation projects of
INTERREG VI – A Italia Malta programme**

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Approved by the Monitoring Committee on 29/07/2025

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Art. 1 – Legal basis

- Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund
- Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds;
- Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC;
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/75 of 17 January 2022 setting out the list of Interreg programme areas to receive support from the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments of the Union, broken down by strand and Interreg programme under the European territorial cooperation goal;
- Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 9624 of 13.12.2022 approving the cooperation programme “(Interreg VI-A) Italy-Malta” for support from the European Regional Development Fund under the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) in Italy and Malta with a financial allocation of €57.604.032 (ERDF + National contribution) of which €4.393.486,25 relating to the resources allocated to the technical assistance of the programme;
- Resolution n. 170 of 26 April 2023 of the Sicilian Regional Government adopting the INTERREG VI-A Italia-Malta, approved with Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 9624 of 13.12.2022
- Law n. 241/1990 laying down the general rules on administrative procedure, published in the Official Journal of 18 August 1990 n. 192, coordinated and last updated with Legislative Decree 16 June 2017, n. 104
- CIPRESS Resolution n. 78 of 22/12/2021 which establishes for European territorial cooperation programmes of which the Italian Republic is part of that national co-financing is established at a maximum of 24 percent of total public expenditure (community share plus national public co-financing);
- Legislative Decree 31 March 2023, n. 36 which establishes the public contracts code and implementing article 1 of law 21 June 2022, n. 78, containing delegation to the Government regarding public contracts and further amendments
- Decree no. 213 of 14 April 2025, 30/6/2023, of the General Director which approved the document “Description of the functions and procedures in place for the Managing Authority (SiGeCo.)” relating to the INTERREG VI A Italy-Malta Programme, together with the attachments last updated by Decree of the General Manager no. 467 of 09/07/2025.

Art. 2 – Definition

AA	Audit Authority
AF	Application Form
Aid	Any measure that meets all the criteria set out in Article 107(1) of the Treaty;
Aid scheme	means any act on the basis of which, without further implementing measures being required, individual aid awards may be made to undertakings defined within the act in a general and abstract manner and any act on the basis of which aid which is not linked to a specific project may be granted to one or several undertakings for an indefinite period of time and/or for an indefinite amount;
CP	Contact Point
CP	Co-operation Programme
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European territorial co-operation
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	Strategy as defined in a Communication from the European Commission (COM(2014) 357 final), accompanied by an Action Plan (SWD(2014) 190 final) which presents the objectives and concrete pillars and topics of the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy. EUSAIR Strategy aims at creating synergies and fostering coordination among all territories in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. EUSAIR focuses on areas of mutual interest with high relevance for the Adriatic-Ionian countries and built on four thematic pillars: (1) Blue growth; (2) Connecting the region (transport and energy networks); (3) Environmental quality; (4) Sustainable tourism. https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/practices/eu-strategy-adriatic-and-ionic-region-eusair#:~:text=EUSAIR%20focuses%20on%20areas%20of,%3B%20(4)%20Sustainable%20tourism.
IAID	Internal Audit and Investigations Department
ICEP	Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning
IGRUE	Ispettore Generale per I Rapporti con l'Unione Europea
Industrial research	planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services. It comprises the creation of components parts of complex systems, and may include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation
JS	Joint Secretariat
LP	Lead Partner
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MFIN	Ministry for Finance
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprises
MNCA	Maltese National Coordination Authority
NC	National Contribution
New and innovative technologies	New and untested technologies compared to the state of the art in the relevant sector, which entail a risk of technological or industrial failure and do not consist

	of optimization or upgrading of an existing technology;
Organisation for Research and dissemination of knowledge	An entity (e.g. universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented real or virtual collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (established under private or public law) or source of financing, the main purpose of which is to carry out independent fundamental research activities, industrial research or experimental development or to ensure the broad dissemination of the results of these activities through the teaching, publication or transfer of knowledge. If this entity also carries out economic activities, the financing, costs and revenues of these economic activities must be accounted for separately. Enterprises that are able to exercise decisive influence on this entity, for example as shareholders or partners, cannot enjoy any preferential access to the results generated;
PA	Partnership Agreement
PP	Project Partner
R&D	Research and Development
RIS3	Malta's Research and Innovation Strategy
SI	System Information
Small and medium-sized enterprises or SMEs	Enterprises which meet the criteria set out in Annex I of Reg. 651/2014
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
SMEs	Small and medium sized enterprises: any entity engaged in an economic activity, regardless of its legal status (Reg. No. 651/2014, Annex I)
SO	Specific Objective
SRI3	Strategia Regionale dell'Innovazione per la specializzazione intelligente
VAT	Value Added Tax
WestMED	Initiative https://westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu/

Art. 3 – Objectives and topics

The Public Notice 01/2023 is aimed at acquiring timely, concrete and feasible project proposals based on the specific objectives linked to the 4 Programme's priorities. The public notice is intended as a targeted call for project proposals on topics that have not been adequately addressed by projects funded to date.

The public notice specifically addresses the following priorities and specific objectives of the programme::

Programme's Priorities	Programme's Specific Objectives
1 – A smarter area of cooperation to promote research and innovation and the development of skills for smart specialisation	1.1 – Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the cross-border area (RSO1.1) 1.2 - Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area (RSO1.4)
2 - A resilient cooperation area, which strengthens the protection and preservation of nature also through the efficient use of resources	2.1 – Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention and resilience in the cross-border area (RSO2.4) 2.2 - Promoting the transition to a circular economy in the cross-border area (RSO2.6)
3 - An area of efficient cooperation in social capital through the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development	3.1 - Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in the cross-border area in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation (RSO4.6)
4 - An area of cooperation with better governance between Italy and Malta	4.1 - Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of cooperation in the cross-border area (ISO6.4)

Each project proposal will target only one specific Objective of the INTERREG VI-A Italia Malta Programme referred to in the table above.

The following factsheets indicate the type and characteristics of proposals which may be considered under this public notice.

Art. 4 – Characteristics of the project proposals

Factsheet 1	
Priorities	I - A smarter cooperation area to foster research and innovation and skills development for smart specialisation
Specific objective of the programme	1.1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the cross-border area (RSO 1.1)
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 2,000,000
Eligible actions	Promotion of collaborative research
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action aim to finance industrial research initiatives in the production/industrial field aimed at raising the level of innovation of companies in the cross-border area.</p> <p>The eligible action focuses on the areas of common interest defined in the Smart Specialisation documents of Sicily and Malta respectively and more specifically in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green and blue economy • circular economy • health and quality of life • cultural and creative industry • social enterprises <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>It is planned to support collaboration between companies and universities/research centres for the development of technological solutions in sectors or production chains where there is a need for joint innovation.</p> <p>Each project may concern the development of one or more technological solutions, also relating to one or more of the sectors listed above, specifically aimed at meeting the needs of the companies involved. In the event that a single project proposal intends to propose the development of joint solutions in several sectors, it will be necessary to ensure a single and well-reasoned common thread.</p> <p>Each solution must be developed jointly through collaboration between a cross-border research team consisting of a university/research centre based in Sicily, a university/research centre based in Malta and at least one company that will benefit from the solution developed.</p> <p>The solutions developed must provide for technological development from a minimum TRL of 3 up to at least a TRL 5. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the presentation of project proposals oriented mainly to prototypes, validated tests, and supported by real scalability, in any case avoiding exploratory project proposals.</p> <p>The definition of the starting TRL will have to be demonstrated during the project submission phase through an evaluation by individual experts or independent evaluation bodies with proven experience in the disciplinary field of the field of intervention of the solutions that will be developed.</p> <p>The achievement of the TRL expected at the end of the project and declared at the time of submission of the project must be demonstrated through an external evaluation by individual experts or independent evaluation bodies with proven experience in the disciplinary field of the field of intervention of the solutions developed.</p> <p>The costs related to the external evaluation for the definition of the initial TRL can be attributed to the project as “preparatory costs”. The costs related to the external evaluation for the certification of the final TRL are attributable to the project as</p>

	<p>“advisory and service costs”. It is understood that in case of non-admission to funding the costs for the evaluation of the initial TRL will not be refundable.</p> <p>The individual project may include the joint elaboration of a maximum number of 5 (five) solutions. Each solution may not exceed € 400,000.00, for a maximum total amount of the project of € 2.000.000,00.</p>
<p>Eligible categories of beneficiaries</p>	<p>Cooperation projects may only be submitted by a 'research and knowledge-dissemination organisation' the main purpose of which is to carry out fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development activities independently or to ensure the wide dissemination of the results of such activities through teaching, publication or knowledge transfer leading the way. The 'research and knowledge-dissemination organisation will be the Lead Partner.</p> <p>The partnership must include at least one MSME, as defined in Annex I to COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 as amended by COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021.</p> <p>The partnership shall be composed of at least one (1) partner from each Member State participating in the Programme (Sicily and Malta) with its registered office or branches or local operational units or administrative competence in the eligible area of the Programme (Sicily and Malta).</p> <p>Any additional partners may also be based in territories outside the two Member States (Sicily and Malta) or in EU Member States, third countries, or overseas countries and territories only if necessary and indispensable to achieve the results of the project and provided that these results have an impact on the programme area (Sicily and Malta).</p> <p>Companies that participate in the project as partners outside the eligible area of the programme, in case of admission to funding, must commit to open an operational headquarters in the eligible territory (Sicily or Malta) within 30 days from the issuance of the decree approving the ranking. This requirement must be positively verified by the MA in order to receive the first payment from the Managing Authority.</p> <p>Beneficiaries covered by this specific objective receive aid in the form of a capital contribution (grants) within the meaning of Article 20 of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 and therefore an aid intensity of 80% applies.</p> <p>Eligible expenditure by research and knowledge-dissemination organisations, where it is of a non-economic nature, as provided for in point 2.1.1 of Communication EC 7388/2022 of 19 October 2022, does not fall within the scope of Article 107 of the Treaty and therefore does not constitute aid. This requires the research organisation to compile and disseminate knowledge of the declaration referred to in Annex E, which will be checked both at the eligibility stage of the proposal and at the closure of the operation.</p>
<p>Characteristics of the projects</p>	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention:</p> <p>WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at the preparation of the project proposal, including the external evaluation for the definition of the initial TRL and any related expenses</p> <p>For this public notice, the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP0 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses <p>Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official</p>

deadline for submitting the project proposal.

