



Restricted Call for Proposals 2019:
Support to the implementation of the RCC Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and
Pilots Grants Work Programme

Guidelines for Applicants
Ref.no. 3PCfP03

Published: 25 November 2019
Deadline for Concept Notes: 9 December 2019

The goal of these Guidelines is to provide instructions to all potential applicants and interested subjects in the process of submitting proposals

Should any additional information and clarifications to these Guidelines be required, potential candidates may send a request with the reference to the Call for Proposals to the email address: tourism.grants@rcc.int according to the timeline provided in these Guidelines.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....3

Pillar - Pilot Projects.....3

1. Objective and priorities of the call for proposals5

 1.1. Objective of the Call for Proposals (CfP)5

 1.2. Priorities of the Programme5

2. Funds available for projects under this call for proposals6

3. Eligibility of Applicants, partnerships6

 3.1. Eligibility of applicants6

 3.2. Other organisations and/or institutions involved in the project.....8

 3.3. Exclusion criteria for applicants and affiliated entities (partners)9

 3.4. Number of Concept Notes/Full Applications per applicant9

4. Eligibility of actions: Duration, location(s) and type of activities10

 4.1. Duration and location of the action10

 4.2. Type of eligible activities10

 4.3. Ineligible activities12

5. Eligible costs12

6. Submission of concept notes and applications13

 6.1. Concept Notes submission.....13

 6.2. Full Applications submission.....15

7. Evaluating and selecting project proposals16

8. Notification on the decision21

9. Conditions related to project implementation after grant approval22

10. LIST OF APPENDICES22

INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are intended to be used by those applying for grants under the 3rd Call for Proposals for the Work Programme for Grants of the Regional Cooperation Council, of Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots (RCC GWP Triple-P) Project for the years 2018–2020. The guidelines provide the essential information necessary for the preparation and submitting of **Concept Notes (first stage) and Full Applications (second stage)** for the 3rd Call for Proposals in the **award year 2019**.

While the overarching aim of the RCC's Grant Work Programme Triple P 2018-2020 is to contribute to economic growth in South East Europe by supporting increase in employment and sustainability of SEE economies through regional tourism development, the 2019 Call for Proposals is focused on thematic pillars: Pilot Projects, deriving from the Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots Project.

Pillar - Pilot Projects

Objective: To support creation of preconditions and enabling environment for tourism product development and support mitigating sector challenges on micro-localities.

In order to achieve best possible results in promotion of the joint regional tourism products, it has been determined of substantial importance to improve the tourism infrastructure and activities on the local level throughout the region, namely on the localities along the routes that will be part of the joint regional products. Local governments, small businesses and NGOs have an important role in contributing to the growth of tourism sector, and therefore need to increase their capacity in order to provide the services that would fit the needs of the tourism industry. The types of services could include information points on localities, local infrastructure network and utilities, health, security, etc. This area of intervention will engage the local community (local governments, small business and civil sector) along the routes of the joint regional tourism products and support them in capacity building in tourism destination management. In cases where specific local community is unable to develop the sufficient capacity, support will be given to multiple local governments clustering into destination management organisations. While Pillar 1 and 2 are focused on development and promotion of regional tourism products and improvement of the policies pertaining to SEE's tourism, respectively, Pillar 3 will create preconditions and enabling environment for tourism product development and mitigating sector challenges on micro-localities. Namely, it will directly support small-scale projects in the local community(ies) on the tourism routes through the region, aiming to improve tourism infrastructure and services, ensure growth of tourism operations both within public and private sector, and ultimately create new jobs and income generation opportunities in target localities. Beneficiaries of the assistance under this activity will be local authorities, local and regional tourism development agencies, civil sector, NGOs, and tourism clusters in selected areas. The financial assistance to beneficiaries will be provided based on open and competitive selection processes and selection criteria. From the viewpoint of the action's internal coherence, this activity will, through particular

approach through tourism, further reinforce implementation of local strategies from the viewpoint of economic development and competitiveness.

The proposed actions are to be implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia.

The Call for Proposals is implemented by the RCC Secretariat, responsible for the overall coordination of the Programme as well as for all contract and payment issues, acting as the Contracting Authority.

This is a restricted Call for Proposals, two-tier process where in first instance applicants submit their Concept Notes accompanied by the *Declaration Concerning Grounds for Exclusion and Absence of Conflict of Interest* (Declaration) and the registration related documentation for eligibility check reasons ([here](#)). The selected applicants will be invited to submit a Full Application Form. The applicants submitting the Full Application Form will undergo a detailed eligibility check, based on the supporting documents submitted ([here](#)) and the eligibility criteria.

