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**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICIES
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME (OP)
"HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT" 2014-2020**



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА
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**Summary of Guidelines for Applicants under a procedure
for selection of project proposals with one deadline
BG05M9OP001-4.003 "TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS"
under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020**

1. General information

The Human Resources Development Operational Program 2014-2020 (HRD OP) contributes actively to the implementation of two of the objectives of the EU Strategy "Europe 2020". These are the objectives in the area of employment, fighting poverty and social exclusion.

Bulgaria, as well as the other EU Member States, also formulates its own national targets for implementing the "Europe 2020" strategy, namely: (1) not less than 76% of the population, aged 20-64 should be in employment by 2020, and (2) the number of people in poverty shall be reduced by 260,000 in 2020. Achieving these goals is of fundamental importance for the vision and strategy of the HRD OP.

Taking into account these challenges, the strategy of the HRD OP is based on three pillars. These are:

- ✓ Higher and higher-quality employment.
- ✓ Reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion.
- ✓ Modernizing public policies.

The Managing Authority of HRD OP is the Directorate General "European Funds, International Programs and Projects" of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

This procedure is implemented within the framework of Priority Axis No.4 "Transnational Cooperation" of the Operational Program.

The current procedure of TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS is part of the coordinated transnational call for proposals at European Union level.

Transnational cooperation is an effective way of developing innovative solutions and projects. Good practices from other Member States can have a strong influence and incentive effect on other organizations. Social innovations are not only good for society but also for individuals because they improve their capacity for action.

During the previous programming period there was no coordination between Member States on individual calls for project proposals, which largely hindered transnational cooperation. In response, a general framework was set up to coordinate invitations on specific topics.

In order to support and promote transnational cooperation, a dedicated Transnational Cooperation Platform has been established within the ESF <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality>.



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The platform will be an essential tool for implementing transnational cooperation within the coordinated call. Each applicant under this procedure must register in the Platform, to publish his/her project idea, establish contacts with partner organizations and form a partnership for the implementation of a common transnational project. To this end, project partners will draft and sign a Transnational Cooperation Agreement, which is also the platform's functionality.

The projects will be implemented on the territory of the EU Member States.

Purpose of procedure:

The procedure aims to contribute to the transfer and implementation of social innovation, good practices, partnership approaches to finding solutions of common problems, building specific partnership skills, etc. in the field of labour market, social inclusion, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, work conditions and the building of administrative capacity in them.

Within the framework of the procedure, each project proposal must necessarily be linked to an investment priority (priorities). Special attention should be given to the fact that each investment priority is characterized by specific eligible applicants / partners, a specific target and a target group, and their compliance is a condition of eligibility. Therefore, it is very important to take these particularities into account when choosing an investment priority; when developing the project proposal, the full compliance between applicants / partners, investment priority, specific target and target group shall be respected.

Description of the thematic objectives and related investment priorities of the HRD OP:

Thematic objective 8:

Investment Priority 1: Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market; also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility.

Investment Priority 2: Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee (ESF) (ESF).

Investment Priority 3: Modernization of labour market institutions such as public and private employment services, and improving the matching of labour market needs, including through actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility and better cooperation between the institutions and the relevant stakeholders

Investment Priority 4: Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises .

Investment Priority 5: Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to the change.



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Thematic objective 9:

Investment Priority 7: Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma.

Investment Priority 8: Active inclusion including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.

Investment Priority 9: Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.

Investment Priority 10: Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment

Thematic objective 10:

Investment Priority 6: Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

Thematic objective 11:

Investment Priority 11: Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance

The following specific objectives, corresponding to the described investment priorities, are covered by this procedure:

Specific objective to IP 1:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of promoting employment for job-seekers and inactive people over 29 years of age.

Specific objective to IP 2:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of sustainable integration of young people under 29 years of age, incl. on the labour market.

Specific objective to IP 3:

Promoting transnational cooperation aimed at the improvement of the processes for policy formulation and implementation and for active labour market measures

Specific objective to IP 4:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models for promotion of self-employment, entrepreneurship and creation of enterprises, including innovative micro, small and medium enterprises.