WP1 – Management and coordination

The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project;
2. selection of researchers/technologists, where applicable, through public tender procedures in line with the regulations in use at the beneficiary administrations/entities;
3. communication within the partnership;
4. reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures;
5. quality and risk management.

For this public notice, the **cost plan of WP 1, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project.** The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:

- Staff costs;
- Office and administrative expenses;
- Travel and subsistence expenses;
- Costs for external expertise and services.

WP2 - Communication

The WP2 should contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project;
2. information activities advertising the public selection of fellows for research activities;
3. dissemination of results;
4. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the INTERREG VI-A Italy Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area.

Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.

The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:

- Staff costs
- Office and administrative expenses.
- Costs for external expertise and services

WP3 – Developing and developing joint solutions

The WP3 must contain the description of the core activities of the project that is substantiated in the elaboration of the joint solution(s) that allow the technological development from a minimum TRL of 3 up to at least a TRL 5.

The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs; ○ Office and administrative expenses. ○ Costs for external consultancy and services. ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Expenditure relating to equipment
Maximum duration of the operation	30 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 1.1, the Application Form – Annex 1a and the budget of this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

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Factsheet 2	
Priorities	I - A smarter cooperation area to foster research and innovation and skills development for smart specialisation
Specific objective of the programme	1.1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the cross-border area (RSO 1.1)
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 1,800,000
Eligible actions	Provision of advisory and innovation support services
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action to finance initiatives aimed at providing innovation advisory and support services to the MSMEs in the cross-border area.</p> <p>The eligible action focuses on the areas of common interest defined in the Smart Specialisation documents of Sicily and Malta respectively and more specifically in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green and blue economy • circular economy • health and quality of life • cultural and creative industry • social enterprises <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>It is envisaged to support MSMEs through the acquisition of specialist assistance and "quick impact" services intended as contributions in services to recipients for the introduction of innovations and eco-innovations based on a technological approach (e.g. digital transformation, technology transfer, etc.). It foreseen to provide support to MSMEs also for the promotion of non-tech business innovations (e.g. scouting for the support of innovative business ideas, (re)organisation of the company system, market positioning and access to credit, etc.).</p> <p>The beneficiaries, through a transparent procedure with rules and mechanisms for public tendering, assign and provide the assistance and 'quick impact' service to the target MSMEs, allowing them to design, create or innovate a product, service or process. It is up to the beneficiaries to check – on the basis of the routine checks provided for in the national legislation of the two countries – the eligibility of the recipients in order to grant the specialist assistance and 'quick impact' services to be dealt with under the indirect aid framework.</p> <p>Examples of eligible activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and development of an innovative product • Design and development of an innovative service • Design and development of an innovative process • Generating a new business model • Experimental measurement and testing • Development of new markets/sectors <p>The individual project must include the provision of quick impact services to at least 15 (fifteen) MSMEs in the cross-border area. The unit cost of the project may not exceed € 1,000,000.</p> <p>In order to ensure the effectiveness of the "quick impact" intervention it is necessary that the project proposals present - through the information of the Application Form - an ex-ante "systematic and participatory diagnosis" of the needs in terms of technological and non-technological innovation of MSMEs. The possible actions, by way of example only, may concern:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preliminary desk survey on target sectors (green/blue economy, circular economy, health, creative industry, social) to identify trends, technological gaps and opportunities; b) Structured surveys and semi-structured interviews to a representative

	<p>sample of MSMEs;</p> <p>c) Regional validation workshops with local stakeholders to fine tuning identified needs.</p>
<p>Eligible categories of beneficiaries</p>	<p>Cooperation projects may be submitted by local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies; universities and research centres; companies, including MSMEs; business support organisations.</p> <p>The partnership shall consist of at least one (1) partner for each Member State participating in the Programme (Sicily and Malta) or have its registered office or branches or local operational units or administrative competence in the eligible area of the Programme (Sicily and Malta).</p> <p>Partners may also be based in territories outside the two Member States (Sicily and Malta) or in EU Member States, third countries, or overseas countries and territories only if necessary and indispensable to achieve the results of the project and provided that these results have an impact on the programme area (Sicily and Malta). Therefore, it is necessary to adequately justify – in the section dedicated to the role of the AF beneficiary – the participation of the beneficiary based in territories outside the two Member States through the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Absence in Sicily or Malta of an entity with adequate levels of specialisation; b) Having a previous highly relevant pilot experience that can be replicated in islands and low industrial density contexts; c) Access to european platforms for the promotion of certain products that can facilitate the access of MSMEs to European markets.
<p>Characteristics of the projects</p>	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention:</p> <p>WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at the preparation of the project proposal, including the systematic and participated ex-ante diagnosis of the needs of MSMEs.</p> <p>For this public notice, the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP0 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Costs for external expertise and services o Travel and subsistence expenses <p>Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official deadline for submitting the project proposal.</p> <p>WP1 – Management and coordination</p> <p>The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project; 2. Initiation and conclusion of procedures with publicly available rules and mechanisms for the identification of MSMEs; 3. Initiation and conclusion of procedures for verifying the eligibility of recipients for the award of specialist assistance and ‘quick impact’ services; 4. Communication within the partnership; 5. Reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures; 6. Quality and risk management. <p>For this public notice, the cost plan of WP 1, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Staff costs

- Office and administrative expenditure
- Travel and subsistence expenses;
- Costs for external expertise and services

WP2 - Communication

The WP2 must contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project;
2. information activities advertising the public selection of MSMEs;
3. dissemination of results;
4. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the INTERREG VI-A Italy Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area.

Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.

The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:

- Costs for staff.
- Office and administrative expenses.
- Costs for external expertise and services

WP3 – Development and delivery of “quick impact” services

The WP3 shall contain a description of the activities related to:

1. Preparation of a general offer of assistance services to MSMEs in the cross-border area for the introduction of technological and non-technological innovations in their business models, within one or more specific production sectors of common interest in which partnership has specific expertise (green and blue economy, circular economy, health and quality of life, cultural and creative industry, social enterprises) in line with the expected results of the ex-ante assessment of the needs of MSMEs in the area;
2. Provision of assistance services to companies belonging to the target production sector(s) aimed at wide dissemination of the state of the art on technological or non-technological upgrading opportunities;
3. Provision of specialist assistance and ‘quick impact’ services to a limited number of target MSMEs (minimum 15).

The nominal value of the specialist assistance and ‘quick impact’ services (referred to in point 3) may not exceed a financial envelope of €20 000 per MSME and will be treated in accordance with Article 20a of Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021.

Product and/or process technological innovations will need to be specifically geared towards reducing the environmental impact of target companies, the transition of business models towards the circular economy and climate neutrality approach, and the digital transition.

Non-technological innovations should improve the competitive positioning of MSMEs in the cross-border area through, for example, access strategies to new

	<p>markets, reorganisation of business systems, etc.</p> <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Expenditure relating to equipment
Maximum duration of the operation	18 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 1.1, the Application Form – Annex 1a and budget I to this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