The eligibility criteria apply to all of the following:

- Eligibility of the applicants ([here](#));
- Eligibility of actions ([here](#));
- Eligibility of costs ([here](#)).

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence”*

1. OBJECTIVE AND PRIORITIES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

1.1. Objective of the Call for Proposals (CfP)

The specific objective of the CfP is to achieve the objectives/results stipulated by the Triple P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots project (Triple P Tourism in SEE project).

The overall objective of the 3rd Call for Proposals is to contribute to the achievement of the objectives/results stipulated by the Triple P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots project.

This is the 3rd Call for Proposals (3rd Call, 3rd CfP), deriving from Regional Cooperation Council's Grants Work Programme: Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy and Pilots (further reading: [RCC Work Programme for Tourism Grants](#)).

The 3rd Call aims to support those actions across the Western Balkans region that will create added value for regional tourism products, increase attractiveness of tourism destinations and sites and generate increase in business activity followed by private sector growth and increase in employment.

Specifically, objectives of the published 3rd CfP respond to the product development process under the identified priority themes (more information below under 1.2 Priorities of the Programme) and as such seek to identify and support actions that will further advance product development efforts, address tourism infrastructure needs at specific locations, seek to advance skills and ability at sites and locations to provide higher quality services to visitors, support information dissemination and promotion of priority joint regional routes, and development of regional cooperation efforts.

1.2. Priorities of the Programme

These Guidelines for Applicants relate to the 3rd Call for Proposals under the third priority of the RCC Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots Grants Work Programme, and Conclusions of the SEE Investment Committee's Tourism Expert Group.

The RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project seeks to develop regional tourism routes in two priority areas: cultural tourism and adventure tourism. Routes to be considered as regional need to travel through at least three of the economies participating in the project, and those are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. Based on industry and product base assessments for each priority areas, the following regional routes are under development by the Triple P Tourism project:

¹ "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence"

Regional Cultural Tourism Routes:

- a. Western Balkans Crossroads of Civilizations; as joint regional identity ([here](#))
- b. Illyricum trail – as part of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route focusing on archaeological sites from the Roman period ([here](#))
- c. Balkan Monumental Trail – Art and design of the World War II monuments ([here](#))

Regional Adventure Tourism Routes:

- a. Via Dinarica regional adventure and its cultural corridor ([here](#))
- b. Other regional offers and regional thematic trails focusing on full adventure (combination of physical activities, natural environment, and cultural immersion)

2. FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECTS UNDER THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Total funds available under this Call for Proposals (CfP) amount to EUR 320,000.

Projects eligible for this CfP are those that seek RCC funding in the amount between EUR 20,000 and EUR 54,000. The RCC reserves the right not to allocate all available funds.

The applicants are expected to co-fund the implementation on the action with minimum 10% co-financing participation. Grants allocated within this call may finance administrative costs and staff costs to a maximum of 30% of the requested amount. The remaining 70% of the funds should be foreseen for costs directly related to the implementation of project activities.

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- Minimum: 20% of the total estimated eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum: 90% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 9).

The balance – co-financing (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from the applicant's own resources.

NB: In-kind contributions cannot be considered as co-financing.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS, PARTNERSHIPS

3.1. Eligibility of applicants

Participation in this call is open to all entities on an equal basis, formally registered in eligible economies and in accordance with the valid legal regulations. Potential applicants may not participate in the call or will not receive grants unless they submit the signed Declaration with the application (to be submitted with the Concept Note).

Applicants may apply individually or with partners. (See section 3.2.).

In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants must be:

- Legal persons and/or entities officially established in one of the participating economies: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia; and

must belong to one of the categories listed below:

- Local authority, established by relevant public laws in eligible economy, such as a municipality and/or a city administration,
- Non-governmental organisation, and
- Not-for-profit organisation.

The applicant must be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, and cannot act as an intermediary.

