**Q & A, Call for Concept Notes – Integrated Territorial Strategy for development of the Romania – Bulgaria region as of the date of 17.02.2025**

| **No.****Question** | **Answer** |
| --- | --- |
| **ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS & PARTNERSHIP** |
|  | Regarding SO2, M2.3:  Supporting local businesses, entrepreneurship and job creation including the circularity of tourism services, having in mind that SMEs are not eligible under this call, this means that we can submit a project where we can budget a minimis scheme, in which we SMEs can apply for grants? | According to the Guidelines for Concept Notes (call 1), SMEs are not eligible to submit concept notes or to apply as partners under the current call.Only eligible entities will be considered for funding under the current call (see 2.2. of the Guidelines).A call dedicated for SMEs will be launched at a later stage under the Interreg VI-A Ro-Bg Programme. |
|  | Please clarify if a partnership can submit one project for SO1 and SO2, considering the fact that one partner wants to apply under SO1 and the other one idea is under SO2 or we should find a consensus for only one specific objective?In how many project concepts an organization can participate as a project partner? | No limitations are established in the Guidelines for the number of Concept Notes that an applicant or a partnership can submit.However, the application must also comply with the conditions of the envisaged financing source (Interreg VI Ro-Bg or other sources). The Guidelines for Concept Notes does not prevent the applicants to plan investments from multiple SO. Still, any project idea should be jointly developed and both partners should contribute to the objectives of the project.  |
|  | I am interested in the territorial scope of the program and whether we, as a primary school in Plovdiv, can apply for the project, respectively for Priority 2 A greener region (PO2)? | The current call for Concept Notes is open to applicants who are registered and/or functioning in the ITS geographical area.In line with the Integrated Territorial Strategy (ITS) and with Annex 3 of the Guidelines for Concept Notes (List of Local Administrative Units within the Ro-Bg ITS area), Plovdiv is not part of the selected territory for the ITS. |
|  | Are **universities** eligible for this call? The headquarters of the University is in a historical building | Eligible applicants are national, regional and local public bodies, institutions, administrations, agencies, including the bodies governed by public law (which fall under the definition of Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement), county/district councils, local councils/ municipalities, etc., , Chambers of Commerce and Regional Development Agencies functioning in the ITS area and registered in accordance to national law, registered and/or functioning in the ITS area, active in the field of cycling, tourism, culture. Public universities in Romania are public institutions with legal personality. From this perspective, a public university functioning in the ITS area is eligible under this call. The characteristics of the buildings of the university are not relevant in terms of eligibility of the applicant.  |
|  | NGOs have to be registred in the ITS teritory? Or is enough to have activities in the ITS teritory? | All eligible applicants have to be registered and/or functioning in the ITS area, according to provision 2.2 Eligible applications and applicants under ITS. Please note that during the assessment, partners may be requested to submit additional information or to indicate legal acts in support of their declared compliance with the requirements in Annex 3. Additional information will be required under the form of a written document, containing explanations, under the signature of the applicant, in the scope of the assessment. |
|  | Is there any chance to have the harbour's administration as partner in the project to install signaling or bike racks or cycling lanes within the port? | All partners must comply with the rules on eligible applicants. Depending on the legal status of the harbour administration, this entity could be considered for partnering in the project, especially if it has activity in the ITS area. However, please also consider that the installation of different equipment could be done in a location even if the owner of the location is not a partner in the project (e.g. the owner gives its legal agreement to partners, to install equipment and to maintain it in the location for at least 5 years after the project closure). So, if it is about installing equipment, you may consider various options. If the projects envisages building cycling lanes, the owner of a real property right should be partner in the project.  |
|  | Related to the size of the partnership, we know it is recommended that the partnership is formed of max. four (4) organizations in compliance with the conditions of the envisaged financing source.Does this number include associated partners as well? | The partnership recommended size refers to lead partner and partners, not to associated partners.  |
|  | In how many project concepts an organization can participate as a project partner? | No limitations are established in the Guidelines for the number of Concept Notes that an applicant or a partnership can submit. |
| **ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIVITIES** |