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Factsheet 3	
Priorities	I - A smarter cooperation area to foster research and innovation and skills development for smart specialisation
Specific objective of the programme	1.2 - Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area (RSO 1.4)
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 3,500,000.00
Eligible actions	Qualification and mobility of human capital
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action aim to increase human capital skills in support of Smart Specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area.</p> <p>The eligible action focuses on the areas of common interest defined in the Smart Specialisation documents of Sicily and Malta respectively and more specifically in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green and blue economy • circular economy • health and quality of life • cultural and creative industry • social enterprises <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>Each project will involve the preparation of a specialized training activity in english to increase the skills of the new generations of entrepreneurs, managers, researchers, technicians and operators in the sectors of interest, aimed at obtaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • master's degree (first or second level) <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highly specialized diploma for higher technical education - EQF level V <p>Each project proposal will focus on one or at most two sectors provided they are related and linked according to a defined intervention logic (e.g. green entrepreneurship in health and quality of life).</p> <p>The training course must conclude with the awarding of a qualification having legal value, both in Sicily and in Malta, through recognition by the respective institutions in charge. Training may be provided both in person and remotely if adequately justified by the need to ensure accessibility, internationalization and sustainability criteria.</p> <p>The focus of the training course should be on covering the skills needs of the business sector in the cross-border area to meet the new challenges and industrial transition processes in the above-mentioned sectors. In this regard, the effective functioning of the entire innovation policy chain requires the introduction of new highly specialised professionals and other professionals in micro- and MSMEs to facilitate them in acquiring, using and fully exploiting the potential of new technologies. The training course must be structured to meet a structural need that ultimately allows for the training programme to be re-proposed even without the programme's financial support.</p> <p>The project proposals should clearly highlight the excellence of the training content, the participation of international expert teachers and the expected post-training placement rate of learners.</p> <p>Each project must foresee the delivering of training to a minimum of 10 (ten) people and a maximum of 20 people. The unit cost of the project may not exceed € 700,000.00</p>
Eligible categories of beneficiaries	Projects can only be submitted by the University or Further and Higher Education Institution licensed for issuing the above mentioned qualifications, with its administrative and operational headquarters in the area of the eligible territory of the programme (Sicily and Malta), one of which assumes the role of lead partner.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Italy, state and non-state universities recognised by Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca and Istituti Tecnici Superiori recognised by Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, with operational headquarters in Sicily. Telematics universities are not admitted for applying. ○ For Malta the University of Malta and/or universities which are accredited and authorised to operate by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) and institutions which, by virtue of Chapter 327 – Education Act, are considered to be public self-accreditation institutions. These are listed in the First Table of Subsidiary Legislation 327.433, and are the University of Malta, the College of Arts, Sciences and Technology of Malta and the Institute of Tourism Studies. Also, other licensed education providers accredited through MFHEA may be allowed to participate. Telematics universities are not admitted for applying. <p>The training course must foresee the participation, as an associated partner, of at least one public or private entity as stakeholder of the relevant productive sector in which people who have been trained may find employment, such as by way of example: companies, including MSMEs, business associations, public economic bodies, etc.</p> <p>Each project proposal must, however, ensure equal co-design, with teachers, modules, internships and stakeholders from both territories.</p> <p>The training course is activated with the participation of a minimum number of recipients equal to 10.</p>
<p>Characteristics of the projects</p>	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention::</p> <p>WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at preparing the project proposal.</p> <p>For this public notice, the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP0 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses <p>Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official deadline for submitting the project proposal.</p> <p>WP1 – Management and coordination</p> <p>The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project 2. selection of recipients through public tendering procedures; 3. communication within the partnership; 4. reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures 5. quality and risk management; 6. follow-up actions for the assisted placement activities of training course participants (matching with partner companies, mentoring and career coaching, traineeship or apprenticeship contracts); <p>For this public notice, <u>the WP1 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project.</u> The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personnel costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Travel and subsistence expenses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for consultancy and services <p>WP2 - Communication</p> <p>The WP2 should contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project 2. dissemination and promotion of the project initiative aimed also at ensuring maximum publicity regarding the selection procedures for the recipients of the training course 3. Involvement activities of the project target groups 4. dissemination of project results 5. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the INTERREG V-A Italia Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area <p>Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.</p> <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for staff. ○ Office and administrative expenses. ○ Costs for external expertise and services <p>WP3 – Didactic plan and provision of training activities</p> <p>The WP3 must contain the description of the <i>core</i> activities of the project that is substantiated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ participatory mapping of MSME needs and industrial transition processes; ○ definition of the training activities and the timetable for the delivery of the training course ○ provision of training, practical experience, project work ○ placement arrangements ○ assisted placement <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personnel costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Costs for consultancy and services <p>In order to facilitate the participation of the recipients in the training course, each candidate will be awarded a scholarship whose amount will be established during the application phase on the basis of the estimate of the travel and accommodation expenses of the students and in any case up to a maximum amount of €20,000 gross per student.</p>
Maximum duration of the operation	30 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 1.2, the Application Form – Annex 1a and the budget of this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

Factsheet 4	
Investment priorities	II - A resilient area of cooperation, strengthening nature protection and preservation including through resource efficiency
Specific objective of the programme	2.1 - Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention and resilience in the cross border area (RSO 2.4)
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 5,400,000.00
Eligible actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integration, development and research of multi-risk prevention processes ○ Implementation of monitoring and alert systems
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action shall aim at promoting climate change adaptation initiatives on the cross-border territory.</p> <p>Specifically, interventions will be supported to improve the resilience of the different territorial contexts that characterize the cooperation area (urban areas, marginal areas, island territories, etc.) to the effects of climate change by promoting forms of adaptation to the phenomena related to the change of climate patterns also in line with the New European Bauhaus (NEB) that integrates climate adaptation and sustainability in the built environment (https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en).</p> <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>In particular, projects will be able to define territorial adaptation strategies to deal with extreme climatic phenomena and their consequences on the quality of life and security of citizens. Projects may also include pilot actions of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, in line with the EU strategy (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/green-infrastructure_en) for adaptation to climate change at local scale such as green spaces,, urban shading, climate islands. The pilot actions may also attain to technological interventions for smart resource management, early warning systems, measures for the management of heavy rainfall and flood prevention, etc. Project proposals should be inspired by the principles, tools and good practices promoted by the European Climate-ADAPT platform https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en, which provides a rich range of data, analyses, case studies and operational options to support climate change adaptation. This platform, developed by the European Commission and the European Environment Agency, is a useful resource for policy makers, technicians and stakeholders engaged in understanding and managing climate risks.</p> <p>In addition, projects will be able to implement initiatives related to the prevention and management of non-climate related natural risks (e.g. earthquakes) and risks related to human activities (e.g. technological accidents). Interventions could cover safety and civil protection, disaster management, promotion of eco-systemic approaches.</p> <p>Projects may include a component aimed at involving citizens and other relevant actors in the cross-border area for the purposes of information and awareness-raising on climate and non-climate risks, as well as the dissemination of good practices, behavioral styles or codes of conduct in the event of extreme events through the exploitation of digital technologies (e.g. IoT, AI, open climate data).</p> <p>The maximum total amount of the project is € 1,500,000.00.</p>
Eligible categories of beneficiaries	<p>Cooperation projects may only be submitted by the following categories of eligible entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local authorities, regional authorities, national authorities; ○ Other public institutions and agencies; ○ Universities and research centres; ○ Civil protection corps and emergency services;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools of all levels and levels; ○ Civil society organisations; ○ Associations active in the environmental sectors.
<p>Characteristics of the projects</p>	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention::</p> <p>WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at preparing the project proposal.</p> <p>For this public notice, the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP0 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses <p>Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official deadline for submitting the project proposal.</p> <p>WP1 – Management and coordination</p> <p>The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project 2. communication within the partnership; 3. reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures 4. quality and risk management; <p>For this public notice, the WP1 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personnel costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Costs for consultancy and services <p>WP2 - Communication</p> <p>The WP2 should contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project 2. activities involving project target groups to ensure the diagnostic or co-design phase. 3. dissemination of project results 4. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the INTERREG V-A Italia Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area <p>Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.</p>

	<p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for staff. ○ Office and administrative expenses. ○ Costs for external expertise and services <p><u>WP3 – Design and development of climate change adaptation and risk prevention interventions</u></p> <p>The WP3 must contain the description of the core activities of the project that is substantiated in the development of solutions for adaptation to climate change and prevention of climate and non-climate risks. Projects may include pilot actions of structural interventions at local scale for adaptation to climate change and risk management and must also ensure adequate ex ante involvement of stakeholders in order to ensure intervention strongly rooted territorially and highly sustainable in the long term.</p> <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs; ○ Office and administrative expenses. ○ Costs for external consultancy and services. ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Expenditure relating to equipment ○ Expenditure on infrastructure and works
Maximum duration of the operation	30 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 2.1, the Application Form – Annex 1a and the budget of this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

Factsheet 5	
Investment priorities	II - A resilient area of cooperation, strengthening nature protection and preservation including through resource efficiency
Specific objective of the programme	2.2 - Promoting the transition to a circular economy in the cross-border area (RSO 2.6)
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 2,600,000.00
Eligible actions	Interventions for the diffusion of the circular economy
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action shall aim to promote the transition towards a circular economy approach in order to minimise or eliminate the final disposal of waste, while respecting the principles of the Community waste hierarchy.</p> <p>The projects will be able to address the needs of production sectors of common interest or broader production chains that have significant local impacts on waste management, as in the case of small islands particularly affected by high-intensity tourism.</p> <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>With regard to the prevention of waste production, projects may concern, for example, the efficient production cycles of companies based on process innovations for the reduction of production waste and/or the replacement of raw materials with recycled materials, product re-engineering and <i>the design of ready-to-recycle</i> products (ecodesign), or the testing of forms of cooperation between companies according to the approach of industrial symbiosis, etc. In addition, projects may cover actions to assist companies in adopting sustainable supply chain management practices and voluntary forms of <i>extended producer responsibility</i>.</p> <p>With reference to the promotion of reuse, the projects may concern the experimentation of innovative solutions for the recovery and enhancement of durable and / or perishable goods before they enter the waste chain, also with the involvement of private operators.</p> <p>With reference to the transformation of waste into recovered materials and/or new products, the projects may concern the experimentation of innovative solutions for the transformation of waste or by-products of common production chains into new products.</p> <p>Projects may include a component aimed at involving citizens and other relevant actors in the cross-border area for information and awareness-raising purposes on circular economy issues.</p> <p>The maximum total amount of the project is € 1,500,000.00.</p>
Eligible categories of beneficiaries	<p>Cooperation projects may only be submitted by the following categories of eligible entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enterprises, including MSMEs ○ Business support organisations ○ Local, regional, national and other public institutions and agencies ○ Universities and research centres ○ Chambers of Commerce, clusters, incubators, living labs ○ Schools of all levels and levels ○ Civil society organisations ○ Associations active in the environmental sectors ○ Consumer associations
Characteristics of the projects	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention:</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;">WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at preparing the project proposal.</p>

For this public notice, **the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility** of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included under WP0 are exclusively the following:

- Costs for external expertise and services
- Travel and subsistence expenses

Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official deadline for submitting the project proposal.

