

1. Programme highlights of the year 2017

2017 proved to be a year full of great accomplishments for the Programme. Its managing and implementing structures from both sides of the border were fully committed and worked side by side to reach the goals set for the year. In practice, this meant tireless hours of work put into preparing and launching Calls for proposals, informing and assisting potential applicants, drafting documents, manuals and guidelines, launching procurements, organizing events, assessing and selecting projects, just to name a few of the main tasks dealt with.



Looking back on our big milestones of the previous year and on the activities implemented, we have compiled an impressive list of accomplishments:

- ✓ The DMCS (Description of the Management and Control Systems) was approved through Member States' agreement, and the designation process of authorities was successfully completed;
- ✓ 2 requests for payment have been submitted to the European Commission, worth 693.707,93 EUR, both being already approved and paid by the end of 2017;
- ✓ The first Programme evaluation was carried out;
- ✓ 5 Calls for project proposals were launched in 2017 only, with a total ERDF allocation of EUR 160.201.433,95;
- ✓ 248 projects were submitted for all 7 Calls launched in the Programme frame, requesting almost double of the ERDF Programme allocation and involving more than 600 partners;
- ✓ 185 applications were checked against the administrative compliance and eligibility criteria, while 41 were assessed from quality point of view (Open Call 1);
- ✓ 2 State aid schemes (de minimis, respectively exempted State aid) were elaborated and uploaded into RegAS and help-desk activities were performed in order to support applicants and Programme structures;
- ✓ 24 Info Day sessions, 3 Partner Search Forums, 34 project generation sessions and 25 eMS help desk meetings were organized to support project applicants;
- ✓ 1628 persons attended information events held for project applicants;
- ✓ 20 technical meetings and 4 internal training sessions were organized for programme structures;
- ✓ 10 trilingual Newsflash editions and 1 Newsletter were sent out to over 2.000 contacts;
- ✓ The webpage registered over 131,000 visitors and 1,060,000 views;
- ✓ There were 572 likes, 591 follows, over 160 postings, as well as 4 rounds of prize-winning interactive contests on Facebook;

- ✓ The Annual event, titled "I ♥ ROHU cooperation", held in September 2017 in Debrecen and Timisoara, attracted more than 1,500 participants;
- ✓ 1 press conference was organized in Debrecen, on 25.09.2017, 2 interviews were held and 1 article was published in a newspaper, all in the context of the Annual Event;
- ✓ The 3rd Monitoring Committee (MC) meeting of the Programme was held, during 14 - 15.12.2017, in Szeged, Hungary;
- ✓ 20 projects were selected for contracting and over-contracting in the frame of the 1st Open Call, worth a total of more than 25 M EUR ERDF;
- ✓ There has been an intense activity and correspondence with the MC: altogether more than 60 e-mails sent on Programme related topics, 20 written procedures launched and 38 decisions issued. By the end of 2017, 11 written procedures were launched and 13 MC Decisions issued.

We are very grateful to all of our colleagues, applicants and beneficiaries for making this possible with their commitment and hard work!

2. 2018 – the year of new projects

2018 started busy, with 2 Calls active until late January. At the beginning of the year, continuous efforts were made to support project applicants. We followed this up with the contracting of the projects selected within the 1st Open Call and the related monitoring visits. In addition, a series of seminars were organized for beneficiaries in April and May, in order to provide them with information on project implementation process, on using the eMS system, regarding the FLC rules, as well as on how to communicate project results.



2018
Plans & happenings

Up until September, these are the main accomplishments of 2018:

- ✓ 2 requests for payment submitted in 2018 to the European Commission, worth 525.544,93 EUR, both being already approved and paid
- ✓ 18 subsidy contracts signed for projects under 1st Open Call, accumulating a contracting rate of 13,15% ERDF, on Programme level;
- ✓ 10 Concept Notes selected under the Restricted Calls, worth 50% of the total ERDF programme budget;
- ✓ Applications under the 2nd Open Call assessed and MC decision expected soon regarding their financing;
- ✓ The evaluation of projects submitted in the frame of the 3rd Open Call in progress.

The end of 2018 promises to be just as busy and eventful: MC meeting for the selection of the projects in the frame of the 3rd Open Call, contracting of all selected projects, monitoring visits and seminars held for the project beneficiaries, Programme Annual event, and several other activities specific for the current stage of programme implementation.

3. Outcomes of the contracting process

Following project assessment and MC selection, the contracting process of the projects within the 1st Open Call has started. Altogether, 18 financing contracts were already concluded, with a total value of EUR 27.592.102, 85 out of which EUR 23.380.116, 80 represent ERDF funding.

The allocation of ERDF for the signed contracts is EUR 15.415.184,14 for Romanian partners, respectively EUR 7.964.932,66 for Hungarian beneficiaries. The contracted projects concern initiatives regarding natural, historic and cultural heritage (Investment priority 6/c) and disaster and risk management (Investment priority 5/b).