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Specific objective to IP 5:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of the exchange of experience, good practices and models for increasing the number of the covered employees in the enterprises, which have introduced new human resources development systems, practices and tools, and improving the organisation and working conditions.

Specific objective to IP 6:

Promoting transnational cooperation in exchange of experience, good practices and models for ensuring equal access of employed persons to lifelong learning.

Specific objective to IP 7:

Promoting transnational cooperation in exchange of experience, good practices and models for ensuring socio-economic integration of the marginalised communities.

Specific objective to IP 8:

Promoting transnational cooperation in exchange of experience, good practices and models for ensuring active social inclusion and promoting equal opportunities for the vulnerable groups.

Specific objective to IP 9:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of long-term care for people incapable of self-care and the disabled, reduction of the number of children, youth and elderly people placed in institutions

Specific objective to IP 10:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models for increasing the number of persons employed in social enterprises following the support provided

Specific objective to IP 11:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of increasing knowledge, skills and competences of the employees in the institutions in the area of social inclusion, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and working conditions

Any activities, funded under other projects, programmes or any other financial schemes, resulting from the national budget, the budget of the European Union or another donor programme will not be supported under this procedure, inspections for compliance shall be made on the individual project level.



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2. Indicators

OUTPUT INDICATORS			RESULT INDICATORS		
Indicator	Measurement Unit	Target value	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Target value
Identified innovative practices ¹	Number	60	Transferred innovative practices ²	Number	40

Each Applicant **must** include in section 8 of the Application Form an output indicator and a result indicator, reflecting the implementation of the project.

Under this procedure, priority is given to projects that involve more than one identified and transferred innovative practice.

In a given project proposal, within one investment priority, there may be more than one identified and / or transferred innovative practice.

An identified and / or transferred innovative practice in a project proposal may not be linked to more than one investment priority. This is an eligibility requirement and, in case of non-compliance, it would lead to the rejection of the project proposal. The connection of the innovative practice to the corresponding investment priority shall be described in field 11.5 of the Application Form.

Applicants should note that if the project proposal covers more than one IP, output and result indicators for each IP should be specified.

3. Total amount of the grant under the procedure:

The total amount of the grant under this procedure shall be BGN 4 389 000. In case of insufficient number of quality proposals meeting the predefined criteria, the Managing Authority shall reserve its right not to allocate the above funds.

4. Minimum and maximum grant amount for a specific project:

Any Applicant under this procedure may apply for a grant, whereas the project he / she has drafted must comply with the following minimum and maximum limits:

¹ Innovative practice shall mean introducing new or significantly improved ideas, services and / or models, aimed at the social sphere (labour market, social inclusion, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, working conditions and the construction of administrative capacity).

² Transferring practices should be understood as the process of transferring skills, knowledge, models and process organization.



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- ✓ **Minimum Grant Amount: BGN 50,000**
- ✓ **Maximum Grant Amount: BGN 200,000**

The minimum and maximum amount of the grant will include planned direct and indirect costs in the budget of each project proposal.

At the application stage, each applicant should only plan his / her direct costs (grant and co-financing - if applicable), which may not be less than BGN 45,454.55 (grant) and be more than BGN 181,818.18 (grant). Indirect costs that are financed by applying a flat rate determined by applying a percentage to one or more specific categories of expenditure, in accordance with Art. 67 (1) (d), Art. 67 (5) (a) (i) and (ii) and Art. 68 (1) (a) of Regulation 1303/2013 will be officially reflected by the MA in the budget of each project proposal. These costs shall amount to exactly 10% of the direct eligible costs.

If applicants do not wish to have officially reflected indirect costs of exactly 10% of direct eligible costs, then it should be declared in paragraph 11.7 of the Application Form. In this case, Applicants can plan their direct costs at a minimum grant amount of BGN 50,000 and a maximum grant amount of up to BGN 200,000.

5. Co-financing rate

Under the procedure no co-financing shall be required by the applicants. The grant may cover 100% of the total eligible costs of the applicant and its Bulgarian partners.