WP1 – Management and coordination

The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project
2. communication within the partnership;
3. reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures
4. quality and risk management;

For this public notice, **the WP1 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project.** The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:

- Personnel costs
- Office and administrative expenditure
- Travel and subsistence expenses
- Costs for consultancy and services

WP2 - Communication

The WP2 should contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project
2. Involvement activities of the project target groups
3. dissemination of project results
4. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the INTERREG V-A Italia Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area

Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.

The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:

- Costs for staff.
- Office and administrative expenses.
- Costs for external expertise and services

WP3 – Pilot actions and circular economy solutions

The WP3 should contain the description of the *core* activities of the project, which consists in testing pilot actions at cross-border level to promote the dissemination

	<p>and introduction of joint solutions for the correct management of waste according to the circular economy model.</p> <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Expenditure relating to equipment ○ Expenditure on infrastructure and works
Maximum duration of the operation	24 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 3.2, the Application Form – Annex 1a and the budget of this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

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Factsheet 6										
Investment priorities	III - An area of efficient cooperation in social capital through the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development									
Specific objective of the programme	3.1 - Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in the cross-border area in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation (RSO 4.6)									
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 2,400,000									
Eligible actions	<p>Revitalisation and promotion of places of culture and other spaces for cultural and social purposes</p>									
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action aim to increase the level of attractiveness of the cross-border tourism and cultural system (eg. theatres, museums, libraries, regenerated former industrial buildings, etc.) through the modernisation of tangible and intangible infrastructures of historical, cultural and environmental heritage, the improvement of the digital capacity for its use and physical and cognitive accessibility also in line with the New European Bauhaus (NEB) integrating art, culture, social inclusion, science and technology in the transformation of the built environment and lifestyles (https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en).</p> <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>Specifically, interventions will be supported to improve the use of cultural heritage and make it more inclusive, also to the benefit of groups of the population lacking the digital tools and technical resources necessary for the remote use of historical, cultural and environmental heritage assets.</p> <p>Initiatives linked to the enhancement of the creative industry that increase citizens' cultural participation through the improvement of inclusive spaces and the use of technologies that increase learning and job opportunities will also be supported.</p> <p>Interventions may also support measures aimed at improving the tourist use of the cross-border area by enhancing the value of marginal places/sites/destinations compared to the most popular destinations, including through the active involvement of local communities. Actions may target, for instance, the joint development digital brands and tools around territorial characteristics, natural characteristics, local products and crafts, etc.; strengthening, guiding and homogenising the entire value chain of cross-border tourism with respect to the sustainability objectives (Goals Agenda 2030); development of innovative solutions and new business models for inclusive culture and tourism.</p> <p>Below is a thematic guidance grid for cross-border project proposals:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #D9E1F2;">Thematic area</th> <th style="background-color: #D9E1F2;">Summary description</th> <th style="background-color: #D9E1F2;">Examples of eligible interventions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="background-color: #D9E1F2;">Enhancement of cultural heritage</td> <td>Interventions for the recovery, accessibility, digitisation or narration of tangible and intangible cultural goods</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoration and refurbishment of historic buildings - Audioguides and virtual tours - Digital platforms for historical archives and collections </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #D9E1F2;">Sustainable and inclusive tourism</td> <td>Initiatives to attract sustainable tourism flows, including in marginal or lesser-known areas</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated cross-border routes - Soft mobility networks and accessibility for disabled people - Promotion of alternative destinations </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Thematic area	Summary description	Examples of eligible interventions	Enhancement of cultural heritage	Interventions for the recovery, accessibility, digitisation or narration of tangible and intangible cultural goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoration and refurbishment of historic buildings - Audioguides and virtual tours - Digital platforms for historical archives and collections 	Sustainable and inclusive tourism	Initiatives to attract sustainable tourism flows, including in marginal or lesser-known areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated cross-border routes - Soft mobility networks and accessibility for disabled people - Promotion of alternative destinations
Thematic area	Summary description	Examples of eligible interventions								
Enhancement of cultural heritage	Interventions for the recovery, accessibility, digitisation or narration of tangible and intangible cultural goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoration and refurbishment of historic buildings - Audioguides and virtual tours - Digital platforms for historical archives and collections 								
Sustainable and inclusive tourism	Initiatives to attract sustainable tourism flows, including in marginal or lesser-known areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated cross-border routes - Soft mobility networks and accessibility for disabled people - Promotion of alternative destinations 								

			with community involvement
	Social inclusion and cultural accessibility	Projects that improve cultural enjoyment by vulnerable people	- Art workshops for people with disabilities - Simplified digital access for seniors and families - Itinerant and participatory exhibitions
	Creative and cultural industry (performing and visual arts)	Support to cultural and creative enterprises to promote innovation and employment	- Cross-border digital festivals and festivals - Training for young artists/cultural entrepreneurs
	Digital tools and technologies for culture	Digital solutions that improve fruition, marketing and cultural interaction	- Multilingual interactive tourist apps - QR-code for educational paths in museums - NFTs for local works of art
	Territorial trademarks and shared identity	Creation of common narratives and identity products for the cross-border area	- Joint cultural branding - Participatory Art Projects Italy-Malta - Joint catalogues of traditional handicrafts
The maximum total amount of the project is €1,200,000.00.			
Eligible categories of beneficiaries	<p>Cooperation projects may only be submitted by the following categories of eligible entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local, regional and national authorities and other public institutions and agencies ○ Universities and research centres ○ Entities managing sites, reserves, parks, protected areas ○ Enterprises, including MSMEs ○ Business support organisations ○ Civil society organisations ○ Associations active in the environmental sectors, the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage ○ Entities and/or associations promoting the active participation of disadvantaged persons ○ Schools of all levels and levels 		
Characteristics of the projects	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention:</p> <p>WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at preparing the project proposal.</p> <p>For this public notice, the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP0 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses <p>Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official deadline for submitting the project proposal.</p>		

WP1 – Management and coordination

The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project
2. communication within the partnership;
3. reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures
4. quality and risk management;

For this public notice, **the WP1 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project.** The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:

- Personnel costs
- Office and administrative expenditure
- Travel and subsistence expenses
- Costs for consultancy and services

WP2 - Communication

The WP2 should contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:

1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project
2. Involvement activities of the project target groups
3. dissemination of project results
4. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the INTERREG V-A Italia Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area

Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.

The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:

- Staff costs
- Office and administrative expenditure
- Costs for external expertise and services

WP3 – Pilot actions and inclusive solutions for cultural and tourist enhancement of the cross-border area

The WP3 should contain the description of the core activities of the project, which consists in testing pilot actions at cross-border level to promote the dissemination and introduction of joint solutions for strengthening the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.

Taking into account the nature of the interventions and the joint need to facilitate the monitoring activity, it is necessary that each project proposal includes methods and tools for measuring the results achieved (e.g. number of visitors, digital users, employment created, disadvantaged parties involved, etc.).

The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the

	<p>following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Expenditure relating to equipment ○ Expenditure on infrastructure and works
Maximum duration of the operation	24 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 3.1, the Application Form – Annex 1a and the budget of this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

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Factsheet 7	
Investment priorities	IV - An area of cooperation with better governance between Italy and Malta
Specific objective of the programme	4.1 - Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of cooperation in the cross-border area (ISO 6.4)
Available financial allocations (ERDF)	Euro 6,500,000.00
Eligible actions	Capitalization, mainstreaming and administrative capacity
Purpose of the projects	<p>The cooperation projects to be selected under this eligible action aim to increase the capacity of public authorities to define and implement strategies aimed at enhancing/improving the capacity of local public institutions to provide services to citizens in the cross-border area, including through the active involvement of relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The priority focus of the governance action concerns the strategic priority areas identified by the Programme's strategy and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Innovation and economic development</u>, with reference, for example, to the creation of stable exchange platforms for joint research in areas of common interest provided for by the Strategies for Smart Specialisation of the State of Malta and the Sicilian Region. Specifically, the project area may concern the creation of systems/databases for the systemisation of qualifying initiatives financed by mainstream programmes under the S3s of the two islands. The initiatives that can be activated under this line of action can be the basis for the coordination of innovation policies on areas of common interest. - <u>Strengthening of skills</u>, with reference for example to collaboration between universities and research centres for exchange programmes, joint training courses and academic mobility projects aimed at strengthening skills for S3 in areas of importance for the economy of the cooperation area such as tourism and the blue economy and to the progressive integration of the labour market in the cross-border area, including also the removal of any obstacles to the cross-border mobility of workers <u>Civil protection and emergency management</u>, with reference, for example, to institutional collaboration on alert systems, crisis management, prevention and response to disasters that intercept the protection of resources of common interest, such as monitoring and mitigating anthropogenic risks in the marine environment and emergency management. Specifically, the project area may concern the definition of coordination and intervention protocols in the field of civil protection and emergency management, the acquisition of the tools necessary for their implementation and support for the implementation of joint exercises between the civil protection of the two islands. The interventions must integrate, systematize, and possibly complete achievements and results already achieved in previous programming cycles. Partnerships for the management of health emergencies and the training of medical staff may also be activated under this line of action. - <u>Sustainable tourism and cultural heritage</u>, with reference, for example, to sustainable management in the tourism sector, especially in the area of coastal tourism and the enhancement of underutilised resources for tourism purposes with a view to seasonal adjustment and combating overtourism. Specifically, the project scope may concern the development of protocols aimed at establishing forms of institutional cooperation in the field of tourism promotion, focusing for example on integrated tourist itineraries. In the framework of this line of action, coordination tables can also be activated aimed at improving maritime and air connections between Sicily and Malta to support forms of coordinated tourism development. - <u>Nature and biodiversity protection</u>, with reference, for example, to the analysis of possible coordination and collaboration actions aimed at the better conservation and management of natural resources, with particular reference to the protection of biodiversity and the conservation of marine habitats. Specifically, in the context of the project, cooperation protocols may be defined and adopted prior to the institutionalisation of structured forms of cooperation between Sicilian marine protected areas and those of the Maltese

