

Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020

Terms of Reference for Horizontal Projects

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The Interreg MED Programme

HORIZONTAL PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the Interreg MED Programme will adopt a “**MODULE**” application procedure (see section 2.1.2. of the *Programme manual*) which will provide better concentration and visibility of every co-financed project in regard to the objectives and activities as well as the expected results and the duration of the implementation.

The concept of horizontal projects is a result of internal (programme management) and external (project partners) suggestions and proposals aiming to improve the quality of the programme.

Horizontal projects will support the module application procedure cooperating with both the programme and individual projects, concentrating and developing information and deliverables per each priority axis from an external point of view. Horizontal projects will not have to implement and achieve their own territorial objectives but to gather results and facilitate transfer from modular projects to other communities (*i.e.* other ETC or thematic programmes, European commission, member States, thematic and/or institutional networks...). The lack of a common facilitator of synergies, exchanging and sharing between individual projects prevented from fully profiting from the overall impact of the results achieved during the 2007-2013 programming period.

Horizontal projects, under the monitoring of the programme Authorities will have the task to promote the modular projects (concept referring to all thematic module-based projects from the Axis 1, 2 and 3) communication and capitalisation actions within a joint framework, in order to better highlight the interests of the programme as well as of the transnational projects themselves.

Horizontal projects should capture elements of the modular projects within each thematic Specific Objective; analyse them, summarise and ensure their transnational dissemination and transferability, in cooperation with the programme Authorities. These projects will provide the frame to develop synergies, produce summaries and qualitative analysis as well as coordinate and manage (under supervision of the JS) communication of a cluster of projects.

They will structure and disseminate a message for the entire MED community and will work on thematic inter-axes links (1, 2 and 3) and links with the Axis 4 "platform" project.

This latter is a top down project financed under the Priority Axis 4: Mediterranean Governance. The objective of this project is to raise the impact of MED project results by connecting them to a mainstreaming activity involving State level actors and other stakeholders. The Horizontal projects have a crucial role of a 'link', as the results of the modular projects should be summarized via their work and subsequently feed the Axis 4 activities, such as preparation of intergovernmental Working Groups on Mediterranean issues that need better multilateral governance. The Horizontal projects should foresee to participate in the preparation and implementation of these Working Groups, if and when invited by the Steering Group of the top-down project.

Horizontal projects will help and support the communication and capitalisation of selected modular projects for each call and for each specific objective, as per the respective Terms of Reference. Each modular project will be linked to a horizontal project and should contribute to its communication and capitalisation activities.

These projects should propose a method for coordinating the joint communication, capitalisation, work on thematic results with the thematic community of projects (all Module projects selected under the same Specific Objective or theme) and propose relevant tools for these tasks.

The horizontal project will be the unifying element of the main outputs / results of each modular project on a particular and shared subject. This will allow real synergies between projects in the same axis / objective of the Interreg MED Programme and provide a better visibility in order to reach policy making level.

Why «horizontal» projects?

First of all, the "horizontal" projects should explore and find ways to improve the interaction between the programme and its projects as well as between individual projects.

The exchange, communication, knowledge and sharing experiences between the projects have been gradually developed during the previous programming period, in particular via the implementation of more focused and thematic projects.

However, the following needs are felt and requested for the project and programme results:

- to structure better the research of common solutions for joint problems and priorities in the territory of the programme;
- to define better the added value of the transnational work;
- to communicate and to develop jointly the main results of the programme;
- to manage a process of community building mixing bottom-up and top-down approaches (between thematic and governance priority axis);
- to contribute to the creation of the unique identity of the MED cooperation area, not limited by national boundaries (to be eventually considered as a single geographical area).

What is a «horizontal» project?

The "horizontal" projects, basically will be:

- 1) a single interface for all modular projects involved in the same axis and/or objective; synthetizing and homogenising answers to the same topics;
- 2) a single interface for the programme Authorities like a centre for the principal thematic information;
- 3) a single interface between the modular projects of the Interreg MED Programme resulting from a bottom-up process and the “governance” platform of the Axis 4 (a top-down process) in order to assist and supply the Axis 4 “platform project” initiative (which is co-financed through the Axis 4 itself): the Lead Partners of horizontal projects could be involved in the working process of the “Axis 4 platform” project as experts summarising the result of thematic projects. They should take into consideration that the Axis 4 Working Groups will eventually ask for their contribution in the mainstreaming and governance process.