6. Eligible Applicants and Partners

Applicants and Bulgarian Partners under Investment Priorities (IP):

Investment Priority 1

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Company Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre, the Ministry of Justice, State Enterprise "Prisons production"; organisations providing intermediary services on the labour market; education and training organisations and institutions; employers; social partners; municipalities and municipal districts; information and professional guidance centres; non-governmental organisations.

Investment Priority 2

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; Centre for Human Resource Development and Regional Initiatives; State Company Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre; organisations providing intermediary services on the labour market; education and training organisations and institutions; employers; social partners; municipalities and municipal districts; information and professional guidance centres; non-governmental organisations.

Investment Priority 3

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; social partners.



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Investment Priority 4

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Company Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre; Ministry of Economy and Energy; self-employed people; education and training organisations and institutions; information and professional guidance centres; entrepreneurship development centres; social partners; municipalities and municipal districts; non-governmental organisations;

Investment Priority 5

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; General Labour Inspectorate Executive Agency; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Enterprise "Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre"; institutions and organisations exercising control on the working conditions in the enterprises; services in support of the employers; organisations providing intermediary services on the labour market; employers; associations of employers (clusters); self-employed persons; educational and training organisations and institutions; information and professional orientation centres; social partners; non-governmental organisations.

Investment Priority 6

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State enterprise "Bulgarian – German vocational training centre"; National Agency for Vocational Education and Training; Ministry of Health; employers; associations of employers (clusters); self-employed persons; educational and training institutions and organizations; social partners; non-governmental organizations.

Investment Priority 7

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and secondary budget spending units which report to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Health and secondary budget spending units which report to the Minister of Health; suppliers of social and health services; social partners; employers; municipalities and districts of municipalities; organisations providing intermediary services; educational and training institutions and organizations; information and professional orientation centers; community centers; non-governmental organizations, social enterprises and cooperatives for people with disabilities; registered religious branches.

Investment Priority 8

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Social Assistance Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; State Agency for Child Protection; Ministry of Health; employers; municipalities and districts of municipalities; non-governmental organizations; organisations providing labour market intermediary services; educational and training institutions and organizations; social service providers; health services providers, public medical and treatment facilities ; medical universities; registered branches of religious denominations .

Investment Priority 9

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Social Assistance Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; State Agency for Child Protection; Ministry of Health; Ministry of



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Youth and Sports; Ministry of Justice; employers; municipalities and districts of municipalities; non-governmental organizations; organisations providing labour market intermediary services ; educational and training institutions and organizations; social service providers; health service providers, public medical and treatment facilities ; medical universities; registered religious branches.

Investment Priority 10

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Social Assistance Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; social enterprises; employers; specialized enterprises and cooperatives of people with disabilities; educational and training institutions and organizations; non-governmental organizations; municipalities and districts of municipalities; social partners; social service providers.

Investment Priority 11

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Social Assistance Agency, Agency for People with Disabilities, Labour Inspectorate Executive Agency, "Working Conditions Fund", Social protection Fund; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Agency for Child Protection; National Agency for Vocational Education and Training; Ministry of Health and the second level budget spending units to the Minister of Health ; Ministry of Youth and Sports; Commission for Protection against Discrimination; The secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues via the administration of the Council of Ministers; The Secretariat of the National Council for Integration of People with Disabilities through MLSP; training organizations of the state administration, municipalities and districts of municipalities; National Social Security Institute.

Foreign partners must meet the following eligibility requirements:

This call for proposals requires a mandatory partnership with at least one partner from another EU member state other than Bulgaria.

The transnational partner is not allowed to spend funds from the budget of this procedure. The Transnational Partner shall apply for funding from the European Social Fund to the Managing Authority of the Operational Program in the respective Member State.

- ✓ Foreign partners must be registered in the EU's transnational cooperation platform <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/>
- ✓ Foreign partners must offer specific skills and experience, innovative approaches to the implementation of activities, etc., which would contribute to the better implementation of the project;
- ✓ Foreign partners shall have the right to participate in more than one project proposal under this procedure;

Project proposals of partners from other EU Member States shall be evaluated in the manner, provided by the respective Member State. The realization of the joint transnational project, shall require each of the transnational partners to be approved for financing of their project.