	<p>State.</p> <p>The cross-border added value of the initiatives will have to be ensured through the coordination of the project partners in the development of methodologies, contingency plans, intervention plans and common operational tools with respect to shared needs, also depending on the preparation of integrated cross-border initiatives/strategies.</p> <p>Interventions will be able to contribute to the strategic and thematic priorities of the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, where they exist.</p> <p>The maximum total amount of the project is € 2,500,000.00.</p>
<p>Eligible categories of beneficiaries</p>	<p>Cooperation projects may only be submitted by the following categories of eligible entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General government ○ Education and training organisations ○ Organisations and associations ○ Enterprises, including MSMEs
<p>Characteristics of the projects</p>	<p>Cooperation projects will have to be developed entirely within 4 Work Packages (WP) according to the following logic of intervention:</p> <p>WP0 – Preparatory costs</p> <p>The WP0 is aimed at preparing the project proposal.</p> <p>For this public notice, the WP0 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed a maximum percentage of 1% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP0 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses <p>Expenses for preparatory costs are eligible and may be claimed if incurred in the time period from the official date of publication of the public notice until the official deadline for submitting the project proposal.</p> <p>WP1 – Management and coordination</p> <p>The WP1 must contain a description of the strategic and operational management of the whole project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination of the project 2. communication within the partnership; 3. reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures 4. quality and risk management; <p>For this public notice, the WP1 cost plan, under penalty of ineligibility of the project proposal, must not exceed the maximum percentage of 15% of the total cost of the project. The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP1 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personnel costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Costs for consultancy and services <p>WP2 - Communication</p> <p>The WP2 should contain the description of the communication activities within the project, with particular reference to the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information and communication activities on the aims of the project 2. Involvement activities of the project target groups 3. dissemination of project results 4. capitalisation activities of the results obtained in order to allow the

	<p>INTERREG V-A Italia Malta programme to share these results and make them integrated with mainstream programmes in the programme area</p> <p>Communication activities within the project will have to be structured through a dedicated Communication Plan, containing the following minimum elements: Vision and mission of communication consistent with the aims of the project and with the values of the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme focused on: transparency of EU funding; cross-border cooperation; sustainable, innovative and replicable impact; clear communication objectives; definition of targets; priority communication actions, preferably environmentally sustainable and digital (dedicated social channels, creation of accessible content, use of storytelling (case studies, interviews); possible launch and final event of the project and dissemination actions of the results; Summary monitoring plan and reporting indicators.</p> <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP2 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Costs for external expertise and services <p>WP3 – Pilot actions for better governance</p> <p>The WP3 should contain a description of the project’s core activities consisting of cross-border pilot actions to strengthen the capacity to achieve the specific objectives identified in the Programme’s strategy through coordination, sharing and transfer of best practices between relevant actors in the cross-border area for the <i>governance</i> of the project’s target policies.</p> <p>The categories of expenditure that may be included in WP3 are exclusively the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff costs ○ Office and administrative expenditure ○ Costs for external expertise and services ○ Travel and subsistence expenses ○ Expenditure related to equipment (eligible if functional to the achievement of objectives)
Maximum duration of the operation	24 months
Application form/application file	For the preparation of project proposals under specific objective 4.1, the Application Form – Annex 1a form and budget of this notice, which forms an integral part of this notice, must be used, failing which the project proposal will not be admissible.

Art. 5 – Contribution of project proposals to the objectives of the programme

Each project proposal must contribute to the achievement of at least one output and result indicator among those associated with the specific objective to which it responds.

The following table shows the relevant output and result indicators for each Specific Objective of the Programme.

Specific Objective	Factsheet	Output indicators	Results indicators
1.1 - RSO1.1. Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the cross-border area	Factsheet n. 1 Promotion of cross-border collaborative research	RCO84 – Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 – Jointly developed solutions	RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
	Factsheet n. 2 Provision of innovation advisory and support services	RCO04 – Enterprises with non-financial support RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 - Jointly developed solutions	
1.2 - RSO1.4 Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area	Factsheet n. 3 Qualification and mobility of human capital	RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 - Jointly developed solutions	RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
2.1 - RSO2.4. Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention and resilience in the cross-border area	Factsheet n. 4 Integration, development and research of multi-risk prevention processes Implementation of monitoring and alert systems	RCO83 – Strategies and action plans jointly developed RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 - Jointly developed solutions	RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
2.2 - RSO2.6. Promoting the transition to a circular economy in the cross-border area	Factsheet n. 5 Interventions for the diffusion of the circular economy	RCO04 – Enterprises with non-financial support RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 - Jointly developed solutionse	RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
3.1 - RSO4.6. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in the cross-border area in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	Factsheet n. 6 Revitalization and promotion of cultural sites and other spaces for cultural and social purposes	RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 - Jointly developed solutionse	RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organizations

Specific Objective	Factsheet	Output indicators	Results indicators
4.1 - ISO6.4. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of cooperation in the cross-border area	Factsheet n. 7 Capitalization, mainstreaming and administrative capacity	RCO81 – Participations in joint actions across borders RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO116 - Jointly developed solutionse	RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organizations

The contribution to the selected output and result indicators is achieved in accordance with the indications provided for each indicator in the table below:

Output indicators	Definition of the indicators
RCO04 - Enterprises with non-financial support	The indicator counts enterprises that receive non-financial support in a structured manner such as, for example, SMEs receiving incubator services. The support provided needs to be documented. One-off interactions (ex: phone calls for information requests) are not included. Examples of non-financial support include services such as (non-exclusive list): advisory services (consulting assistance and training for the exchange of knowledge and experience etc) or support services (provision of office space, websites, data banks, libraries, market research, handbooks, documents and working models etc).
RCO81 - Participation in joint actions across borders	The indicator counts the number of participations in joint actions across borders implemented in the supported projects. Joint actions across borders could include, for instance, exchange activities or exchange visits organized with partners across borders. Participations (i.e. number of persons attending a joint action across borders - e.g. citizens, volunteers, students, pupils, public officials, etc.) are counted for each joint action organised on the basis of attendance lists or other relevant means of quantification. A joint action is considered as the action organised with the involvement of organizations from both participating countries.
RCO84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	The indicator counts the pilot actions developed jointly and implemented by supported projects. The scope of a jointly developed pilot action could be to test procedures, new instruments, tools, experimentation or the transfer of practices. In order to be counted by this indicator the pilot action needs not only to be developed, but also implemented within the project and finalised by the end of the project. Jointly developed pilot action implies the involvement of organizations from both participating countries.
RCO116 - Jointly developed solutions	The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from both participating countries in the drafting and design process of the solution.

Result indicator	Definition of the indicator
RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organizations	The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or upscaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organization adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake/up-scaling should be documented by the adopting organizations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.

Without prejudice to the obligation to contribute to at least one output and result indicator of the Programme, each project proposal may also define additional methodologies and tools to measure the achieved results, if they are necessary for monitoring and evaluation of the Programme.

Art. 6 – Programme’s addressed areas

Pursuant to Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/75, the eligible area of the INTERREG VI-A Italy Malta Programme includes the following NUTS 3 statistical regions:

For Italy

Sicilia: Palermo, Trapani, Caltanissetta, Agrigento, Ragusa, Siracusa, Enna, Catania and Messina;

For Malta

Malta, Gozo and Comino;

An operation can be also carried out in only one of the two countries participating in the Programme, provided that its impact and benefits for the entire area addressed by the Programme are identified.

In duly justified cases, the Programme may finance the implementation of operations or part of operations even outside the eligible areas of the Programme, provided that it contributes to the achievement of its objectives. The selection of that operation shall require the explicit approval by the managing authority in the monitoring committee.

In the event that the operations, or part of operations (activities), are not of benefit to the area, they will be considered ineligible.

Art. 7 – Financial allocation

The total ERDF contribution available for this Public Notice, divided by specific objective as reported below, is **24,000,000.00 Euros** and takes into account the decisions taken by the Monitoring Committee during the meeting of 29th of July 2025. The financial resources of each SOs is indicative. Thus, in the event that the financial allocation of an objective exceeds the eligible projects, the Monitoring Committee may decide to shift the “not allocated” financial resources to an objective where there are eligible projects in the ranking list that are not covered by the funds allocated to it. Hereunder the indicative amount allocated for each SOs:

Priority 1 – A smarter area of cooperation to promote research and innovation and the development of skills for smart specialisation

- ✓ Specific Objective 1.1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the cross-border area (RSO1.1)
 - Promotion of collaborative research - € 2,000,000.00 (ERDF)
 - Provision of advisory and innovation support services - € 1,800,000.00 (ERDF)
- ✓ Specific Objective 1.2 - Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area (RSO1.4)
 - Qualification and mobility of human capital - € 3,500,000.00 (ERDF)

Priority 2 – A resilient cooperation area, which strengthens the protection and preservation of nature also through the efficient use of resources

- ✓ Specific Objective 2.1 – Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention and resilience in the cross-border area (RSO2.4) - € 5,400,000.00 (ERDF)
 - Integration, development and research of multi-hazard prevention processes
 - Implementation of monitoring and alert systems

- ✓ Specific Objective 2.2 - Promoting the transition to a circular economy in the cross-border area (RSO2.6)
 - Interventions for the diffusion of the circular economy- € 2,600,000.00 (ERDF)

Priority 3 – An area of efficient cooperation in social capital through the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development

- ✓ Specific Objective 3.1 - Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in the cross-border area in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation (RSO4.6)
 - Revitalization and promotion of cultural sites and other spaces for cultural and social purposes - € 2,400,000.00 (ERDF)

Priority 4 – An area of cooperation with better governance between Italy and Malta.