The horizontal projects will be selected with an open call for projects launched per axis and / or objective: there will be thematic horizontal projects with initially a maximum duration of 36 months that could be extended until the end of the programming period.

Once the project is approaching its closure, a decision of the MED Steering Committee may allow the project to continue its activities with a new budget for a second cycle of a maximum duration of 36 months in order to ensure the continuity throughout the programming period (experience and capitalisation of programme results).

Who can participate?

Although all types of structures eligible to participate in Interreg MED projects are also eligible to the horizontal projects, the partnership should have specific skills in:

- Community building;
- Communication;
- Theme of the Priority Axis/Specific objective of the call chosen;
- Management, coordination of works;
- Capitalisation of results, thematic lobbying and networking at European level.

The partnership of the horizontal project should merge all these skills at the higher level possible and not to construct the partnership only on general competencies and experiences, such as previous participations to ETC projects.

Accompanying a group of projects in the framework of a specific axis/objective of the programme will help merging, networking, analysis, synthesis and transferability of the consolidated results of the transversal issues, building on the work carried out by each thematic modular project.

Each partner of the horizontal project should be able to ensure a high quality of results, respecting their tasks and responsibilities in the framework of the general duties expected; each partner should be able to suggest/take initiatives and successfully carry out activities in the field of its specialisation/sector; partners should be able to share information with all other partners involved in the thematic modular projects called to contribute to the common tasks.

More in detail, the communication of the horizontal projects will be based on their capitalisation throughout the implementation period and vice versa: that is the reason why the partnership will consist of structures being able to face all these tasks (COM / CAP) in order to organise the work in a logical way and with the contribution of every partner, in line with its role and skills. Nevertheless, some structures might have a heavier workload and more responsibilities when the modular projects start their activities, while other partners will be more active during the capitalisation stage.

Thus part of the partner structures may have a more passive role, with a subsequently lower financial allocation at the beginning of the project, and develop their role and have a more important financing at later stages of implementation (nevertheless the full budget per each partner in the projects should be foreseen in the application).

If unforeseen skills are required during the project implementation, the programme shall allow modifications (partners, budget) at certain moments of the project life cycle and only under certain conditions. A mid-term verification of the progress of the horizontal project should be carried out by the Interreg MED JS, compared to milestones already foreseen in the project application. Any necessary modifications will be integrated during this process. The partnership may be modified, extended or reduced, but always with the same fixed budget approved when the proposal was selected (ERDF + eventual IPA funds).

In summary, partners that deal with a horizontal project should have mainly skills and competencies of networking. Thematic network organisms could be the real added value in order to promote and enlarge aggregation, dissemination, transfer of data (synthesis) from specific MED territories (natural target of modular projects) towards a more general transnational Mediterranean framework, supporting individual modular projects through joint actions and producing new capitalised results going further than their territories and end users. Technical and private partners could complete thematic networks and support them.

Horizontal projects should keep their partnership 'light' and limited in number, to concentrate on their task (for instance a responsible partner per each specific task/work package, following sub themes of specific thematic terms of references, in particular for the priority 1) of supporting modular projects, rather than on their internal management. When needed, external expertise can be proposed in the project application, to complete the needed skills and competency.

List of possible partner organisms (not exhaustive):

- Transnational thematic networks
- Mediterranean thematic networks
- Institutional networks
- Universities
- Specialised agencies/associations/foundations
- International organisms
- Public authorities
- Etc;

Horizontal project partners should avoid conflicts of interest with the modular project partners within the same axis / objective. This means that a partner in a horizontal project cannot participate in a modular project approved within the same specific objective. If this happens, the partner in question should withdraw from the horizontal project.

National Ministries and Regional authorities can be exempted from this rule, if for particular reasons their participation to a horizontal project is requested (to be justified in the application form). This should remain rather rare though, as the partners of a Horizontal project should in general be more thematically than territorially oriented.