Applicants will be excluded from participation in the call or from the allocation of grants if, at the time of submission of project proposals, they are in one of the below situations:

- the organisation belonging to any permanent working group actively participating in Triple P Tourism in SEE project;
- they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Authority can justify;
- they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the economy in which they are established or with those of the economy of the Contracting Authority or those of the economy where the contract is to be performed;
- they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity;
- they are subject to a conflict of interest;

- they are guilty of providing false information to an authorised contractual party, which are required as a precondition for participation in the call for submission of project proposals or if they fail to submit the required information;
- they tried to obtain confidential information, exert influence over the Evaluation Committee or authorised contractual party during project proposals evaluation process.

3.2. Other organisations and/or institutions involved in the project

A **partner** is an affiliated entity, either an organisation or institution that officially agrees to take part in the implementation of the action. Where applicable, the partner’s involvement can be funded, as long this funding is adequately presented in the budget of the action.

Partner organisations must meet the same eligibility criteria as the Applicants (above under 3.1). The costs they incur as part of the grant activity fall under the same eligibility rules as those incurred by the applicants themselves (Section 5). If applying in partnership, the “Applicant” will be the leading organisation (Lead Applicant) and if selected, as the contractual party (“Beneficiary”), it will assume all legal and financial liabilities for project completion.

Each partner organisation involved in the implementation of the proposed action must provide a correctly completed and signed Partnership Statement (included in the Grant Application Form - see Section 6).

The Applicant will need to submit the scanned copy(ies) of the signed Partnership Statement(s) together with the Concept Note, where the Partner will be asked to:

- a) Acknowledge to having carefully read the General Terms and Conditions, these Guidelines for Applicants and the Application to be submitted to the RCC;
- b) Acknowledge to have read the application form and understood what their role in the action will be, what obligations arise for them from the grant contract; being entitled to receive a copy of narrative and financial reports; and that any substantial changes in the action need to be prior agreed with the partner(s);
- c) Declare their authorisation of the Applicant to sign the agreement with RCC on their behalf and represent them in all dealings with RCC in the context of the action's implementation, to have read and approved the contents of the proposal submitted to RCC; and that they do not fall in any of the categories (a) to (i) listed in Section 3.3

Furthermore, Partnership Agreement(s) will need to be submitted with the Full Application proposal with precise and detailed definition of roles, rights, and responsibilities of the Lead Applicant and all Partners, taking into account that the Lead Applicant is the contractual party (“Beneficiary”) assuming all legal and financial liabilities for project completion towards the

Contracting Authority. Partnership Agreements are free form documents signed between the Lead Applicant and the Partner organisation.

3.3. Exclusion criteria for applicants and affiliated entities (partners)

Applicants and partners will be excluded from participation in the call or from the allocation of grants if, at the time of submission of project proposals, they are in one of the below situations:

- a) the organisation belongs to any permanent working groups actively participating in Triple P Tourism in SEE project²;
- b) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- c) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- d) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Authority can justify;
- e) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the economy in which they are established or with those of the economy of the Contracting Authority or those of the economy where the contract is to be performed;
- f) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity;
- g) they are subject to a conflict of interest;
- h) they are guilty of providing false information to an authorised contractual party, which are required as a precondition for participation in the call for submission of project proposals or if they fail to submit the required information;
- i) they tried to obtain confidential information, exert influence over the Evaluation Committee or authorised contractual party during project proposals evaluation process.

3.4. Number of Concept Notes/Full Applications per applicant

An applicant can submit maximum one application under this Call for Proposals.

An applicant may at the same time be a partner in another application.

² The applicant and/or partner(s) are subject to potential conflict of interest.

Potential conflict of interest may be raised in case the applicant and/or partner, or individual(s) employed or associated with the applicant/partner, participated in the design or implementation of Triple P Tourism in SEE project, or may have influence on the evaluations of applications or being in the position to have direct or indirect influence that may ensure benefits to the beneficiaries in the granting process, other than those clearly communicated in the action.

A Partner may have the partner role in up to two applications.

4. ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIONS: DURATION, LOCATION(S) AND TYPE OF ACTIVITIES

4.1. Duration and location of the action

The duration of the projects can be between 3 and 6 months, and the projects must be implemented during the period between 03/2020 and 08/2020.

The projects must be implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia³.

Regional projects implemented on territories of 3 and more economies will be considered an asset.

The projects have to provide a solution for the specific needs of and/or on the regional routes being developed through the Triple P Tourism project (see Sections 1.2 and 4.2). It should consist of a set of operational activities with clearly defined operational goals, target groups and planned outcomes in order to achieve specific results within a limited time period. The proposed projects should demonstrate relevance in addressing regional impact and aim to achieve principles of all-inclusiveness.