- ✓ Specific Objective 4.1 - Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of cooperation in the cross-border area (ISO6.4)
 - Capitalisation, mainstreaming and administrative capacity - € 6,300,000.00 (ERDF)

The amounts shown above constitute the contribution of the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), equal to 80% of the INTERREG VI-A Italy Malta programme.

For Italian beneficiaries (public and private bodies as well as bodies governed by public law) the national contribution, equal to 20%, is ensured by the national Fondo di Rotazione, without prejudice to the rules on state aid.

For Maltese beneficiaries the national contribution, equal to 20%, is to be ensured through funds from the partner itself, that is own resources, or by other public body/ies, should this be so endorsed.

The financial resources (ERDF and NC) made available by this Public notice for the selection of co-operation projects, are provided exclusively on a reimbursement basis for expenses actually incurred by the beneficiaries and considered eligible, in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 June 2021, by the competent bodies of the programme.

An advance payment corresponding to 50% of the ERDF for each partner within the approved project is envisaged. Further advance payment, corresponding to 30% of the budget, may be transferred to partners demonstrating to have fully spent and certified the previous advance payment.

The beneficiaries will receive advanced payment within approximately 3 months from the presentation of the request to the Managing Authority made by the lead partner on behalf of the other partners.

Therefore, without prejudice to the possibility of requesting an advance of resources, each beneficiary (Lead Partner and Partner) will have to ensure – after the approval of the project proposal – the necessary financial resources for the launch of project activities.

In case of State Aid, the advance payment eventually paid is subject to a bank guarantee and in line with the provisions of Art. 91, par. 5, lett. b) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 which establishes that “those advances do not exceed 40% of the total amount of the aid to be granted to a beneficiary for a given operation”.

Possible delays in the transfer of the advance payment by the Managing Authority cannot be used by the project beneficiaries (Lead Partner and Partners) as a justification for the delay and the missed achievement of expenditure targets, the objectives and the outputs as stipulated by the subsidy contract and the partnership agreement.

Art. 8 – Characteristics of cooperation projects

Each cooperation project must provide a package of actions (timely, concrete and feasible), logically and coherently connected to one another, in order to allow full achievement of the programme output and result indicators identified for each specific objective as indicated in Art. 5 of this public notice.

For each specific objective (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1 and 4.1) the provisions contained in Art 4 of this Public Notice must be respected, under penalty of inadmissibility of the proposal itself to the evaluation phase.

Each cooperation project will be made up of partner beneficiaries and a lead partner beneficiary; the latter will represent the whole partnership vis-à-vis the Managing Authority and other programme authorities.

The general objective of the co-operation project will have to contribute directly to the achievement of the specific objective of the chosen Priority, therefore the results of the project will have to be linked to the result indicators of the Programme. This mechanism of correlating the internal coherence of the project with the programme shall imply that the outputs foreseen by the project must be directly linked to the programme outputs.

In general, each cooperation project must ensure:

- 1) The coherence of the project with the programme strategy, the priority and the specific objective chosen;
- 2) The coherence of the project with national and regional policies and the measures taken to create synergies and avoid overlapping;
- 3) The cross-border dimension and character of the project with partners who share common needs and objectives;
- 4) The innovative nature of the projects, their concrete specialization and their impact in the medium to long term;
- 5) The coherence of the partnership, the relevance and competences of the partners in relation to the objectives of the project;
- 6) The relevance of the financial plan and the coherence of the budget with the objectives;
- 7) Visible, concrete and lasting results;
- 8) Structuring the project in 3 work packages of activities only with the possibility to also include a WP0 for the preparation of the project proposal;
- 9) A maximum duration of 30 months for Specific Objectives 1.1 (Promotion of cross-border collaborative research), 1.2 and 2.1; 18 months for Specific Objective 1.1 (Provision of advisory and innovation support services); 24 months for specific objectives 2.2, 3.1 and 4.1¹;
- 10) An overall budget allocation referring to WP 0 up to a maximum of 1% of the overall project allocations;
- 11) An overall budget allocation referring to WP 1 up to a maximum of 15% of the overall project allocations;
- 12) An overall budget allocation referring to the cost category "Travel and accommodation costs" up to a maximum of 4% of the total budget provided in WP 1;

Art. 9 - Characteristics of the partnership

The quality of a project is closely linked to the quality of the established partnership. A good partnership shall gather competent institutional abilities on the subjects dealt within the project, in order to reach the set targets.

The partnership is made up of at least one (1) partner from each Member State participating in the programme.

When drafting a project proposal, project partners must identify themselves as lead partner or partners.

¹ In duly justified cases and for delays that are not under the responsibility of the partnership, the MC may authorize possible project extensions beyond the deadlines set above without increasing the financial allocations.

The lead partner shall assume responsibility for ensuring implementation of the entire project, ensure that expenditure presented by all partners has been paid in implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the partners, in accordance with the project approved and the commitment made with the Managing Authority.

Associated partners are eligible and must be included in the project proposal, without the obligation to fulfil any declaration or sign the partnership agreement. Associated partners are not counted among the eligible beneficiaries listed in the factsheets numbered from 1 to 7 of the Art. 4 of this Public Notice.

The associated partners are involved in the activities envisaged by the project proposal without any specific project budget. Typically, they are stakeholders/takers with respect to the objectives of the project. More specifically, they are subjects interested in the purposes of the project or in the acquisition of the results as long as this does not conflict with the legislation relating to public procurement.

Therefore, a project partner cannot delegate the performance of the project activities, or some of its parts, to an associated partner.

Art. 10 – Legal status of the eligible beneficiaries

Only and exclusively the subjects listed under the heading "Eligible categories of beneficiaries" in the factsheets numbered from 1 to 7 of the Art. 4 for each specific objective can participate as beneficiaries of the projects.

For the purposes of eligibility for this public notice for submission of cooperation projects, these subjects must possess a **legal status** among those listed below:

- Public entities:
 - “Contracting authorities” within the meaning of Article 2(1), Number 1 of Directive 2014/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council
- Bodies governed by public law pursuant to Article 2(1), Number 4 of Directive 2014/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council
- Private bodies provided they have a legal personality
- Third sector entities if included in the Italian National Register for Third Sector (Runts) and if registered with the Maltese Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations or relevant body.

The beneficiaries/partners must have registered office or branches or local operational unit or administrative competence in the eligible area of the Programme.

If necessary, partners can also be based in areas outside the two Member States, i.e. in EU Member States, third countries, or overseas countries and territories (hereinafter “OCT”). In this case, their role in the project must be explained with particular attention. These partners must be essential to achieve the project results. They must bring added value to the project that the Programme Area does not currently own. It should be kept in mind that in all cases the impact of the projects must fall on the Programme Area. For partners from EU Member States outside the Programme Area, special agreements are needed between the Managing Authority and the cited EU Member State.

When the operation involves one or more partners located in the territory of a Member State, third country, partner country or OCT which is not represented in the Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority shall condition its explicit approval to the submission of a written acceptance by the concerned Member State, third country, partner country or OCT to reimburse any amounts unduly paid to these partners.

When the written acceptance cannot be obtained, the body implementing all or part of an operation outside the programme area shall obtain a guarantee from a bank or another financial institution for the corresponding amount of the funds granted.

The entities whose institutional mission or main activities within the project are predominantly linked to project coordination, management, communication activities or support to other entities cannot be involved as project partners but should be contracted by means of procurement procedures.

If the requirements set out in this paragraphs are not satisfied/fulfilled, this would entail the exclusion of the individual beneficiary from the project partnership.

Art. 11 – Eligibility of expenses

The eligibility of expenses is governed by Chapter V of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. The eligible cost categories are listed below and refer to what is regulated in the Articles 37-44 of the aforementioned regulation.

- ✓ Staff costs
- ✓ Office and administrative costs
- ✓ Travel and accommodation costs
- ✓ External expertise and services costs
- ✓ Equipment costs
- ✓ Costs for infrastructure and works

Beneficiaries' expenses can be claimed on the basis of real costs or on the basis of a fixed rate.

Expenses claimed on the basis of "real costs" are reported through the presentation of all supporting documents for expenditure and payment, up to the amount claimed.

Expenses claimed on the basis of a "fixed rate" are calculated according to the percentages established by the regulatory framework (refer to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, 2021/1059 and 2021/1058) and, during the reporting phase, the submission of supporting documents for expenditure and payment is not required although the beneficiary should retain such documentation.

External expertise and services costs include first level control for which it is recommended to allocate 4% of each beneficiary's budget.