Which objectives? Which results are expected?

The main task of a horizontal project will be to ‘coach’ a group of modular projects in order to find common answers to shared issues, transfer results, and ease communication flow. In some cases (for example via European networks), horizontal projects will help to go beyond the sphere of influence of the original partnership within the framework of national and / or community policies, especially in regard to the regional and thematic programmes co-financed by the EU.

The aim of horizontal projects is not to promote themselves, but to assist the modular projects in their communication and capitalisation as a ‘community’ of thematic projects. The horizontal project offers a ‘peer review platform’ to this community of projects, by coordinating exchanges and joint events between them.

The objective is to increase the potential impact of the Interreg MED Programme results. The integrated results at the transnational level (in the MED area), coming out of the modular projects and consolidated via the horizontal projects, will be transferred mainly towards the ‘governance’ mechanisms of the Priority Axis 4 in order to impact future policies. Nevertheless, the horizontal projects should have as well the capacity to promote and spread the technical consolidated results achieved, towards institutional and thematic networks within the MED area.

Thus, the horizontal projects will also help all modular projects to orient, transform and export the local results into useful results for the whole MED area, via the previously identified beneficiaries, interested in results of MED projects.

Horizontal projects will work upon deliverables ‘in progress’, produced by the modular projects. The activities of the Horizontal projects do not consider specific territories or local actors, but the whole MED cooperation area. The main task of each horizontal project is to gather information from all other projects in order to synthetize it and spread it out in all the MED area. The Horizontal project is capitalising results to benefit the whole programme objectives.

This is not comparable to the tasks and objectives of a module based M3 (capitalisation) project: these will be strictly linked to a specific local context. The M3 projects capitalise results from former projects that their partnership has selected for their own project-level capitalisation activity. The M3 projects should feed larger horizontal project activities that are covering each specific objective as a whole.

Which activities?

The horizontal projects should propose a method of coordinating the joint communication, capitalisation, work on thematic results with the 'community' of projects and propose relevant tools for these tasks.

The horizontal project will have to work in three parallel directions: 1) community building, 2) joint communication, 3) joint capitalisation/transfer.

They should therefore implement activities via three major steps:

- 1) The first step consists of discovery, analysis, comparison, consolidation of the objectives shared between the group of modular projects, and subsequently objectives of the horizontal project. In this first step we can imagine building activities of joint and transversal basis with a common communication and capitalisation structure (COM / CAP integrated strategy) that identifies adequate target groups. To achieve this, it will be necessary to use all means of internal and external communication based on Internet, social networks, videos, etc. in line with the programme communication strategy.
- 2) The second step consists of joint specialised and general communication tasks (allowing important saving of time and effort for each thematic project, and a larger target of final beneficiaries).
- 3) The third and final step consists of the cooperation to the transfer of achieved and aggregated results (of all modular projects) either to the territorial policies or the EU thematic programmes. Equally, the final step consists of transfer of results towards the policies identified by the "platform" project (governance) in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme Axis 4 that will be essentially based on the inputs from the three thematic Priority axis of the programme.

Concrete activities include:

- a) Ensuring **the networking** of the modular projects within the same objective for which they have applied, by proposing a joint method of work;
- b) Facilitating **synergies** between the projects belonging to the same specific objective/priority: coordination of working groups and structured exchange between the modular projects;
- c) Contributing, in collaboration with Joint Secretariat, to the **technical development and transferability of project results** identifying appropriated actors and targets either via the governance platform that will be managed by the Member States under the Axis 4, or via the mainstream (regional programmes) or European programmes/networks (inside or outside the partnership);
- d) Ensure the **qualitative and quantitative analysis** of the main joint deliverables of the 'community' of modular projects;
- e) Animating and regularly updating the thematic sections of the programme website (among others by transferring information from project and programme level);
- f) Organizing **thematic and capitalisation events** for the "'community' of modular projects;
- g) Representing the 'modular projects community' in any relevant **transnational seminar** of the Interreg MED Programme, Interact or other ETC and / or thematic programmes.
- h) Cooperating with the Interreg MED Programme to coordinate communication activities of all horizontal projects on an annual basis.