|  | Our municipality is applying to the MRDPW Bulgaria for a concept for ITI with 2 projects "Construction of a pedestrian bicycle route with infrastructure for tourist attractions Evrovelo6". It mainly envisages the placement of markings and information signs along a 20 km long route and the construction of infrastructure for tourist attractions. We plan to apply under your advertisement for the same route, but now with the construction of an additional bicycle lane with a length of 6 km. on the same road after additional installation of the guardrail and installation of photovoltaic lighting. This is a clear demarcation of the site for implementation. Our question is whether this is admissible for funding from the program. The second site is the construction of a site for the use of the site "Roman Tomb Mausoleum" village of Babovo, which is a UNESCO site and is located in close proximity to the official route of the "Evrovelo6". We plan to carry out the construction in two stages.The first stage includes the construction of infrastructure related to the protection and exhibition of archaeological immovable cultural values;• Ensuring an accessible environment - approach to the site, information boards, signposts, etc.;• Construction of new infrastructure - electricity supply, cabling, water supply, sewage, alley network, roads, etc.;This is the subject of national financing, and for the second stage, the very deconservation of the tomb and the construction of a visitor center, we plan to apply under your program. With this clear demarcation, our question is whether this is admissible for financing under your program. | In order to be eligible for financing under ITS in line with the Guidelines for Concept Notes, you must fulfil the criteria detailed in section 2.1. and 2.2 of the Guidelines. The Guidelines encourage projects with clear synergies and complementarities with other initiatives. Therefore, with the condition that your project idea meet all requirements set out in the Guidelines, as well as the budget limits, you are encouraged to apply. |
|  | Following the conversations we had during the meetings for to the current Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria program (Priority 4: Integrated Region) and the already opened Call for project ideas for 5.2 (Promoting integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security in non-urban areas), we would like to ask for your opinion and advice about the possible applying a Concept Note regarding our project for the "Black Sea Route" tourist route.As we are aware, the Strategy Board decided to accept and support the development of the following directions as adjacent routes to the EuroVelo6 infrastructure:- Silistra - Dobrich - Durankulak;- Silistra - Dobrich - Balchik.During the meetings we had proposed the "Black Sea Route" tourist route (which is connecting Constanta, Varna, Burgas and Istanbul) as a meaningful continuation of the EuroVelo6 with the idea of connecting the city of Constanta in Romania with Balchik in Bulgaria. In this way, the directions to Constanta, Durankulak and Balchik would be connected, and bicycle tourists traveling to these points would have a logical continuation of their route, regardless of whether they were heading north or south. We truly believe that the section of the "Black Sea Route" tourist route between Constanta and Balchik as a connection of these two parts of EuroVelo6 can provide a one-of-a-kind experience for tourists and would boost the bicycle tourism on both sides of the border and along the sea coast.We have already made several meetings regarding the "Black Sea Route" with representatives of Balchik, Kavarna and Constanta municipalities and we have their support. The initiative has been also supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Transport, i.e. our government has interest in its development.The European cycling federation and European Ramblers association also support the initiative as they proposed it to be a continuation of EuroVelo6 and the E-3 path as a beginning of its development.In regard to the above I'm sending to you again the presentation and description of our initiative with a request to give us your advice about:- is a similar connection between Constanta and Balchik, in particular using the "Black Sea Route" concept, eligible for application for funding under the current call?- how relevant to the program such a concept note would be considered? | Please refer to the approved Integrated Territorial Strategy and its Annexes for details on the EuroVelo6 main and secondary routes, eligible for funding under the ITS and the Call for Concept Notes. Part of the Black Sea Route is eligible under the ITS and the Guidelines for Concept Notes. The connection between Constanta and Balchik is also part of the ITS territory. However, please consider the budget limitations stated in the Guidelines, compared to the activities and investments that are envisaged.  |