The summary table below highlights the different reporting methods for the cost categories envisaged by this notice:

Cost categories	Type of costs	Claiming methods	
Staff costs	direct cost	Flat rate of 20% of the direct costs other than the direct staff costs of that operation (Art. 39 par. 3 lett c) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)	<p>Real cost, up to a maximum of 40% of direct costs according to the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Full-time ✓ part-time, with a fixed percentage of time worked per month <i>or</i> with a flexible number of hours worked per month ✓ on an hourly basis <p>Staff costs may be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reimbursed on the basis of the eligible costs actually incurred by a beneficiary and paid in implementing operations (Art. 53(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060), proven by the employment document and payslips 2. reimbursed on an hourly rate (Art. 55, par 2-4 of the Reg. (EU) 2021/1060) calculated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. by dividing the latest documented annual gross employment costs by 1720 hours for persons working full time, or by a corresponding pro-rata of 1720 hours, for persons working part-time; <i>or</i> b. by dividing the latest documented monthly gross employment costs by the average monthly working time of the person concerned in accordance with applicable national rules referred to in the employment or work contract or appointment decision (both referred to as the employment document). 3. reimbursed on the basis of staff costs calculated as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a fixed percentage of the gross employment costs, in line with a fixed percentage of time worked on the operation per month, with no obligation to establish a separate working time registration system (Art. 55, par. 5 of the Reg (EU) 2021/1060) <i>or</i> b. a flexible share of the gross employment cost, in line with a number of hours varying from one month to the other worked on the operation, based on a time registration system covering 100 % of the working time of the employee (Art. 39, par. 4, lett. b) of the Reg. (EU) 2021/1059) <p>Methods referred in 3a and 3b will apply to staff costs related to individuals who work</p>

Cost categories	Type of costs	Claiming methods	
			on part-time assignment on the operation
Office and administrative costs	indirect cost	<p>Flat rate corresponding to 15 % of eligible staff costs, (Art. 54, par. 1, lett b) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.</p> <p>NOTA BENE: Expenses corresponding to the elements included in the list of Art. 40 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 will not be considered eligible under other cost categories. The purchase of consumables falls within the definition of office and administrative costs when laboratory consumables are purchased whose single cost is less than €500.00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chemical and biological materials - reagents - pipettes, test tubes, syringes - laboratory glassware - other materials and goods that are no longer useful after their first use. <p>As a consequence, the elements listed above will also not be considered eligible if reported under other cost categories other than office and administrative costs.</p>	
Travel and accommodation costs	direct cost	Real cost	
External expertise and services costs	direct cost	Real cost	
Equipment costs	direct cost	Real cost	
Costs for infrastructure and works	direct cost	Real cost	

Each beneficiary will have to choose one of the staff cost reimbursement options when drafting the application form. The chosen reimbursement option will apply to the whole staff working on the project for the entire duration of the project.

Art. 12 – State aid

Public contributions under the Programme must comply with State aid rules in force at the time the public contribution is granted.

In line with Art. 107 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, State aid is a form of aid granted by the State, i.e. through state resources, under any form that, by favouring some companies or productions, distort or threaten to distort competition by favouring the production of some goods/services to the extent to which these hinder trade among Member States. The main elements defining State aid are:

1. the existence of a company performing an economic activity;
2. the responsibility of financing through state resources;
3. the granting of an advantage;
4. the specific nature of measures;
5. the possible distortion effect on competition as well as on the internal EU market.

It must be underlined that the five criteria are collective and, therefore, all the five elements must be adequately evaluated in order to establish whether the measure can be considered as State aid or not.

In line with Art. 1-Annex 1 of EU Regulation no. 651/2014 of the Commission of 17 June 2014, an enterprise is any entity that is engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form. Economic activities are all activities consisting in the offer of goods or services on the market. Activities performed within the framework of statutory tasks normally performed by public authorities do not belong to the notion of an enterprise, considering the non-commercial purposes of public entities. Nevertheless, while assessing the existence of state aid, the legal status of the beneficiary is irrelevant since, for example a non-profit organisation may also perform an economic activity. This being said, the aspect to be taken into consideration is the nature of the activities that the project beneficiary intends to carry out through the programme resources.

When such economic activities financed with public resources create a selective advantage for an entity that, under normal free market conditions and without public financing, would not have been obtained, then this is deemed as State aid. This is due to the fact that the carrying out of such activities affects the free competition principle and determines an effect that distorts the free market principle within the European Union. It must also be noted that state aid implications also apply in cases where the entity reports costs related to its routine operations that, should the entity not have participated in any project, it would have had to sustain anyway.

Within the INTERREG VI-A Italia Malta programme, activities considered for State aid purposes are assessed by the programme authorities.

All potential beneficiaries (lead partners and partners) are required to provide, during the project proposal presentation phase, a self-evaluation of the envisaged activities (Annex C) in order to determine their relevance for State aid.

Through the self-evaluation, the beneficiary will be able to choose the application of the provisions referred to in Art. 20 of EU Regulation no. 651/2014 of the Commission of 7 June 2014 as modified by Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

Art. 20 of EU Regulation no. 651/2014 of the Commission of 7 June 2014 as modified by Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 only applies to undertakings participating in cooperation projects provided that the conditions laid down in Chapter I of the Regulation itself are fulfilled (notification thresholds; transparency of aid; incentive effect; aid intensity and eligible costs; cumulation; publication and information).

To the extent that they are linked to the cooperation project, the following costs, which shall have the meaning ascribed to them in Articles 38 to 44 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 shall be eligible costs:

- a) staff costs;
- b) office and administrative costs;

- c) travel and accommodation costs;
- d) external expertise and services costs;
- e) equipment costs;
- f) costs for infrastructure and works.

The aid intensity shall not exceed the maximum co-financing rate of 80%.

Art. 20 bis of EU Regulation no. 651/2014 of the Commission of 7 June 2014 as modified by Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 only applies to undertakings participating in cooperation projects provided that the conditions laid down in in Chapter I of the Regulation itself are fulfilled (notification thresholds; transparency of aid; incentive effect; aid intensity and eligible costs; cumulation; publication and information) in the case of limited amounts that do not exceed €20,000.00 granted to a company and attributable to indirect aid.

Art. 13 – Selection criteria

The selection of cooperation projects will be carried out in compliance with the selection criteria and sub-criteria set out in annex 1, attached to this Public Notice.

The selection of project proposals will take place in 2 sequential phases:

- A. Verification of formal admissibility and eligibility requirements
- B. Quality assessment of the project proposals

Phase A) refers to the preliminary assessment of project proposals aimed at verifying both compliance with formal eligibility requirements (administrative procedures for submission of the application and the application file/Application Form), both the existence of general eligibility requirements (minimum eligibility conditions) for the proposals themselves as governed by the Programme and the "public notice of selection of project proposals".

The check is based on questions which can be answered with "yes" or "no". A negative response may result in (1) total rejection of the project proposal or (2) a request for further information or clarification and/or documentation.

Specifically, the request for additional information or clarifications and/or documentary integration will be activated by the Managing Authority only in cases where the deficiency found in the verification phase of eligibility and eligibility requirements does not substantive elements of the project proposal.

Applicants will be given a period of 7 working days to provide requested additions/clarifications. In the absence of feedback and/or in case of feedback which does not respond to the request, the proposal will be considered ineligible for the next evaluation phase.

Project proposals that do not satisfy the formal admissibility and eligibility requirements (even just one) will be considered ineligible and the project lead partner will be informed of the outcome.

Therefore, upon completion of the verification of the formal admissibility and eligibility requirements, each project proposal may be "**Eligible for evaluation**" or "**Not eligible for evaluation**".

Project proposals eligible for evaluation go to phase B) of the project quality assessment of project proposals.

Quality assessment criteria of project proposals are divided in two categories:

- the **strategic evaluation** which verifies: 1)) the relevance of the proposal in the cross-border context; 2) the strategic value of the project; 3) the partnership relevance.
- the **operational evaluation** which verifies: 4) management and communication, 5) work plan and budget

Within the strategic evaluation, it is possible to obtain an overall score of 60 points. However, in order to access the subsequent assessment, it is necessary to concurrently ensure the compliance with the following conditions:

- Achieving a minimum score of at least 12 in relation to "cross-border relevance";

- Achieving a minimum score of at least 36 points by counting all the points attributed to all the criteria related to the strategic evaluation.

Within the operational evaluation, the maximum score that can be obtained is equal to 40 points while the minimum score below which it is not possible to finance the project is 24 points.

In terms of strategic and operational evaluation, each criterion is assigned a quantitative score on the scale from 1 to 4 according to the compliance of the contents of the project proposal with the assessment elements covered by the individual criteria.

In particular, the grading scale is as follows:

- Very good: the proposal demonstrates a very good quality in relation to the elements being evaluated. Marginal improvements are possible;
- Good: the proposal demonstrates good quality in relation to the elements being evaluated. Improvements to the design formulation are possible but they do not affect the overall assessment of the project's performance in relation to the aspects under assessment;
- Sufficient: the proposal demonstrates acceptable quality in relation to the elements being evaluated, but there are some appreciable criticalities that would need to be corrected.
- Poor: the proposal is insufficient in relation to the elements under evaluation. The information requested is not present or is worded in an irrelevant or inappropriate manner.

The projects will be selected taking into account their score (in descending order) and will be financed on the basis of available resources. The final score achieved by a proposal is given by the sum of the scores obtained for each selection criterion in the strategic evaluation and operational evaluation.

Based on the score obtained, each project can be:

- ✓ eligible for financing
- ✓ eligible for financing under conditions
- ✓ eligible but not financed
- ✓ rejected

With reference to the project proposal "*eligible for financing under condition*", it should be noted that such condition may concern the possible reshaping of budgets, of activities or parts thereof, of output and/or result indicators, etc. These will be specified in the evaluation grids for each project proposal. The eventual presentation of the revised project proposal, in line with the aforementioned conditions, will again be subject to evaluation.

With reference to the project proposal "*eligible but not financed*", it is to be noted that this refers to the lack of sufficient financial resources at Programme level for carrying out the project. In this regard, it is specified that the final ranking lists will be valid for 24 months from the time of their publication and therefore the Monitoring Committee may allocate additional resources within those available in the programme, upon request by the Member States, for the possible financing of further project proposals occupying a favourable position in the ranking, according to the minimum admissibility score defined in the notice.