List of possible activities and deliverables (non-exhaustive):

	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Community Building	<p>Coordination, animation and mediation of the Community</p> <p>Organisation and moderation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings - Seminars - Working groups - Workshops - Networking Sessions - Peer reviews <p>All the activities shall be coordinated together with the Interreg MED Programme authorities</p>	<p>Community building Strategy and action plan</p> <p>Events Minutes, conclusions and wrap-ups</p> <p>Preparatory documents</p> <p>Internal Communication products</p>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy building and updating (annual plans), setup of contact databases • Coordination/Provision of communication contents (from/to projects, from/to programme) • Animation and regular updating of Interreg MED thematic website section • Social media communication • Production of a poster as requested in EC regulations (following guidelines) • Organisation of events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Thematic community’ events with projects (e.g. Kick Off) ▪ Trainings and seminars ▪ Public events (e.g. mid-term, final event) • Participation in programme events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thematic working groups ▪ Axis 4 “platform” project meetings ▪ Coordination events with programme bodies (JS and NCP) • Presentation/exhibition at external events (e.g. with projects, other cluster etc.) • Communication with specialised media • Production and update of publications (print and online) <p>All the activities shall be coordinated together with the Interreg MED Programme authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plan and annual communication updates • Target group mapping and contact databases • Online publications (online newsletters or video news, infographics, flip books, smart phone applications etc.) and print publications (brochures, leaflets, flyers) • Event follow-up material (conclusions, recommendations, video reporting, interviews, live-streaming) • Exhibition and promotion material • Media/press kit (texts, pictures)

	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Capitalisation/Transfer	<p>Referencing (SEO) of project deliverables</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>Synthesis</p> <p>Drafting recommendations</p> <p>Thematic lobbying/networking</p> <p>To contribute to the priority axis 4 capitalisation objectives (through the “platform” project”)</p> <p>All the activities shall be coordinated together with the Interreg MED Programme authorities</p>	<p>Capitalisation Strategy and action plan</p> <p>Events Minutes, conclusions and wrap-ups</p> <p>Policy Paper and recommendations</p> <p>Technical Paper</p> <p>Deliverable Database</p>
Management	<p>Finally, all partners of each horizontal project will also have to face normal activities of project management (for instance, Steering Committees, regular progress reports and certification of expenditures).</p> <p>During the implementation, a strategy will be developed to foresee the transition from one horizontal project to the following horizontal project (at the end of the scheduled duration).</p>	

Which roles and responsibilities?

1. General responsibilities

The responsibilities of a horizontal project will be of two types:

- a) towards the programme;
- b) towards the ‘community’ of modular projects.

Their responsibilities towards the programme are the same management responsibilities as any MED project has: objectives achievement and commitment / payment of funds received in compliance with the Interreg MED procedures and in line with the approved project application.

As for the second type of responsibility, a horizontal project will develop a horizontal approach and a support mechanism towards the modular projects: responsibilities of initiative and proposals of joint activities, coordination of a group of projects; responsibilities of thematic, transversal and relevant communication in regard to the different target groups; homogenisation, synthesis, producing of elements / documents / deliverables shared within the *community of projects* of the same specific objective.

The modular projects can benefit from the ‘savings’ created thanks to the work of the horizontal project: they will not need to carry out transnational communication or capitalisation tasks outside their territories and/or in a larger approach than their specific topics, which will be taken over by the horizontal project. Apart from local communication towards direct target groups of each partner, the modular projects can concentrate their efforts mainly in content issues.

2. Specific coordination responsibilities

The Interreg MED Programme aims to design a communication strategy that is coordinated among various bodies responsible for project and programme communication, providing a reliable common orientation, but yet being flexible enough to be updated and adapted according to programme and project evolution.

Hence, it is foreseen to produce annual communication plans involving all bodies concerned: horizontal project partners, the Joint Secretariat and the National Contact Points. Such annual plans will help to develop activities in a way that allows for a maximum of involvement, effectiveness and appropriateness.

In order to bring activities in line and guarantee leverage effects, horizontal projects are expected to participate in yearly communication meetings, to contribute to their preparation and follow-up and finally to adapt their communication strategy accordingly.