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If the project proposal of the foreign partner or of any of the foreign project partners is not approved for funding by the Managing Authority in the respective Member State, then the Bulgarian Applicant (in case it is approved for funding) will have the opportunity to seek another foreign partner (s) that meet the above eligibility conditions to undertake the role of the rejected foreign partner (s) and to perform the same type and volume of activity. It is acceptable that the role of the rejected partner be taken in the same form and volume by other foreign project partners, if any, and if they have such capacity. In both cases, it is necessary to sign a new Transnational Cooperation Agreement.

The Applicant and all project partners shall sign **an agreement on transnational cooperation** (Transnational Cooperation Agreement), to be attached to the platform of transnational EU cooperation <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/template-transnational-cooperation-agreement-tca>

The Transnational Cooperation Agreement must be signed before submitting the project proposal under this procedure. Its content must contain the minimum amount of information, specified in Annex VI of the Guidelines for Applicants.

Irrespective of the number of project partners, only one Transnational Cooperation Agreement shall be signed. The Agreement shall be drawn up and signed in English, and a translation of the Agreement in Bulgarian shall be enclosed upon submitting the project proposal, certified with the text "True to Original". Official translation by sworn translator is not required.

The persons, representing the relevant organizations-party to the Agreement, shall sign the Transnational Cooperation Agreement.

7. Activities eligible for funding

Each project proposal should contain mandatory information and communication activities and project management activities.

Eligible activities must be in line with horizontal OP principles and avoid duplication of funding for the same activities from different sources.

The following activities shall be eligible for funding under this grant procedure:

The following 4 activities shall be MANDATORY, where each of them should be included in any of the project proposals:

Applicants should bear in mind that the four mandatory activities are interrelated and logically consistent and that performing part of the work alone and in isolation would not be permissible. Project proposals that do not contain all four mandatory activities will be rejected at the stage of assessing administrative compliance and eligibility.

- 1. Enhancing the capacity of partners and stakeholders to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate good practice and innovative approaches (social innovation) through the organization of seminars, workshops and training to promote exchange**



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of experience, information, good practice and innovative approaches (social innovation) between partners and other stakeholders.

Applicants should note that the focus of action should be on social innovation. Organizing events without specific focus will not be considered to be the performance of the above activity.

2. Adapting and validating social innovations that may be based on innovative models, practices, services, products from other countries, and / or pilot implementation of developed innovative approaches and models.

For the purpose of the procedure, "adaptation of social innovation" will mean the following: Any of the partners have a product, a service, a ready solution or any part of the above that will allow a more complete, more efficient and effective solution to an identified problem. Adapting social innovation involves sharing its knowledge and experience with other partners and bringing it into line with the needs of the applicant / partners, including testing this innovation in other conditions and environments.

For the purposes of this procedure, "validation of social innovation" means the process of its implementation, including recognition / certification / legalization of innovation if Bulgarian legislation requires that.

The activity can be implemented in two directions:

2.1 Adapting and validating social innovations that may be based on innovative models, practices, services, products from other countries

Such cooperation shall be based on the experience of one of the transnational partners, who has a social innovation (product, service, ready solution or any part of it) that will allow a more complete, efficient and effective solution to an identified problem. Such a partner then performs a leading function of sharing his / her knowledge and experience with other partners, including those relating to certain advantages in the form of an opportunity to acquire knowledge and experience from other partners in testing social innovation in other conditions and environments.

This type of cooperation may significantly reduce the cost of implementing social innovation due to the reduced time for its preparation (an already existing solution is used to limit the cost of product preparation), i.e. eliminating potential mistakes and problems (the partner shares his/her experience on the basis of which it is possible to predict problems, related to the introduction of social innovation and, accordingly, to take steps to minimize the risks of introduction).

2.2 Creation of social innovation (new solution) and its pilot implementation

Cooperation with foreign partners, involving co-development and creation, and then the introduction of social innovation (new solutions), is the broadest form of transnational cooperation and requires the highest commitment from all sides. In such a project, the partners work together from the stage of designing the project concept to generate and then to bring together new solutions / social innovations, regarding common problems for transnational partners. The added value of such a project above all is a product, common to all parties that



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brings benefit not only to the target group of the beneficiary but also to the target groups of the partner countries.

