

**Questions and Answers
under**

Guide for application with concept notes (Call 1) under the Territorial Strategy of the INTERREG VI-A IPA Bulgaria North Macedonia Programme 2021-2027, Specific objective 1.2 “Development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation”

No	Question	Answer
1.	<p>In relation with the 1st call for concept notes of project proposals under the Specific objective 1.2 “Development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation ”the Territorial Strategy of the INTERREG Bulgaria-North Macedonia Programme 2021-2027, the South-West University "Neofit Rilski" (public body) intends to submit a concept note of project proposal. In the framework of the project the South-West University intends to renovate a site for which the university holds a deed for private state-owned property.</p> <p>Is the university an eligible applicant in this case or do we need to take measures to change the ownership from private state to public state ownership?</p>	<p>According to the <i>Guide for application with concept notes</i>, point 4.6. <i>Scope of project activities</i>, the planned investment activities in the form of building of new or rehabilitating existing infrastructure, should be carried out exclusively on state-owned or municipal property (including the listed exceptions). There are no restrictions on the type of state property - private or public (according to Bulgarian legislation).</p>
2.	<p>How we can organize cooperation and partnership on the cross-border program. We aimed for the leading organization to be a cultural institution from Kyustendil and partners from North Macedonia. With a good distribution of activities, according to the expertise of the partners from the Bulgarian side, we want to include 2 NGOs dealing with cultural heritage (both are registered in Sofia), as well as Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In what way would you advise us to use the expertise of colleagues and institutions, so that the partnership is expert, but also meets the</p>	<p>According to the Guide for application with concept notes, point 4.5 <i>Project partnership</i> (section <i>Eligible lead and project partners</i>), all project partners, including lead partner, must be registered and operate in the Programme area at least 3 years prior to the application. Territorial focus of the Call is the entire cross-border region of the INTERREG VI-A IPA Bulgaria North Macedonia Programme 2021-2027 (Districts of Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil in Bulgaria, and North-East, East and South-East regions in North Macedonia).</p> <p>The cultural institution from Kyustendil, which meet the eligibility criteria, can acts as a Lead partner or project partner. NGOs registered and operate in Sofia are not eligible candidates under the current call.</p> <p>Please taking into account that expenditures, necessary for hiring qualified experts, who are not</p>

	<p>requirements of the program? We are still specifying the partner from North Macedonia. As far as I understand, it doesn't matter the city or district as long as it is within the specified territorial scope of the North-East, East, and South-East regions.</p>	<p>part of the project team or partner organizations, must be budgeted in BC 4 External expertise and services costs. Please have in mind that a project partner and its employees can never act as a contractor in the same project. Note that a "partner" involved in the project implementation as "Lead Partner" or "project partner" is excluded from any forms of contracting to other partners within the same project.</p>
3.	<p>In connection with an invitation to collect conceptual projects under the Interreg Bulgaria-North Macedonia 2021-2027 Programme, as well as in order to achieve correctness with regard to our potential partners from the State Enterprise "Macedoniasume", the Republic of North Macedonia, please provide us with your opinion on the eligibility of the candidates: Southwestern State Forest Enterprise (SWSFE) was established on the basis of Art. 163 of the Law on Forests in connection with Art. 62, para. 3 of the Commercial Law and Order No. RD 49-106 of 04/13/2011 and Order No. RD 49-210 of 06/04/2011 of the Minister of Agriculture and Food.</p> <p>Management bodies are the Minister of Agriculture and the Board of Directors. According to Art. 168 of the Law on Forests, the Minister of Agriculture exercises the property rights of the state in state enterprises; determines the headquarters of state-owned enterprises; appoints and dismisses the members of the management boards; approves regulations for the organization and operation of state-owned enterprises; approves the annual financial plans of state-owned enterprises; makes decisions on profit distribution and loss coverage; makes decisions on the spending of the funds under the funds created and managed by the state-owned enterprises; approves the annual financial statements and/or the annual reports on the activity of the state-owned enterprises; makes</p>	<p>According to the Guide for application with concept notes, point 4.5 <i>Project partnership (section Eligible lead and project partners are legally established)</i>, eligible partners are: Local/regional bodies and authorities (incl. regional structures of central public authorities and statutory bodies); MSMEs – stand for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in European Union law (EU recommendation 2003/361); NGOs and other socio-economic partners; Academic, research, training, education, social and cultural institutions. Provisions of art. 62 para 3 of the Commercial Law of Republic fall within the definition of regional/national public organization provided in the Guidelines for Applicants (GfA) for the current call.</p> <p>All project partners, including lead partner, must be registered and operate in the Programme area at least 3 years prior to the application. In case a structure of local/regional/national authority is not and cannot act as a legal entity, its legally established central organisation, if such exists, shall be the project partner. Territorial focus of the Call is the entire cross-border region of the INTERREG VI-A IPA Bulgaria North Macedonia Programme 2021-2027 (Districts of Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil in Bulgaria, and North-East, East and South-East regions in North Macedonia).</p> <p>Observing the principle of transparency and equal treatment of all potential applicants, the Operational Unit cannot give prior opinion on eligibility of specific applicants, since that shall be subject to the eligibility check of the concept note. The assessment working group, after it is established, is the body that will possess the entire and complete information regarding each concept note and will make the final decision on the eligibility of applicants. Please, see section 6. <i>Project ideas identification process</i> of the GfA.</p>