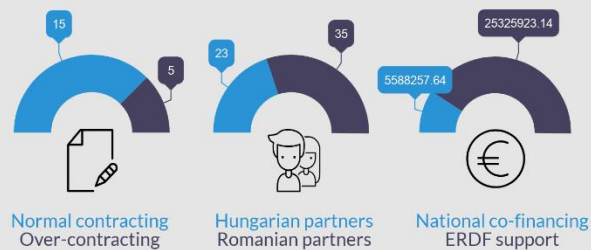
The process of concluding the co-financing contracts is handled by the Romanian and Hungarian First Level Control Units. So far, all 31 co-financing contracts with Romanian beneficiaries were signed, the total value of those contracts being of 2,349,441.15 EUR. On the Hungarian side, up to now, 10 co-financing contracts had been concluded, worth EUR 600.664,00.

Following MC decision, by the end of 2018, the Programme intends to contract the projects selected under the 2nd Open Call. In addition, with cut-off date for concluding the subsidy contracts in September 2018, the Concept Notes of flagship projects are already in pre-contracting phase.

Introducing: APPROVED PROJECTS OF THE 1ST OPEN CALL



Application period: 29.12.2016-30.06.2017.



APPROVED PROJECTS PER PRIORITIES



5/b Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems



6/c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

Projects' contribution to EU indicators

Did you know?

The Programme set out target numbers as output indicators to be achieved by 2023. These indicators ensure transparent performance evaluation as well as the contribution to the EU 2020 strategy's goals.



144 133.58

hectare surface area of habitats better conserved



3 138 943

people safeguarded by better emergency response

4. Project Implementation Manual



The Project Implementation Manual, a document of paramount importance that can come handy during all implementation phases, was published on the Programme's website, to guide beneficiaries towards successful project implementation. The compilation collects and summarizes the most important stages of project implementation, thus providing Project Partners with tips on carrying out quality activities while observing the specific Programme regulations.

Please be aware, that the 2nd revised version of the PIM was published on our website, currently being the version in force.

This document serves as a basis for beginning project implementation, so *we kindly ask every Project Partner to thoroughly get acquainted with it!*

5. Seminars and eMS trainings for Beneficiaries



Lead Beneficiary Seminars were held on both sides of the border, where colleagues from the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat, the First Level Control and the Hungarian Info Points provided information regarding the most important steps of project implementation, based on the Project Implementation Manual.

On 23/04/2018 in Oradea, Romania, 50 beneficiaries attended the event, while one day later, in Debrecen, Hungary, there were 30 beneficiaries on the Seminar.

The main topics were:

- the steps to be taken after signing the subsidy contract/partnership agreement;
- the national co-financing contract;
- reimbursement /advanced payment from the ERDF;
- communication activities and requirements for projects;
- obligations regarding the content of the documents, reimbursements which have to be submitted to the First Level Control.

As a continuation of the above seminars, an eMS training and FLC information day was held a few days later on both sides of the border. It is of key importance for Beneficiaries to understand the eMS system, as it will be the main platform for submitting reports, providing and receiving information about the current stage of project implementation. In order to ensure the transfer of hands-on knowledge, participants were walked through the steps of submitting partner/project reports and reporting modifications if the case, on the DEMO site of eMS.



6. 4th Monitoring Committee Meeting in Arad, Romania – June 28-29, 2018



Between June 28-29, 2018 the 4th meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Programme took place in Arad, Romania, where very important decision was made in what concerns the financing of 10 Concept Notes, under the Restricted Calls, worth 50% of the total ERDF programme budget, i.e. more than 94,5 mil. EUR, ERDF.

Funds were allocated for projects under the Investment priorities Ips 7/b (TEN-T infrastructure), 9/a (health-care infrastructure), 8/b (employment) and 6/c (cultural heritage), ensuring a balanced allocation of resources, thus efficiently contributing to the development and overall quality of life in the border region.

In addition to the selection of the Concept Notes, with the occasion of the meeting, other important topics had been tackled, such as the modification of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the MC, the status of programme implementation, aspects related to the pre-financing received by the Programme from the Commission, modifications of the Cooperation Programme and last but not least, the calendar of programme implementation, including the planning of the next MC meeting.

Introducing:

Approved Concept Notes of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Restricted Calls

Basic statistics:



42 partner institutions



ca. 94,5 M € ERDF support

Approved Concept Notes per priorities



6/c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage



7/b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure



8/b Supporting employment-friendly growth through the development of endogenous potential



9/a Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development

7. New acceleration and simplification actions for projects

All Programme bodies are committed to ensure a smooth operation during the entire programming period, for the success of all projects and the Programme itself. As the Managing Authority and the National Authority recognized the need for a simplified and accelerated implementation process, they agreed during the last MC Meeting, held in Arad (RO) 28-29. June 2018, to release a series of actions that, applied to the projects under implementation, will lead to a faster and more flexible accomplishment of project and programme objectives.



The 4 measures to be taken are based on project beneficiaries' feedback, and concern the applicability of the Project Implementation Manual (PIM), the eligibility of preparation costs, the reporting of implementation costs, as well as the eligibility of promotion and information materials and their related costs.

In line with the emphasized importance of continuous communication, we kindly encourage partners to contact us (colleagues from the Joint Secretariat, First Level Control and Info Points) with any questions they may have.

On behalf of the Programme bodies, we wish you a successful project implementation!

Stay tuned via our website and like us on Facebook!

www.interreg-rohu.eu



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