This type of action contributes mostly to the development of new EU-level solutions that enhance the quality of ESF interventions at the level of the entire European Union. Projects, involving co-operation in the creation of common products allow for the development of innovative solutions, utilizing the potential and different conditions of all partners.

In the current procedure, the concept of "social innovation" is seen in the context of the ESF Regulation 1304/2013 and can be defined as developing and implementing new ideas (products, services and models) in order to respond to social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. Social innovations present a new response to urgent social demands that affect the process of social interactions. Social innovations are targeted at improving people's well-being. Social innovations are not only good for society but also for individuals, because they improve their capacity for action³

For the purpose of this procedure, "social innovation" and "innovative practice" shall be equivalent concepts.

In choosing social innovation, the Applicant may select among the following approaches, identified in the European Union which should be adapted to the target regions of this procedure:

The innovations shall be:

- Process-oriented - developing new methods and / or approaches;

or

- Goal-oriented - working with different target groups, different sectors or at different levels;

or

- Content-oriented - a new organisation of training, networking and distribution.

Innovations shall be based upon:

- Totally new approaches;

or

- The existing approaches shall be used with new target groups and / or in a new context;

or

- New combinations of existing approaches.

³ European Commission, Guide to Social Innovation, February 2013, page 6
http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/84453/Guide_to_Social_Innovation.pdf



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3. Activities for the assessment of results, achieved in terms of applicability of its innovative elements

The evaluation of achieved results will follow the logical link between the items, specified in the Application Form and its actual implementation. The focus of the evaluation will be the feasibility of social innovation, based on the following parameters:

- ✓ Follow up of achieved goals and the results of the project, as well as their relation to meeting the needs of the target group;
- ✓ Particularities in the implementation of the planned activities and their relation to the objectives and the achieved results of the project;
- ✓ Efficiency and effectiveness of projected costs and expenses in terms of objectives, activities and results achieved.

Please note that the costs for this activity shall be limited in percentage. They shall be up to a maximum amount of 2% of direct eligible costs for the project.

4. Activities for the dissemination of results (positive and / or negative).

Applicants should note that this activity is different from the above mentioned information and communication activity and does not involve the printing and distribution of brochures / leaflets.

The implementation of this activity should be based on the evaluation of achieved results in terms of the applicability of its innovative elements. Achieved results from the project implementation should be shared among stakeholders in an appropriate manner (e.g. information event, publication on the organization's web page, etc.).

In addition to described mandatory activities, one or both of the additional activities listed below may be included in the project proposal and must be linked to the objectives of the project:

- **Preparation of specific analyses and studies of the experience of other Member States;**
- **Building up and / or inclusion in networking, twinning.**

When provided project activities are related to a registration and / or licensing regime, applicants and / or Bulgarian partners should be registered / licensed to perform the respective types of activities before the submission of the project proposal. The number of relevant license shall be indicated in the Application Form in the description of respective activity.

Example: If the applicant and / or Bulgarian partners have direct participation in the delivery of innovative social services it will be necessary for them to be registered social service providers and in the cases, where social services are provided for children - they should also hold a license, issued by the State Agency for Child Protection.



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In addition each project, financed under this procedure should contribute to social innovations, i.e. contain innovative elements. This is a condition of eligibility, described in paragraph 11.5 of the Application Form.

8. Expenditure categories, eligible for funding

Eligible costs under this procedure only apply to the Applicant and the Bulgarian partners and are detailed in paragraph 14.3 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

The costs, incurred by the foreign partner are not eligible for funding under this project.

9. Eligible target groups

The eligible target groups are allocated to the investment priorities of this procedure as follows:

Investment priority 1

The focus on certain groups within the specific objectives does not exclude a wider range of the target groups covered by this investment priority, namely: inactive people who are not in education or training, including discouraged ones, job-seekers and disadvantaged groups on the labour market.

Investment Priority 2

Economically inactive young people who are not in education or training, at the age of 15 to 29.