Horizontal projects are expected to coordinate their communication activities with the Joint Secretariat, other horizontal projects and all modular projects. They will have to maintain a regular and constructive communication flow between all these stakeholders to ensure information is duly and timely disseminated among all of them. Horizontal projects should also actively contribute to the thematic and general programme publications.

For the daily coordination between horizontal projects, between horizontal projects and modular projects and finally between horizontal projects and the programme level, the web platform will constitute an important tool: it will help horizontal projects to receive/provide information and communicate with all necessary levels. The web platform will be the communication hub, allowing for promotion, but also management, coordination and exchange.

In this regard and for the programme strategic reasons, mentioned before, horizontal projects should not foresee budget allocations to develop thematic or project websites. This indication is also valid concerning specifically the creation of project logos.

The programme will deliver a joint web platform with all the necessary tools and functionalities and a common framework for the project logos.

This common approach for the websites and for the project logos will ensure economies of scale, reducing hosting and web site development costs, and allowing the projects to concentrate their budget allocations on the development of more direct communication activities.

The horizontal project is not meant to replace the authorities of the Interreg MED Programme. It will always work under the supervision of the Interreg MED authorities. It will not be the horizontal project's responsibility to verify and certify the implementation of any individual project within the community. In particular, the horizontal project is there to support the modular projects and carry out communication and synergy tasks for them. The project has no contractual or hierarchical relationship with the modular projects. The modular projects will be engaged in the "horizontal" approach within the framework of the thematic Terms of Reference.

The unique administrative authority for both horizontal and modular projects will be the Programme Managing Authority via its Joint Secretariat.

Conditions and modalities

With an initial duration of 36 months, horizontal projects will structure and disseminate one single message regarding identified sub-themes for the whole MED area and will coordinate between thematic axes (1, 2 and 3) as well as with the "platform" project Axis 4 (governance).

They will have the opportunity to be renewed until the end of the programming period via a procedure of evaluation and negotiation with the programme Authorities. This means that a single call for proposals of horizontal projects at the beginning of the period could virtually cover the whole programming period 2014-2020 if the selected projects respect their qualitative and quantitative commitments and show adequate results.

These commitments will be verified according to the subsidy contract with a mid-term review and at end of the 36 months of the project (respect of delays, deliverables and budget consumption in particular).

Within every formal verification performed by the Interreg MED Programme, the project may modify (if justified) part of its partnership and reallocate its budget in accordance with the procedures provided by the programme manual.

Three horizontal projects for priority axes 1 and 2 and only two for priority axis 3 will be selected during the Interreg MED first call.

Regarding axis 1, as there is only one specific objective, three sub themes are proposed (only one has to be selected per each proposal submitted): 1) green growth; 2) blue growth; 3) creative industry and social inclusion.

Concerning the other two priority axis, proposals have to address to a specific objective (2.1.or 2.2.or 2.3. or 3.1. or 3.2.).

Duration: 36 months (with possibility to renew the contract under conditions)

Budget ERDF: Max 1,2M€ and **IPA:** 50 000€ (for 36 months) for each project under axes 1 and 3; 1M€ **ERDF** and **IPA:** 40 000€ for each project under axis 2.

Main budget categories (see *Programme manual* section 2.4.4.):

External expertise (if needed for the analysis of joint results)

Human resources (Horizontal project partners)

Services (linked to organisation of events and to the joint communication and capitalisation tools)

Travel costs (For horizontal project partners: the modular projects foresee the travel costs needed to participate to joint events, in their own budgets).

Main activities:

Organisation of (thematic and capitalisation) events related to modular projects.

Analysis and synthesis of documents based on module project outcomes.

Partnership : The partnership is limited to maximum 6 partners: The partnership should remain as small and ‘light’ as possible to concentrate to the ‘coaching’ and synergies of modular projects, and not to the internal organisation of the horizontal project.