With reference to the project proposal "*rejected*", it is to be noted that this refers to the minimum score below which no financing will be granted to the proposal, since the latter would be deemed not suitable.

Art. 14 – Selection procedure

The selection of co-operation projects will be carried out in compliance with the provisions of the "*Selection criteria of the operations - INTERREG VI A Italia - Malta programme*" approved by the Monitoring Committee on 29/07/2025.

The selection procedure for the identification and approval of co-operation projects is divided into the following phases.

PHASE 1 – Verification of the formal admissibility and eligibility requirements

The Joint Secretariat (JS), supported by experts independent of the Managing Authority (Nucleo di Valutazione e Verifica degli Investimenti Pubblici della Regione Siciliana), receives by the Managing Authority the project proposals submitted by the potential lead partners by the expiry date established by this Public Notice and starts the verification of the existence of the “*admissibility and eligibility requirements*” established by the selection criteria (refer to par. 2.2 of the attached document). The JS then presents to the Monitoring Committee (MC) a list with the details of the project proposals considered as:

- a) eligible for evaluation;
- b) eligible after completion of the documentation, according to the specific cases defined in the Notice
- c) not eligible for evaluation by providing the necessary reasons

The Monitoring Committee verifies and approves the list with the related eligibility details of the project proposals provided by the JS/experts and gives mandate to the Managing Authority to communicate to each lead partner the outcomes of the admissibility phase.

No later than 15 calendar days after receiving the results of the admissibility phase, the potential lead partners can submit to the Managing Authority, if necessary, counter-claims against the decisions of the Monitoring Committee. Such counter-claims must be made in a precise, concise manner and present arguments closely related to the reasons that led to the ineligibility of the project proposal to the evaluation phase.

Within 15 calendar days, the Monitoring Committee reviews the counter-claims received and gives a mandate to the Managing Authority to respond to each potential lead partner. It can change, if necessary, the list with the related eligibility details of the project proposals.

Duration of Phase 1: 60 calendar days

PHASE 2 – Quality assessment of the project proposals (strategic and operational evaluation)

The Joint Secretariat (JS), supported by experts independent of the Managing Authority (Nucleo di Valutazione e Verifica degli Investimenti Pubblici della Regione Siciliana), carries out the “qualitative assessment of the project proposals” considered eligible according to the selection criteria and then submits to the Monitoring Committee a proposed ranking list, with a list of the proposals divided by Priority and Specific Objective.

The Monitoring Committee verifies the JS/experts proposed ranking list, and prepares the final ranking list containing the list of project proposals divided by Priority and Specific Objectives, under one of the following financing eligibility conditions:

- a) eligible for financing
- b) eligible for financing under conditions
- c) eligible but not financed
- d) rejected

The Monitoring Committee gives a mandate to the Managing Authority to notify the outcomes of the evaluation to potential lead partners. No later than 15 calendar days after receiving the results of the quality assessment, the potential lead partners can submit to the Managing Authority, if necessary, counter-claims against the decisions of the Monitoring Committee. Such counter-claims must be made in a precise, concise manner and present arguments closely related to the reasons that determined a negative score for the project proposal, non-financing and/or rejection.

Within 15 calendar days, the Monitoring Committee examines any counterclaims and gives a mandate to the Managing Authority to answer each potential lead partner. It can change, if necessary, the list with the related financial eligibility details of the project proposals.

The Monitoring Committee adopts the final ranking lists of project proposals divided by Programme’s Priority and Specific, including per each project one of the above listed eligibility for financing conditions.

Duration of Phase 2: 90 calendar days

PHASE 3 - Eligibility for financing

Having received the results of the decision by the Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority adopts the decree ratifying the final ranking lists and committing the resources which is further sent to each lead partners together with the request to communicate the project's starting date. Subsequently, the Managing Authority establishes the modalities and the timing for signing the Subsidy Contract, duly accompanied by the Partnership Agreement.

Duration of Phase 3: 30 calendar days

The final ranking lists (Priority 1, 2, 3, 4) will be valid for 24 months from the time of publication.

The timeline indicated in this article is indicative and may be subject to change based on the number of project proposals that will be submitted.

The Monitoring Committee will be able to allocate additional resources, within those available in the programme, for the possible financing of further project proposals at the request of the Member States.

Art. 15 – Documentation and submission of the project proposal

The application pack for the participation under this call should consist of the following documents:

1. **Application Form: form (Annex 2.a) and budget (Annex 2.b)**
Please note that this is a template of the application form containing information to allow potential beneficiaries to draft their project proposals.
2. **Letter of intent and co-financing lead/partners (Annex A)** duly signed and stamped by the legal representative of the lead/project partners of the project proposal;
3. **Copy (front and back) of a valid identity document** belonging to the legal representative of the lead beneficiary and each project partner;
4. **Formal administrative act** (Decree, Decision, Resolution, formal letter, etc.) which approves the project proposal, highlighting the total budgetary amount for the implementation of the project activities of the whole partnership. This letter/administrative act should be endorsed by the legal representative of the lead partner.
5. **Any necessary clearances/permissions/authorizations** which verify readiness to develop the project proposal.

In the case of participation of a private entity and/or a " body governed by public law" (equivalent public entity), the following documentation will also need to be attached:

6. **Statute of the entity**
7. **Last two approved financial statements** of the entity with proof of filing;

Private entities only (profit or nonprofit) will also need to produce

8. **A document confirming financial capacity** (Annex D).

Research and knowledge dissemination bodies will also need to produce:

9. **Statement of eligible expenditure by research organisations** (Annex E)

All beneficiaries will also need to complete and attach:

10. **State Aid declaration** (Annex C).

In the event that the National Contribution (NC) to cover 20% of the partner's share of the budget is secured by another entity and not by the partner itself, the partner in question must also submit the following document:

11. **Letter of Co-financing in favour of the partner (Annex B)** duly signed and stamped by the legal representative of the entity securing the private partner's NC.

Finally, with specific reference to project proposals submitted for the specific objective 1.1 (Factsheet 1), the application package for the participation to this Public Notice shall contain and the document concerning the external independent evaluation for the definition of the initial TRL of the solutions that will be developed.

The deadline for submission of applications is on the **31st of December 2025**.

The application form and the complete application package will be sent via an online platform, which will be accessible starting from 30 days before the deadline for submission of applications publication and until 23:00:59 of the 31st December 2025.

Exceptionally, in case of problems with the functioning of the platform, the AdG reserves the right to accept the submission of applications by the applicant/ leader via certified mail (PEC) addressed to dipartimento.programmazione@certmail.regione.sicilia. The e-mail should have the following subject line: "Avviso Pubblico 2/2025 per la presentazione di progetti di cooperazione a valere sul Programma – INTERREG VI-A Italia Malta".

In the case of Maltese beneficiaries who do not have a certified e-mail address (PEC), the Italian partner with a larger budget will be responsible for sending the application.

Updates and specific information will be provided on the programme's website: www.italiamalta.eu, together with project submission platform references.

Art. 16 – Protection of personal data and information on their treatment

The data acquired through this public notice, necessary for the preliminary investigation and evaluation of the project proposals, are processed by the Programme Management Authority (Presidency of the Sicilian Region - Regional Planning Department, P.zza Sturzo, 36 - 90139 Palermo) pursuant to Art. 13 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679. For this purpose it is brought to the attention of potential beneficiaries that the processing of personal data supplied by them, or otherwise acquired for this purpose, by the Managing Authority of the Programme (Presidency of the Sicilian Region – Regional Planning Department) is aimed solely at the completion of the de quo procedure of this notice and will take place at Area 7 of the Department by authorized personnel, with the use of computerized procedures also, in ways and within the limits necessary to pursue the aforementioned purposes. The data will be stored in compliance with the conservation of administrative documentation. The Data Controller and person in charge of data processing is Vincenzo Falgares – General Manager of the Planning Department, with headquarters in P.zza Sturzo, 36 – 90139 Palermo (certmail: dipartimento.programmazione@certmail.regione.sicilia - email: dipartimento.programmazione@regione.sicilia.it; telephone 091/7070032).

The provision of data is mandatory and the refusal to provide the same will make it impossible to fulfil the conditions inherent in the procedure. Personal data, with the exception of those which reveal the state of health, may be disseminated. Pursuant to the current provisions, the data will be disseminated, through publication, in the forms provided for by the relevant regulations, in compliance with the principles of relevance and non-excess. Personal data may be disclosed to other public and private subjects when this is required by law or Regulation. In the context of the procedure, only sensitive and judicial data that are indispensable for carrying out institutional activities will be processed. In some cases, the interested parties have the right to obtain from the Data Controller, access to personal data and carry out corrections or cancellations of the same or limit or oppose the processing of data that concerns them (Articles 15 et seq. of the Regulation).

Art. 20 – Annexes

This public notice for the submission of cooperation projects under Priorities 1, 2, 3, 4 of the INTERREG VI-A Italia-Malta Programme, on the basis of the decisions taken by the Monitoring Committee, is accompanied by the following documents which form an integral part of the public notice:

- Annex 1 – Selection criteria of the operations –INTERREG VI-A Italia Malta Programme
- Annex 2.a – Application Form for submission of project proposal
- Annex 2.b – Application Form “budget” for submission of project proposal
- Annex A – Letter of intent and co-financing lead/partners
- Annex B - Letter of co-financing in favour of private project partner
- Annex C – State aid declaration
- Annex D – Verification of financial capacity of private entities (profit or non-profit)
- Annex E –Statement of eligible expenditure by research organizations

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