Investment priority 3

Administrative staff involved in the area on the labour market, job-seekers, employers.

Investment priority 4

People who wish to start their own business; self-employed people; micro-enterprises established by the indicated as target groups natural persons, including self-employed persons; employees in micro-enterprises supported by the program.

Investment priority 5

Employed persons, including employed and self-employed persons; employers.

Investment priority 6

The focus on certain groups within the specific objectives will also include a wider range of the target groups covered by this investment priority, namely: employed persons, including employed and self-employed, post-graduate students and health professionals.

Investment priority 7

The main target groups are representatives of the Roma community; citizens of other countries; The main target groups are the representatives of the Roma community; people with a foreign background; people at risk and / or victims of discrimination; people living in areas with low population density, rural and isolated areas, parts of populated areas where there is a concentration of problems creating risk of poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation (high



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level of unemployment, low income, limited access to public services, spatial segregation, spatial isolation, etc.).

Although the activities are aimed primarily to the representatives of the Roma community and to the citizens with a foreign background, they will not exclude the support of other marginalised groups with similar characteristics and needs.

In view of the specificity of the activities under the investment priority, the eligible target groups will include employees of organisations and institutions related to the socio-economic integration of the marginalised communities.

Investment priority 8

People with disabilities and their families; families with children, including with disabilities; children and adults at risk; employees of providers of social and health services;

Investment priority 9

People with disabilities; people over 65 incapable of self-care; families with children, including with disabilities; children and adults at risk; children, youth and elderly people, including with disabilities placed in specialized institutions and their families; the staff of specialized institutions; employees in organisations and institutions engaged with the process of deinstitutionalisation; employees of social and health service providers; public employees engaged with the implementation of the reform in the youth justice.

Investment priority 10

People with disabilities; disadvantaged people on the labour market and other socially excluded persons; representatives of different communities employed in social enterprises, co-operatives and specialized enterprises for people with disabilities; people employed in social entrepreneurship institutions and organisations.

Investment priority 11

Employees in the administrations of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the second level budget spending units to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy; officials in the administrations of the Ministry of Health and the second level budget spending units to the the Minister of Health; employees at the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and employees in the Secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (NCCEI); experts on ethnic and integration issues in the regional and municipal administrations, officials in the Secretariat of the National Council for Integration of People with disabilities through MLSP; employees of the public administration units, providing social and health services; employees of providers of social and health services; representatives of the social partners; representatives of organizations and institutions engaged in the implementation of the policies in the field of social inclusion, health, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and working conditions.

No duplication of funding of the same target group from different sources for the same activity shall be allowed.



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In the cases, where the applicant develops his / her project proposal in more than one investment priority, the target groups should be clearly distinguished according to the individual investment priorities, while respecting the eligibility of the target groups mentioned above.

The project proposal requires that the applicant indicate the specific target group (s), to which the activities of the project proposal will be targeted. The applicant should describe the target group's representatives, within which investment priority they are included in the project proposal. It is necessary to analyse the needs and problems of the target group, as well as to decide which of them the project is targeting. The target group, included in the project proposal has to be described in specific detail, according to the Application Terms and has to be quantified with respect to how many representatives of the target group will be included.

10. Applicable de minimis / State Aids scheme:

The current procedure BG05M9OP001-4.003 "Transnational Partnerships" regarding applicants / partners - bodies of the executive and / or local authorities does not fall within the legal scope of provisions of de minimis / state aids.

Under this procedure, Regulation (EU) No. 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid shall be applied.

The operations, projected under this procedure shall have business (economic) nature with an already existing market for them. Consequently, all costs of the applicant / Bulgarian partners (with the exception of the executive and local authorities) related to the implementation of the project proposal are of an economic nature and will be considered as de minimis aid.

11. Minimum and maximum duration for project implementation

The implementation of activities under the procedure should be completed by 31 December 2020.