Specific conditions:

- The partnership should be composed of the structures representing at least three EU Member States, with head offices located in the MED area. It is strongly recommended to include at least one IPA partner (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro) in the partnership.
- Every project should foresee an external mid-term evaluation using the methodology proposed by the Interreg MED Programme (cf. *Programme manual, section 4.4*). The costs of the evaluation must be included in the budget of the proposal. This evaluation helps the project to adjust its progress but also contribute to the project quality, assessed in the mid-term review carried out by the JS.
- The Lead Partner should be represented by an organisation regrouping local authorities or a thematic network (formal legal structures representing institutional, scientific, thematic interests like foundations, associations, committees...). It is recommended that a partnership consists of scientific, entrepreneurial, civil society bodies in the most fluent mix in regard to their skills and experience. Local, national and regional authorities can take part if the value added of their participation is demonstrated in the proposal.
- The project will facilitate a link between the modular projects representing the territories and the “platform” project Axis 4 (governance) representing the MED area (States): networking and thematic structures will be given advantage as they match more the requirements of the project. In addition, good skills in institutional communication, capitalisation and data management will be appreciated.
- The partnership should be balanced from geopolitical and financial point of view in order to ensure a logical division of tasks and responsibilities according to the objectives to be achieved and the skills required for this: a horizontal project should keep in mind that its partnership do not directly represent some specific territories but the whole MED area in a specific Programme objective. In that sense, a good balance between West and East representatives would be appreciated

The horizontal projects will essentially be an instrument of sharing thematic results, highlighting activities of each modular project in order to promote in a structured way their implementation and transferability in the MED area. The use of a joint Internet webpage will be a determining element allowing the emergence of geographical content being recognized as transnational “MED” identity.

TIMETABLE OF THE CALL

Date	Activity
22 nd September 2015	Specific applicant’s seminar (Marseilles)
10 th November 2015	HP call launch
11 th January 2016	HP call first phase closure: partial candidature
January/February 2016 (indicative)	Eligibility and assessment phase 1
March 2016 (indicative)	Steering Committee selection
March 2016 (indicative)	Conditions and requirements of the Steering committee (only for proposals having the best scores)
1 st April – 31 st May 2016 (indicative)	HP call second phase (open only for proposals having the best scores): full candidature
June/July 2016 (indicative)	Eligibility and assessment phase 2
July or September 2016	Steering Committee selection (final selection : 8 HP in total approved)

MODALITIES OF THE CALL

A specific applicant’s seminar will be organized by the Interreg MED Programme on 22nd September in Marseilles: it will be open to all organisms interested in the HP call. The official call will be based in two different phases (**please note that the submission procedure in two phases is applicable only to horizontal projects**):

- the first phase will be open on November the 10th 2015, the 1st and will be closed on January 2016, the 11th.
Applicants shall submit their proposals through the official monitoring system Synergie CTE choosing the right type of project (horizontal project) and the right specific objective.

The first phase proposal will be based on a simplified application form and will be mainly focused on the selection of projects demonstrating partnership quality and related specific expertise in the specific activities/tasks foreseen for this type of projects.

Only the following sections are evaluated in the first phase:

first question: C.3.1. / C.3.2. / C.3.3.