4.2. Type of eligible activities

Indicative types of activities which may be financed under this call for proposals are given below.

As previously described (see Section 1.2) the Triple P Tourism in SEE priority areas are adventure and cultural tourism in Western Balkans with focus on the regional tourism routes under development:

Cultural tourism

- Western Balkans Crossroads of Civilizations, as regional identity ([here](#))
- Illyricum Trail – as part of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route focusing on archaeological sites from the Roman period ([here](#))
- Balkan Monumental Trail – Art and design of the World War II monuments ([here](#))

Adventure tourism:

- Via Dinarica Mega Trail – Dinaric Alps and its cultural corridor ([here](#))

³ Beneficiary economies from the Western Balkans on a territory of the RCC Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots

- Other regional thematic adventure trails contributing to the overall goal of the Triple P Tourism in SEE project

Further to the confirmed priority areas of intervention stated above, the list below provides an indicative list of activities that address the needs as they are recognised in the current stage of product development and market readiness. Relevant and related innovative activities that might not be listed below but contribute to the project goals in the key eligible areas may also be considered for support.

Eligible activities must address **needs, sites and locations** that are on the **supported regional routes** (see above and section 1.2).

Eligible activities (for culture priority areas):

- Improving **visitors flow management**, including **interpretational, directional, promotional and/or digital signage**;
- Developing **storytelling and on-site content** and its connection with local service providers (local artisans, craftsmen, restaurants, etc.);
- Development of **authentic experimental cultural tourism products and services** that offer possibilities for co-creation of the visitors' experience (cooking workshops, handicrafts products making workshop, traditional dancing courses, etc.).

Eligible activities (for adventure priority areas):

- Improvement of visitor flow management **through small-scale infrastructure interventions which include physical and digital marking of trails, information boards, educational infrastructure** and other small-scale tourism infrastructural works delivered through **environmentally friendly interventions** and supporting safe delivery of traveller experience;
- **Promotion and development of thematic adventure trails** to be part of the **regional offers** (connected or/and can be connected with existing itineraries pertaining to the Dinaric Alps cultural corridor and its adjacent areas) combined with supplementary programmes such as gastronomy, traditional craftsmanship, music, performing arts and other local assets of tangible and intangible heritage;
- **Creation and innovative promotion of transnational tourism adventure product and services**, and in particular those that cater to **youth travellers**;
- **Exploitation of nature parks potentials** and their buffer areas in a **regional tourism perspective**, involving local communities and private sector and fostering positive effect of adventure routes on the competitiveness of SMEs.
- Organisation and implementation of **regional outdoor and adventure festivals, markets and bazaars, regional competition events, youth-skills and employment regional forums on adventure travel industry** and similar.

4.3. Ineligible activities

The following types of actions are considered ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- purchase of land;
- actions aimed at infrastructure investments at tourism facilities that are already well established and have dedicated promotion and marketing resources;
- profit making activities;
- actions linked to political parties;
- actions which fall within the general activities of competent public institutions or public administration services, including local government;
- actions with provisions for financing the usual (routine) activities of the organisations from the region, especially covering their running costs;
- actions started before the signature of a contract;
- actions confined to charitable donations.

5. ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary which meet all the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred during the implementation of the Action;
- b) they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the Action;
- c) they are necessary for the implementation of the Action;
- d) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Beneficiary and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the Beneficiary;
- e) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- f) they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

Subject to the respect of the above eligibility criteria, the following direct costs shall be eligible:

- Administrative costs, as follows:
 - The cost of staff assigned to the Action, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs; salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by Beneficiary unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the Action;
 - Travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons taking part in the Action, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the Beneficiary according to its rules and regulations;
 - Costs of consumables;

- Costs directly related to the activities of the project;
- Costs deriving directly from the requirements of the contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the Action, audits, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.) including financial service costs (in particular the cost of transfers and financial guarantees where required according to the contract);
- Costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the project, including small procurement of goods, works or services as described in the action.

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- Debts and debt service charges (interest);
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Costs declared by the Beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme;
- Currency exchange losses;
- Credits to third parties, unless otherwise specified in the Contract;
- Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations, unless otherwise specified in the Contract and only to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the Action were not undertaken;
- Individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- Individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Occasional conferences (unless necessary for successful project implementation);
- Purchase of equipment (unless necessary for successful project implementation);
- Funding of projects which are already in progress or are finalised;
- Projects for exclusive benefit of individuals;
- Projects supporting political parties;
- Primary funding of applicants or their partners;
- Duties, taxes and charges, including VAT (unless the organisation is not able to reclaim them and if allowed by the applicable regulatory provisions of the European Community).