12. Procedure for evaluation of project proposals

All project proposals, submitted in due time shall be evaluated in accordance with the criteria, outlined in the Guidelines for Applicants. Criteria are not subject to change during the procedure. The evaluation is carried out in the UMIS 2020 system and is documented by filling out evaluation grids. The evaluation of project proposals shall include:

1. Assessment of administrative compliance and eligibility;
2. Technical and financial evaluation.

Stage 1: Assessment of administrative compliance and eligibility

A Commission, appointed by order of the Head of the Managing Authority will assess the administrative compliance and the eligibility of the project proposals, subject to the following requirements:

Evaluation criteria are described in detail in the Administrative compliance and eligibility Grid, presenting information appendix to the Guidelines for Applicants.

In accordance with the provisions of Art. 34, Para. 2 of the Law for the management of the European Structural and Investment Funds, when any absence of documents is established and / or other irregularities in the assessment of the administrative compliance and admissibility, the Commission shall send to the applicant a notification of the established irregularities and shall set a reasonable time for their removal, which may not be shorter than one week. The notice should also contains information that failure to remedy irregularities on time may lead to the termination of proceedings in respect of the applicant. Removal of discrepancies may not lead to improvement in the quality of the project proposal.

Correspondence with the applicant shall be carried out through the UMIS 2020 system in the applicant's profile and the user's e-mail address, associated with it.

Stage 2: Technical and financial evaluation

"The Technical and Financial Assessment" is a substantive assessment of the project proposals, which is carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria.

In order for a project proposal to be proposed for financing, the total final assessment in the stage of technical and financial evaluation must be equal to or greater than 60 (sixty) points.

In the event that two or more project proposals have the same total final assessments, the projects will be ranked in descending order, depending on the following criteria:

- ✓ Higher result indicators: Number of innovative practices transferred;
- ✓ Final assessment of Section 3 "Methodology and organisation";
- ✓ Final assessment of Section 4 "Budget";
- ✓ Sequence of UMIS registration.

If the total number of points, received for each of the sections 1 and 2 is less than 20% of the maximum number of points for that section, the project proposal shall be proposed for rejection.

If the total number of points, received for each of the sections 3 and 4 is less than 30 % of the maximum number of points for that section, the project proposal shall be proposed for rejection.

Quality Assessment Criteria:	Maximum number of points
1. Operational capacity	15
1.1 Experience of the applicant and the Bulgarian partner/-s in project management and/or experience in the performance of activities, such as the ones, included in the project proposal in the preceding 5 years	10
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1.1. B Experience of the Bulgarian partner/-s in project management and/or experience in the performance of activities, such as the ones, included in the project proposal in the preceding 5 years	
1.2 Experience of the project manager or of the legal representative of the Applicant (manager, procurator, etc.) / owner of the applicant's capital in organizing and managing / implementing projects and / or activities, identical to those, included in the project proposal and / or management experience	5
2. Compliance	20
2.1 Description and justification of project's objectives	10
2.2. Description of the target groups under the project and their needs	10
3. Methodology and organisation	45
3.1 Compliance of activities with the objectives and the expected results	20
3.2 Clarity in the implementation of activities	25
4. Budget and cost effectiveness - Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the expenses, budget structuring	20
Total maximum number of points	100

13. Registration in the ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform

It shall be mandatory for each Applicant / Partner under this procedure to register with the ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/>

The Applicant should note that the Transnational Cooperation Agreement under this procedure, which is part of the coordinated EC Call for Proposals for Transnational Cooperation, is created through the Platform and is announced / published in the Platform. This must be done prior to submitting a project proposal under this procedure through the UMIS 2020 system.

Applicants / partners should register with the Platform, using their ECAS⁴ account (EU login in the top left corner). In case the applicant / partner does not have an ECAS account, the Applicant must first create one from the green + button of the EU login in the upper left corner of the Platform.

The Platform Operations Manual (in English) is available at the following web site:

<https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/sites/esf/files/esf-database-guide.pdf>

Upon registration in the Transnational Cooperation Platform, the Applicant should create a profile of the organization. This can be done by any organization, whether it is an applicant or a partner of the project being developed. Instructions have been provided in Section 5 of the above Guidelines.

⁴ European Commission Authentication Service (ECAS) - Certification Authority of the European Commission. This is a system for using a full range of websites and online services, managed by the EC.



