

**ELIGIBILITY
OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
EXPENDITURES
FOR
EXTERNAL BENEFICIARIES**

**Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme
CCI 2014TC16I5CB006**

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The objective of this document is to set common management and eligibility rules for Technical Assistance for period 2020-2023. It was developed based on:

- Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 Of The European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Council Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance - IPA II Implementing Regulation;
- Bulgarian Government Decision № 156/21.03.2014 setting up the authorities designated to manage, control, audit and implement the European programmes for territorial cooperation in which the Republic of Bulgaria participates;
- Bulgarian Government Decision No 115/07.03.2022 for determining the Contracting authority / beneficiary for carrying out preparatory activities for a new Border Crossing Checkpoint (BCCP) Strumyani - Berovo between the municipalities of Strumyani, Blagoevgrad region, Republic of Bulgaria and Berovo, Eastern Planning Region, Republic of North Macedonia;

In general, the budget allocated to the Priority Axis 4 Technical Assistance (TA) for external beneficiaries shall finance actions for preparation, information and communication in regard to establishment of new BCCP Strumyani - Berovo.

The management and spending of funds under the Priority Axis TA shall be performed in compliance with the present eligibility of expenditure rules adopted by the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC).

The management of TA budget should be in line with principles of sound financial management, namely in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In accordance with art. 43 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014, the expenditure shall be eligible for a contribution from the Funds if it has been incurred and paid between **1 January 2014 and 31 December 2023** by Bulgarian beneficiaries and incurred and paid between **23 September 2014 and 31 December 2023** by beneficiaries from Republic of North Macedonia.

2. LIST OF ELIGIBLE TA EXPENDITURES

Costs are generally eligible if:

- they have been actually incurred and paid by the external beneficiaries of the TA, and they can be verified on the basis of original invoices or other accounting documents of equivalent nature;
- they are directly related to the TA for external beneficiaries, necessary for the development, starting and /or implementation of the activities envisaged, and they are planned in the approved TA budget;
- they are incurred during the eligible period of the Programme.

BUDGET LINE 1: Staff costs

Including all expenditures related to staff members related to implementation of the activities by the external beneficiaries. The remuneration under this budget line could be by one of the following options:

- Real cost option - project staff members could be hired on part-time for the project;
- Flat rate option - all team members will be full time employed under the project as the flat rate percentage will be specified in the budget.

BUDGET LINE 2: Office and administrative costs

BL 2 covers the expenses for the office and administrative costs and includes all expenditures related to offices of the external beneficiaries in Bulgaria and North Macedonia such as:

- Rent of office;
- Overheads (electricity, heating, water, telephone, fax, internet, other utilities);
- Consumables (paper, pens, files, folders, toner, cases, CDs, etc.);
- Bank charges (expenses for opening and administrating the bank account where the implementation of the project requires a separate account to be opened, charges for transnational financial transactions);
- Maintenance, cleaning and repairs costs (postal services, cleaning, security, insurances, repairs, business cards, coffee/biscuits for small project meetings, etc.);

The Office and administrative costs must be reported as **a flat rate** on the basis of the concrete percentage of the staff costs, envisaged in the budget of the respective project partner.

BUDGET LINE 3: Travel and accommodation costs

Budget line 3 Travel and accommodation costs covers the expenses for project team members and participants from Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia in events taking place in the two partnering countries or abroad, as follows:

3.1. Travel Costs, including train tickets; bus tickets; airplane tickets (economy class);; Transfer from the airport to the place of accommodation and from the place of accommodation to the venue of the event and vice versa; parking fees; car/ mini-bus travels (expenditure for fuel/kilometer, insurances for cars, green cards, motor way taxes, vignettes, etc.) - for service cars or for private vehicles used for official business trips; rent of vehicle for the operation; medical insurances for project team members and participants in the events; departure fees, etc.

3.2. Daily Allowances – for project team members and participants in the events: Daily allowances rates shall be in accordance with the provisions of the national legislation of the two neighboring countries.

Daily allowances for Bulgarian participants:

In country travel:

- € 20 for Bulgarian nationals when travelling in Bulgaria (according to art. 21(1)(2) of the Bulgarian Decree for Mission in the Country);

Travel abroad:

- € 35 for Bulgarian nationals when travelling abroad (according to art. 17(1) of the Bulgarian Decree for Mission Abroad); the daily allowances are provided for food, internal public transport and other costs (according to art. 18 of the Bulgarian Decree for Mission Abroad);

Daily allowances for participants from Republic of North Macedonia:

In country travel:

- Per diem in the amount of € 5,75 and in the amount of € 11,5 depending on the duration of the business trip in country, for citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia (according to article 20 of the branch collective agreement for state administration bodies, professional services of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, courts, public prosecutors, penitentiary – correctional and correctional institutions, state attorney, municipalities, City of Skopje and the city of Skopje, agencies, funds and bodies established by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (Official Gazette of RSM no. 51 from 25th of February 2020)

Travel abroad:

- € 37,50 for nationals from Republic of North Macedonia when travelling abroad (according to Decision for rates of allowances for trips in the Official Gazette No.19/2014 and Decree for calculation of daily allowances for travelling abroad);

In case of one-day business trip the national legislation shall be observed for calculation of daily allowances size.

3.3. Accommodation costs - for project team members and participants in the events:

Accommodation costs for Bulgarian participants:

In country travel:

- € 40,90 for Bulgarian nationals when travelling in Bulgaria (according to Order RD-02-14-1190/21.11.2018 and Order RD-02-14-678/24.07.2013 issued by the Minister of MRDPW);

In the border region:

- In the border region of the partnering country the maximum accommodation costs are for the amount of € 50;

In third countries and outside the border region:

- € 130 for Bulgarian nationals when travelling abroad.

Accommodation costs for participants from Republic of North Macedonia:

- *In the border region of two partnering countries* the maximum accommodation costs are for the amount of € 60;
- *In third countries and outside the border region* the maximum accommodation costs are for the amount of € 160.

BUDGET LINE 4: External expertise and service costs

Budget line 4 includes the following categories of expenditures:

4.1. Rent of hall (in public or private buildings) **and equipment for events**, including:

- rent of premises;
- rent of translation equipment;
- rent of audio equipment;
- rent of video equipment;
- rent of other equipment related to the purpose of the event.

4.2. Catering for events – expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, business diners and lunches for the participants in the events;

4.3. Preparation of materials – expenses for preparation of materials supporting the events (invitations, agenda, presentations, etc.);

4.4. Consumables - expenses for consumables as paper, files, folders, cases, compact disks, etc.;

4.5. Purchase of promotional materials – expenses for notebooks, CDs, USBs, hats, bags, folders, calendars, etc.

4.6. Elaboration, translation, design, etc. of promotional materials:

- translation of the prepared documentation on the national languages of both countries (ENG to BG/official languages of the Republic of North Macedonia or visa versa);
- advertising materials as billboards, banners, etc. (including elaboration and printing logo of the programme, etc.).

4.7. Publications and announcements in mass-media - TV, radio, newspapers, social media, etc.

4.8. Consultancy and external expertise

- preparation of the technical documentation for construction/rehabilitation of BCCP Strumyani- Berovo

4.9. Interpreters, lecturers, trainers - in connection to the different events;

VAT treatment

VAT is eligible for financing under TA provided that it is not recoverable and is borne by the final beneficiary. There are certain requirements determining the VAT as recoverable which are specific for each country.

Ineligible expenditures

Ineligible expenditures are listed in articles 15 and 43(2) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and Article 2 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014.