|  | We are working on a concept note for the development of an integrated infrastructure project which will include both the development of the cycling routes in the municipality and the creation of a tourist infrastructure for recreation and rest - parking for caravans with all amenities to guarantee a pleasant stay of the visitors in the municipality.The parking infrastructure will be built on land, owned by the municipality. Still, the future management - maintenance, cleaning, security, etc. is outside the scope of the municipality's activities, so we intend to award it to a concessionaire under the Concession Act of the Republic of Bulgaria. We would like to ask if such a use of the infrastructure meets the requirements of the procedure. We expect a substantial increase in the number of visitors to the municipality due to the new parking for caravans, thus the local businesses will observe a substantial rise in customers (one of the goals of the program). In the same time, the management of the infrastructure will be performed by a company specialising in such activities, thus ensuring high quality of service and optimal maintenance of the infrastructure.Any income from the operation/concessional management of the infrastructure will be reinvested in the construction/rehabilitation of the remaining technical infrastructure (roads, parks, tourism trails) in the surrounding area to improve the life of the citizens of the municipality.  | The construction of camping sites falls under Measure 2.1 of the ITS, ”Development of touristic infrastructure and cultural assets”. The parking for caravans, in the proximity of tourist attractions falls under the specified measure. Considering the indicative types of actions financed under the current Call for Concept Notes under the Integrated Territorial Strategy, actions for which the partners do not act as economic operators and for which there are no considerations to assume that the competition will be distorted, the Concept Notes **shall not be subject to state aid rules**, where the state aid is defined as *any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods […], in so far as it affects trade between Member States* (Article 107(1) of the Treaty).Please pay attention to the project idea activities which could be most susceptible to be subject of state aid provisions, for example:* aid to operators: operators who make use of the infrastructure to provide services to end-users receive an advantage if the use of the infrastructure provides them with an economic benefit that they would not have obtained under normal market conditions; or
* aid to end-user: if the operator of an infrastructure has received State aid or if its resources constitute State resources it is in a position to grant an advantage to the users of the infrastructure (if they are undertakings) unless the infrastructure is made available to the users on market terms; etc.

Thus, in case of the examples above mentioned, an economic advantage to the operator/end-user can in particular be excluded if the concession to operate the infrastructure (or parts of it)/the fees for use of the infrastructure is assigned for a positive price/have been set through a tender that meets all the relevant conditions (the tender procedure has to be competitive, transparent, sufficiently well-publicized, non-discriminatory, unconditional (to allow all interested and qualified bidders to participate in the process), using and complying with the national laws on public procurement of the country on whose territory the partner which organizes the procedure is located. |
|  | If a municipality develops a caravan parking as part of the tourism infrastructure, could we award it's management to a concessionaire under the Concession Act of the Republic of Bulgaria? Any income from the operation/concessional management of the infrastructure will be reinvested in the construction/rehabilitation of the remaining technical infrastructure (roads, parks, tourism trails) in the surrounding area to improve the life of the citizens of the municipality. | Please see the answer from above.  |
|  | Is it eligible under the call, the project partners to participate with an infrastructural project, which investment part do not include construction/modernization of cycle infrastructure? I mean is it eligible the investment part of the project to include only construction/modernization of cultural and touristic objects on the territory of the both partners? | The project concept must include a combination of investment actions (e.g., cycling network infrastructure and/or facilities) and soft-type actions (e.g., services).If your project idea aligns with **SO2**, project partners are eligible to participate with an infrastructure project, even if the investment component does not involve the construction or modernization of cycling infrastructure but it does focus on the construction or modernization of cultural and tourist sites within the territories of both partners. Still, in order to increase the chances of your project to obtain higher scoring during assessment, you may consider adding some support facilities and/or safety features for cycling tourists, within your site or along the roads leading to it. |
|  | Is it eligible under the call, an investment only in a part of the cycle infrastructure which is a part of local route - for example reconstruction of appr. 1 km. road, but not a whole length of the local route? Also, is there some limits regarding the constructional works on the local cycle infrastructure? I mean, is it possible to plan construction of road and established of cycle route or the investment need to be only in cycle route and excludes reconstruction works on the road, which is a part of the cycle local route? | The length of the newly built / significantly upgraded cycling routes or lanes will be included in the Concept Note and will be taken in consideration for the overall assessment of the project idea, in accordance with the evaluation criteria. This call is not dedicated to building roads. As a general rule, reconstruction works of the road infrastructure are not eligible under the present call for Concept Notes.Still, the call allows punctual interventions such as “ensuring road safety for the sections overlapping the EuroVelo Route, in view of complying with standards related to traffic signaling systems and/or additional development of infrastructure dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians, such as tunnels, bypasses, bridges, overpasses and walkways and protected cycling paths.”From another perspective, project activities which may not be eligible under this call or, in general, under the Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme, may be still included into the project, if financed from the partners’ own contribution or from other sources.Finally, please also consider the budgetary limits for the submitted Concept Notes. |