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Once the profile of the organization has been created, a project idea shall be created next. Instructions for creating a project idea in the Platform are presented in paragraph 6 of the above Guidelines. Each project idea gets a Transnational Project Identifier (TPI). You should bear in mind that generating a project idea in the Transnational Cooperation Platform is designed to facilitate the finding of an appropriate transnational partner for the project. Subject to evaluation under this procedure will only be the project proposal that the applicant will develop and submit through the UMIS 2020 Information System in accordance with the present Guidelines for Applicants and the Instructions for Application and for Completing the Application Form.

Once the applicant has found a transnational partner, it must generate a Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TCA) in the Platform.

Detailed guidance on the establishment of a Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TAC) is available in English in the Platform at the following web address: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/sites/esf/files/esf-tca-guide.pdf>

Upon finalization of the Transnational Cooperation Agreement, a signed and scanned Agreement, based on the applicable minimum requirements in Annex VI of the Guidelines for Applicants shall be attached to the Platform. The Applicant should bear in mind that the Transnational Co-operation Agreement must be signed by all project partners and should be scanned and attached to the Platform. Without attaching a signed TCA Agreement to the Platform, it is not possible to publish the Transnational Cooperation Agreement and send it to the relevant Managing Authorities. When the process of preparing the Agreement in the Platform is over, one of the partners should publish the Agreement itself by clicking on the "Publish" button.

After the publication of the TCA, it becomes visible to the Managing Authorities that the organizations concerned apply for funding. The Managing Authorities have the obligation, after completing the evaluation of the project proposals, to enter the Platform and to indicate whether the relevant TCA is approved or not.

Applicants should note that only the project proposals, developed by Bulgarian applicants under the procedure are subject to evaluation by the MA of the HRD OP. The project proposals of the foreign partners of Bulgarian Applicants under this procedure shall be evaluated by the relevant MA in the Member State, according to the court registration of the respective partner organization.

It should also be borne in mind that the design ideas, generated by the Transnational Cooperation Platform, which serve only as a basis for drawing up the Transnational Cooperation Agreement, will not be subject to evaluation.

The project proposals to be evaluated under this procedure will be prepared on the basis of the web-based application form in the UMIS 2020 system, in compliance with the requirements in these application conditions and the instructions for completing a form under this procedure (Annex for information to these Guidelines for Applicants).

14. Submission of project proposals:

The projects under this call for proposals should be submitted only electronically with a Qualified Electronic Signature using the UMIS 2020 system.



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The internet address of the e-application module of UMIS 2020 is <http://eumis2020.government.bg/>, where a system operating manual is also available.

15. List of documents, submitted by foreign partners at the application stage

No documents are required from the foreign partner, since it is not subject to evaluation under this procedure. The partner organization shall be checked for eligibility and assessed by the relevant Managing Authority in the home Member State of the organization, subject to the requirements of the relevant funding body.

The foreign partner must only sign the Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TCA), enclosed to the ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform and Section 12 of the Project Proposal in the UMIS 2020 system.

16. Deadline for submission of project proposals

The deadline for submitting project proposals is 11 May 2018, 5:30 p.m. local Bulgarian time=
Any project proposal submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

17. Additional requirements:

Each applicant can submit only one project proposal under this call for proposals. In the event that an applicant has submitted more than one project proposal, only the last submission at the time of submitting a project proposal will be accepted, unless it is withdrawn by the applicant.

A partner may participate in more than one project proposal, if he / she has sufficient capacity to carry out the project activities.

For any questions and further clarification you can use the following web address, by clearly stating the number of the call for proposals, latest three weeks before the expiry of the application deadline, i.e. until 20 April 2017 incl.:

tnc@mlsp.government.bg

Written clarifications shall be given at latest two weeks prior to the expiration of the application deadline, until 27 April 2018 incl.

In order to ensure equal treatment of all applicants, the MA will not provide any clarifications that contain an opinion on the quality of a specific project proposal. Explanations are provided with regard to the application requirements, and they shall be binding for all applicants.

Questions and clarifications will be published on the following websites:

www.esf.bg and <https://eumis2020.government.bg> to the documents under the procedure.