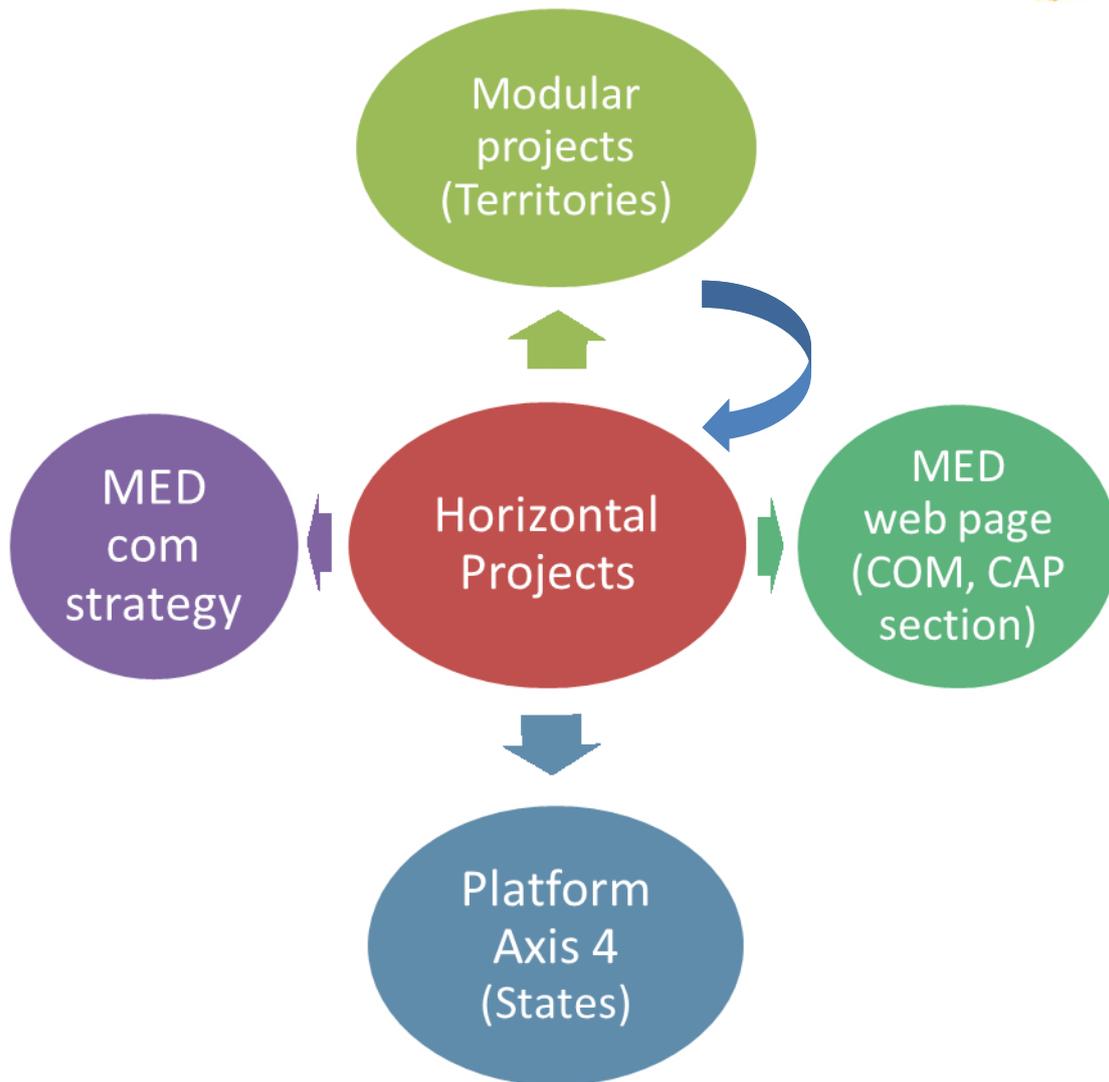
second question: B.1. / C.1.2. / C.1.3. / C.1.4.

third question: C.2.1. / D (only general budget per partner)

fourth question: B

Partnership quality will be particularly important in this phase.

- 1st phase of the submission will be followed by an eligibility check and a first assessment according to the administrative and assessment procedures approved by the Interreg MED Monitoring Committee on June 2015, the 10th (see section 3.3. *Programme manual*).
- Only proposals having the best scores will be admitted to the 2nd phase of the submission: minimum threshold required is of 24 points out of 40, thus 60% of the maximum score (minimum average score per each main section being of 5 points).
- An intermediate parallel step of information exchange, bilateral meetings or seminars could be promoted (in order to integrate possible Steering committee conditions and/or requirements) between HP partnerships (admitted to the 2nd phase) and the MED JS.
- The second phase (full application including working plan and detailed budget) is expected to be open between April 2016, the 1st and May 2016, the 31st.
- A second administrative check as well as a second final assessment will be finalized approximately between June and July 2016.
The minimum threshold required is of 75 points out of 100. *i.e.* 75% of the maximum score (minimum average score per each main section being of 5 points).
- The final selection is expected in July or September 2016.



The horizontal projects feed the programme communication and capitalisation by promoting transversal activities within each objective of the CP. Their analysis and synthesis should be proposed to the Axis 4 platform in order to highlight project results and their transfer to the stakeholders. The programme communication and capitalisation are promoted by the Interreg MED webpage.