|  | Is the construction of a dispensary eligible for this call? | Any investments must respond to the specific objectives of the ITS, namely the development of the EuroVelo6 route and/or supporting tourism activities and connected industries. The health sector is not targeted by the current call.  |
|  | Can a feasibility study for a new dedicated cycling-pedestrian bridge over Danube could be financed? It definitely could not be build within the frame of the program, but a project could pave the way for the final construction. | The project ideas must contain investment(s). If the project you are planning to submit respects this requirement, then any other activities (like drafting a feasibility study) that are in line with the proposed investments can be included. However, a project focused only on drafting a feasibility study will not be considered under the present call.  |
|  | Does planning infrastructure (feasibility study on EV6 for example) could be funded if the project does not include the actual  building of the infrastructure (due to the lack of finance). In short can we apply for planning 100km but building only 10km (random number example)? | See the answer above. Still, you may consider the possibility of proposing a project idea for planning AND building the 10 km of cycling route or path, while the rest will be addressed in complementarity, under other projects, from other sources of financing.  |
|  | Please tell what you mean measures for road safety | The Guidelines for Concept Notes mentions the following measures for road safety (with priority for EuroVelo 6 route): complying with standards related to traffic signalling systems and/or additional development of infrastructure dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians, such as tunnels, bypasses, bridges, overpasses walkways and protected cycling paths. Safe cycling involves limited interaction with motorized traffic, with other cyclists and pedestrians.However, the applicants can determine what are the most relevant and efficient safety features that have to be installed on the supported infrastructure, in line with the budget and following the numerous guidelines and best practice examples of the EuroVelo, as well as complying with the national legislation on this topic.Several sources of information is available here: * Cycling Design Principles - <https://www.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cycling-Design-Best-Practices-Report.pdf>,
* EuroVelo Development Guide - <https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/EuroVelo-Development-Guide_Final.pdf>,
* EuroVelo European Certification Standard - [https://eurovelo.com/download/document/ECS-Manual-2021\_online.pdf?\_gl=1\*8ynph0\*\_gcl\_au\*NTU1NzAzOTQxLjE3MzkyNzE1NzE](https://eurovelo.com/download/document/ECS-Manual-2021_online.pdf?_gl=1*8ynph0*_gcl_au*NTU1NzAzOTQxLjE3MzkyNzE1NzE).
* Guide Romanian Cycling Infrastructure - <https://www.mdlpa.ro/uploads/articole/attachments/642fe22085d91361687322.pdf>

National legislation on road safety should be also considered. |
|  | Is it mandatory to build a number of km of bike roads in a hard project? | There is no minimum limit of km of bike roads to be build. From the perspective of the assessment criteria, projects are encouraged to demonstrate their contribution to the cycling infrastructure (a maximum of 20 points are assigned to the criterion Effective Support for Cycling Tourism). Project ideas to be financed from Interreg VI A Romania-Bulgaria must contain the mandatory pair/s of indicators including at least one of the two pairs of ERDF indicators (investment indicators), namely RCO58 Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported and RCO77 Number of cultural and tourism sites supported. See the Guidelines for Concept Notes for further details.  |
|  | You mentioned at some point “pathways” to natural, cultural heritage locations etc. Can you please elaborate on what you mean by “pathways” from the perspective of the needed infrastructure and the modality of access (by foot, by bicycle, etc).  | From the perspective of the assessment criteria, projects are encouraged to demonstrate their contribution to the cycling infrastructure (20 points are assigned to the criterion Effective Support for Cycling Tourism). Pathways usually refers to pedestrian pathways. In the context of the present call for concept notes, pathways may refer to both pedestrian and cycling. Pathways for pedestrians or cycling paths for cyclists are encouraged to complement main investments in cycling infrastructure or touristic or cultural objectives, to increase their accessibility and to encourage tourism activities.  |
|  | Is there financing for green energy within this call? | Green energy is not the main focus of the current call. However, if investments in alternative sources of energy have a clear and necessary connection to the main investments of the project ideas, such activities can be included, with the condition of respecting the budgetary constraints.  |