6. SUBMISSION OF CONCEPT NOTES AND APPLICATIONS

Documentation for this Call can be obtained from the RCC's website: www.rcc.int.

This is a restricted Call for Proposals. Only Concept Notes must be submitted for evaluation, whereas applicants whose Concept Notes have been selected will be invited to submit a Full Application.

6.1. Concept Notes submission

The Concept Notes must be submitted using the format and instructions provided in the Grant Application Form, annexed to these Guidelines.

The documentation must contain the following:

1. Grant Application Form (Concept Note) in accordance with the instructions (submitted as Word document);
2. Completed and signed Declaration (scanned copy);
3. A copy of a valid certificate of registration of the entity in eligible economy (for the project applicant);
4. A copy of organisation's statute/articles of incorporation; and
5. Copy of the final annual financial report for the previous year (balance sheet and income statement) certified by a responsible agency for financial operations and licensed and authorised accountant, unless the organisation is established in the current year (for Grant Applications above EUR 30,000).

Optionally, in case the action is meant to be implemented with partners as affiliated entities, the application also needs to be accompanied with the following documentation:

6. Copy of a valid certificate of registration and copy of statute/articles of incorporation of partners; and
7. Partnership Statement (template provided; a scanned, signed copy needs to be submitted for each Partner)

Note: Applicants and Partners need to provide documentation that will undoubtedly enable determining the eligibility (clearly stating registration status of the applicant/partner) from the submitted evidence, and the evidence may be an official extract from the register, a certified act of establishment or another act that has full legal force in the national law.

The Concept Note together with the documentation should be submitted electronically by the prescribed deadline to the e-mail address: tourism.grants@rcc.int with the subject heading:

Application – CFP 3 2019

Application Form and supporting documentation should be completed using the templates provided through the RCC website with no alternations to the forms. Other relevant documents are to be scanned and attached to the e-mail.

Please note that the maximum size of incoming e-mail submission is 15 MB.

The deadline for submission of Concept Notes is **09/12/2019, 14:00 hours**, date and time considered as evidenced will be the date of e-mail received by the RCC.

Any Concept Notes submitted after the deadline, not prepared in accordance with these Guidelines or being incomplete will be rejected.

6.2. Full Applications submission

The applicants whose Concept Notes are selected will be notified and invited to submit the Full Application. The Full Application **must be** prepared using the official templates of this Call for Proposal inclusive of the segments of the template pertaining to the Concept Note (i.e. previously completed parts of the form under Concept Note submission should not be deleted).

The Full Application must contain the following:

1. Grant Application Form (submit as Word document)
2. Budget breakdown (submit in Excel document)
3. Partnership Agreement (free form)

In case the application is evaluated positively, prior to the signing of the contract, the applicant will be requested to provide the following administrative documents:

4. Completed Administrative Identification Form, PDF (LIF)
5. Completed Financial Identification Form, PDF (FIF)

Any additional information specific to the action will be requested upon approval of Grant Application Form.

Prior to signing the Grant Contract with selected applicants RCC may request original copies of the documents.

Completed Full Applications, with all mandatory documentation, must be **submitted via e-mail to** the e-mail address: tourism.grants@rcc.int with the subject heading:

Application – CFP 3 2019

The alternative delivery such as Dropbox, WeTransfer or similar online services are not acceptable, as is not regular or express mail delivery. Documents should not be submitted as ZIP or RAR files.

The **deadline** for submission of Full Applications is **20/01/2020 at 14:00 hours**, date and time considered as evidenced will be the date of email received by the RCC.

The RCC will keep records of any received project proposal and will issue pertinent receipts.

6.3. Indicative timetable*

	DATE	TIME*
Publication of 3 rd Call for Proposals	25/11/2019	
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the RCC	30/11/2019	14:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the RCC	05/12/2019	
Deadline for submission of concept notes	09/12/2019	14:00
Information to the applicants on the results of the concept note evaluation and invitations to the successful applicants to submit the full applications	23/12/2019	
Deadline for submission of full application forms	20/01/2020	14:00
Information to applicants on the evaluation of full application forms and notification on award and request for administrative documents	10/02/2020	
Complaints period	10/02/2020 17/02/2020	
Clarifications period	17/02/2020 24/02/2020	
Contract signature	24/02/2020	

***Provisional date.** This indicative timetable may be updated by the RCC during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the RCC website.