<p>decisions on the establishment of property rights and mortgages and agrees requests for leasing properties that are not forest territories; makes decision^ on the purchase, disposal, scrapping or liquidation of durable tangible assets with a balance sheet value of over BGN 30,000; approves requests of state-owned enterprises for the use of credits; on the proposal of the management board of the state-owned enterprise, makes decisions on the creation and closure of territorial divisions of the state-owned enterprises and on determining their area of activity and headquarters; exercises the powers given to him by law related to the activities of the state-owned enterprises.</p> <p>The enterprise owns and manages the state forest territories within its territorial scope of activity, falling within the boundaries of eight administrative regions - all State Forest Units (SFU)/ State Hunting Units (SHU) from Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pematik, Sofia City, Sofia - Region, as well as Forestries from Lovech, Pazardzhik and Plovdiv Region. The headquarters of the Company and the address of management are in the region Blagoevgrad, Blagoevgrad, 18 Zora Str.</p> <p>The enterprise has UIC 201627506.</p> <p>The main tasks of the enterprise are aimed at sustainable management, maintenance of the diversity of ecosystems, protection of biological diversity and forest – state property.</p> <p>Having in mind the fact that Southwestern State Forest Enterprise - Blagoevgrad, although registered in accordance with Art. 62 of the Commercial Law, undoubtedly provides public services and manages forests - state property, for which appropriate</p>	
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	<p>financial guarantees have been provided by the competent public law bodies, would you please confirm that SWSFE is an eligible candidate under the Interreg Bulgaria-North Macedonia 2021 -2027 Programme and can participate with a conceptual project under the announced invitation under the Specific objective "Development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation"</p>	
4.	<p>The Bureau for regional development is an institution within the Ministry of local self-government of Republic of North Macedonia with separate legal entity. The Bureau is responsible for implementation of the balanced regional development policy in the country. For the purposes of carrying out professional tasks relevant for the development of the planning region, 8 (eight) Centers for development of the 8 (eight) planning regions are established and functional. Our request for clarification refers to the question whether the Bureau is eligible to apply as a beneficiary of the Interreg Programme?</p>	<p>The text in the Guide for application with concept notes, point <i>4.5 Project partnership</i> clearly specifies who are the eligible partners, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local/regional bodies and authorities (incl. regional structures of central public authorities and statutory bodies); - MSMEs – stand for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in European Union law (EU recommendation 2003/361); - NGOs and other socio-economic partners; - Academic, research, training, education, social and cultural institutions. <p>Please, also have in mind that all project partners, including lead partner, must be registered and operate in the Programme area at least 3 years prior to the application. In case a structure of local/regional/national authority is not and cannot act as a legal entity, its legally established central organisation, if such exists, shall be the project partner. Territorial focus of the Call is the entire cross-border region of the INTERREG VI-A IPA Bulgaria North Macedonia Programme 2021-2027 (Districts of Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil in Bulgaria, and North-East, East and South-East regions in North Macedonia).</p> <p>Observing the principle of transparency and equal treatment of all potential applicants, the Operational Unit cannot give prior opinion on eligibility of specific applicants, since that shall be subject to the eligibility check of the concept note. The assessment working group, after it is established, is the body that will possess the entire and complete information regarding each concept note and will make the final decision on the eligibility of applicants. Please, see section 6. <i>Project ideas identification process</i> of the GfA.</p>
5.	<p>In relation with the 1st call for concept notes of project proposals under the Specific objective 1.2 "Development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation" the Territorial</p>	<p>In regards to the Guide for application (GfA) with concept notes, section Financial aspects, the project budget should be min € 500 000 and max € 1 000 000. The investment component (works only, or works and supply) of the project idea should be no less than 60% of the total eligible costs. The GfA does not set a requirement for the investment component to be equally borne by all project partners.</p>

	<p>Strategy of the INTERREG Bulgaria-North Macedonia Programme 2021-2027, in the guide for application with concept notes it is written that the investment component on a project level should be at least 60 %. Is it obligatory for all partners to have investment component? Is it possible for just one of the partners to have investment component and the rest of them - soft type actions?</p> <p>My second question is related with the result indicators: is it obligatory for the investment component to be implemented on a registered cultural and tourism site?</p>	<p>As for the second question – the only requirement that the GfA imposes in relation to the project investments on tourism and cultural sites is the type of the property that is subject to building new or rehabilitating existing infrastructure – it should be carried out exclusively on state-owned or municipal property. Only the owner of the respective property rights, or the legal body that has acquired the management rights of that particular property, is entitled to contract the implementation of those activities, i.e. it should be a project partner.</p>
6.	<p>According to the package of documents for application under the 1st call for concept notes of project proposals, the projects must contribute to the Programme priority specific objective RSO5.2: Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security, in areas other than urban areas. Please, specify “areas other than urban areas”. Does it mean that the interventions should be planned out of the town/ city areas or urbanized territories?</p>	<p>The definition of “urban area” is set out in the INSPIRE Regulation, and it can be also consulted on the following link https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/codelist/SupplementaryRegulationValue/7_1_4_4_UrbanArea. Please, note that by definition “areas other than urban areas” includes the notion of peri-urban areas whose meaning is also articulated in the INSPIRE Regulation and can be found here https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/codelist/SupplementaryRegulationValue/7_1_4_7_PeriUrbanAreas. Interreg programmes differentiate the eligible localities (‘urban areas’ and areas other than urban’) of PO5 interventions at a more semantic and technical level, where significant part of project investments are not expected to take place in purely urban areas, but it may inevitably touches upon physical part of a town or a city.</p>