7. EVALUATING AND SELECTING PROJECT PROPOSALS

The evaluation of the received proposals is delivered by the Evaluation Committee.

The Evaluators conduct the following steps:

- Administrative check of Concept Notes received;
- Evaluation of Concept Notes;
- Administrative check of Full Applications received;
- Evaluation of Full Application proposals.

The first and third step in the evaluation procedure are the Concept Note and the Full Application administrative check respectively, which examine that all of the required documents were submitted on time and have been completed according to the Guidelines.

Concept Notes submitted which duly passed the administrative check are evaluated for the relevance and design of the action, using the evaluation grid which is part of the Guidelines for Applicants.

Each member of the Evaluation Committee undertakes individual evaluation, scoring the proposal against the criteria of the evaluation grid. The final score for an application is the arithmetical average of the scores given by the evaluators. Ranking the project proposals is carried out in a manner that the first ranked project proposal is the one with the highest score, followed by the project proposal with the next highest score up until the project proposal with lowest score.

Only Concept Notes that received the average score of 30 points and higher are selected for further consideration and invited to submit the Full Application proposals.

All received Full Application proposals are subject to the administrative check. Full Applications that are submitted and pass administrative check are evaluated against the criteria as defined in the evaluation grid for full applications. All received Full Applications are ranked according to the score obtained. Pertaining successful completion of the eligibility check the highest ranked proposals will be awarded grants within the limits of the funds available under the call for proposals.

Evaluation grid for the Concept Note

Section	Maximum score	Average score
1. Relevance of the Action	30	
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals? * Regional projects implemented on territories of 3 and more economies will be considered an asset.	5x2	
1.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target economy(ies) or region(s) is the proposal? (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)	5x2	
1.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (end beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices?	5	

2. Design of the Action	20	
2.1. How coherent is the overall design of the Action? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved and take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	5x2	
2.2 Is the Action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2	
Maximum total score	50	

*A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses more than the required minimum number of priorities as indicated in section 1 (Objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

Only the Concept Notes which have been given a score of a minimum of 30 points will be considered for selection.

Evaluation grid for the Full Application

Section	Maximum score	Average score
1. Financial and operational capacity	15	
1.1 Is the Applicant sufficiently experienced in project management ?	5	
1.2 Does the Applicant have sufficient professional capacities (specific knowledge in the relevant field)?	5	
1.3. Does the Applicant have sufficient management capacities (including staff, equipment and capacities for financial management)?	5	
2. Relevance	25	
2.1. How relevant is the project compared to the goal and one or more priorities defined in the public call?	5	

Note: score 5 (very good) can be assigned only if the project is addressing at least one of the priorities.		
2.2 Are stakeholders clearly defined and strategically selected (agents, end beneficiaries, target groups)?	5	
2.3 Are the needs of the target group and end beneficiaries clearly defined and does the project address them in the right way?	5	
2.4 Does the project incorporate added value , such as innovative approach and best practice models?	5	
2.5 Does the project proposal advocate for rights-based approach and does it influence vulnerable groups? (Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental protection, international cooperation, youth, etc.).	5	
3. Methodology	20	
3.1 Does the plan of activities and proposed activities logically and practically correspond to the goals and expected results?	5	
3.2 How consistent is the overall project design? (especially, does it reflect the analysis of identified problems, possible external factors)	5	
3.3 Is the level of involvement of partners in project implementation satisfactory?	5	
3.4 Are objectively measurable indicators included in the project?	5	
4. Sustainability	25	
4.1 Will the proposed activities have concrete influence on target groups?	5	
4.2 Will the project have multiple effects ? (<i>including possibility for application on other target groups or implementation at a different location and/or extending the effects of the activities as well as exchange of information on the experience gained through the</i>	5	

<i>implementation of the project)</i>		
4.3 Are the expected results of suggested activities institutionally sustainable ? (<i>Will the structures that enable project activities exist after the completion of the project? Will there be a local ownership over the project results?</i>)	5	
4.4 Are the expected results sustainable ? (If applicable, name the <i>structural impact of implemented activities – improvements of legal frameworks, methods, code of conduct, etc.</i>)	5	
4.5 Is it likely that the expected long-term results/outcomes will influence local economic conditions and/or quality of life in target areas?	5	
5. Budget and cost efficiency	15	
5.1 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and expected results satisfactory?	5	
5.2 Are the suggested costs necessary for project implementation?	5	
5.3 Budget -is the budget clear and does it include a narrative part? (including explanations for technical equipment) - meets the principle that administrative and personnel costs cannot be above 30% of the total budget? - is the budget gender-sensitive?	5	
Maximum total score	100	

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity of the Applicant

In case the total score in Section 1 is lower than 10 points, the project will be excluded from the further evaluation process, as the organisation does not have the minimum capacities to ensure quality implementation of the proposed project.

Note on Section 2. Relevance

In case the total score in Section 2 is lower than 18 points, the project will be excluded from further consideration as the score implies that, although the applicant meets financial and operational capacities, the project's concept is not relevant or in line with the defined priorities of the call for proposals; the project does not address the needs of the region.

Note on Section 4. Sustainability

In case the total score in Section 4 is lower than 20 points, the project will be excluded from further consideration as the score implies that the activities will not benefit the objectives of the project in a long run.

8. NOTIFICATION ON THE DECISION

The applicants will be notified on the Concept Note evaluation outcomes according to the timetable provided in these Guidelines. Selected applicants will be notified and informed to submit the Full Application according to the timetable provided in the Guidelines.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and granted a right to appeal with the complaint, according to the timetable provided in these Guidelines.

The results will be announced on the RCC website.

A decision to reject a Full Application or deny funds will be made if:

- The applicant does not meet the conditions of the call for proposals;
- Project activities are unacceptable (e.g. proposed activities go beyond the scope of the call for proposals, the project's stipulated duration exceeds the maximum allowed time period, the requested amount of funds exceeds the maximum allowed amount or is lower than the minimum, etc.);
- The project proposal was not sufficiently relevant; financial and operational capacities of the applicant are not sufficient, or the projects selected for funding have been superior in these areas;
- The quality of the project proposal was technically and financially lower in comparison to the projects selected for funding.

Cancellation of a call for proposal

The RCC Secretariat may decide to cancel a call at any stage and in particular if:

1. The call for proposals was unsuccessful, i.e. no worthwhile application has been received or there is no response at all;
2. Economic or technical data of the programme have been fundamentally altered;
3. Exceptional circumstances or force majeure case render the normal conduct of the planned action impossible;
4. Irregularities in the procedure, in particular those preventing equal treatment.

In the event of cancellation, all applicants must be notified of cancellation by the RCC and will not be entitled to any compensation.

9. CONDITIONS RELATED TO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AFTER GRANT APPROVAL

After a decision has been made on grant approval, the applicants whose project has been approved will be offered a contract for project implementation. Before signing the contract and if needed, the RCC is entitled to request certain modifications from the organisation to the project, in order to align it with the rules and procedures of project implementation.

Contracts with the Applicants of the selected Applications will be prepared on the standard template. Model of Grant Contract is available as part of Application Package.

For all Full Applications, whose activities involve **infrastructure**, the following additional documents may be required prior to Grant Contract signature (contracting phase):

- Positive Decision on Environmental Impact Assessment OR a Statement from the relevant public authority that the EIA is not needed for the specific activities;
- Proof of ownership or long-term lease (10 years) of the land /assets (if applicable);
- Preliminary design OR detailed design including indicative bill of quantities in EUR;
- All necessary legal authorisations (e.g. location and construction permits, etc.).

Please note that in case all necessary documents (permits, etc.) are not provided to the Contracting Authority (CA), if requested, prior to the contracting, Contracting Authority reserves the right to withdraw from contracting.

10. LIST OF APPENDICES

- [Grant Application Form](#)
- [Declaration by the Applicant](#)

- [Budget Breakdown](#)
- [Legal Entity Identification Form](#)
- [Financial Identification Form](#)
- [Grant Contract](#)
- [General Terms and Conditions for Grants](#)
- [Checklist for Assessing Action Budget and Simplified Cost Options for Grant Contracts](#)
- [Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions](#)
- [Regional Cooperation Council Visual Guidelines for External Parties](#)
- [Partnership Statement](#)
- [Western Balkans Crossroads of Civilisations Concept and list of locations](#)
- [Illyricum Trail of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route Concept and list of locations](#)
- [Balkan Monumental Trail Concept and list of locations](#)
- [Via Dinarica Concept](#)