|  | Following our review of the Guidelines for Concept Notes, we require some clarifications regarding the types of touristic infrastructure that may be modernized, rehabilitated, or restored under Specific Objective 2, Measure 2.1 – Developing Touristic Infrastructure and Cultural Assets.In this context, could you please confirm whether zoos, cinemas, and stadiums, which are publicly owned, are eligible for support under this measure?We would greatly appreciate your guidance on this matter and look forward to your response. | The current call for concept notes encourages applicants to identify which touristic attractions or cultural points are more likely to contribute to the overall specific objectives of the ITS. The examples you provided could be eligible, with the condition of meeting the specific requirements of Interreg VI A Romania-Bulgaria or of any other sources of financing that the applicant considers.  |
|  | Regarding the open call for concept notes under ITS, please give your justification on the following questions:1. Is it eligible under the call, the project partners to participate with an infrastructural project, which investment part do not include construction/modernization of cycle infrastructure? I mean is it eligible the investment part of the project to include only construction/modernization of cultural and touristic objects on the territory of the both partners?2. Is it eligible under the call, an investment only in a part of the cycle infrastructure which is a part of local route - for example reconstruction of appr. 1 km. road, but not a whole length of the local route? Also, is there some limits regarding the constructional works on the local cycle infrastructure? I mean, is it possible to plan construction of road and established of cycle route or the investment need to be only in cycle route and excludes reconstruction works on the road, which is a part of the cycle local route? | 1. Project ideas to be financed from Interreg VI A Romania-Bulgaria must contain the mandatory pair/s of indicators including at least one of the two pairs of ERDF indicators (investment indicators), namely RCO58 Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported and RCO77 Number of cultural and tourism sites supported. Therefore, projects that plan to invest in cultural and touristic objectives are eligible, with the condition of respecting the integrated approach and all other requirements. However, from the perspective of the assessment criteria, projects are encouraged to demonstrate their contribution to the cycling infrastructure (20 points are assigned to the criterion Effective Support for Cycling Tourism).
2. No minimum number of km of cycling route to be built or modernized has been established. However, please consider the assessment criteria when designing your project ideas. The cycle route must meet criteria of safety and must be separated from the road. The investment should only focus on the cycling infrastructure, not on the road infrastructure.
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| **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES** |
|  | It is possible to submit one project with contains investments activities from SO1 and SO2? For example, 2 millions for cycle tourism infrastructure and 1 million for renovation of churches.  | The Guidelines for Concept Notes does not prevent the applicants to plan investments from multiple SO. Moreover, applicants are encouraged to design project ideas with an integrated character, combining activities from multiple SOs. Please keep in mind that the project idea must meet all conditions detailed in the Guidelines.  |
|  | In Section 1/1.3, in the table detailing the indicative financial allocation available for the present call, there are 2 different total amounts corresponding, each, to a SO: 22.500.000 euro for SO1, and 33.750.000 euro for SO2.Given this tiebreaker, of different total budgets corresponding to different SOs, please clarify if one concept note must respond to/address only one ITS specific Objective: SO1, or SO2?, or can respond to two SOs in one single concept note?For example, our concept note will regard the **development of a modernized cycling lane** (being addressed by SO1) and also will **develop a camping site near a natural landmark** (being addressed by SO2). If the case might be that each of these two types of interventions can not be framed under 1 single concept note, we will submit two different concept note: one, addressing SO1, and one addressing SO2, but your clarification upon this issue is important in order for us to not wronglt interpret the Guidelines,In conclusion, please clarify **if we can cover/include both above mentioned interventions** (addressed according to the Guidelines under two different SOs), in one single concept note, **or each intervention addressing a Specific Objective, must be framed under one single concept note?** | A Concept Note is expected to contribute or respond to one or several of the specific objectives within the available budget threshold. The Guidelines for Concept Notes does not prevent the applicants to plan investments from multiple SOs. Moreover, applicants are encouraged to design project ideas with an integrated character, combining activities from multiple SOs. Please keep in mind that the project idea must meet all conditions detailed in the Guidelines.In the described situation is important to make sure that the proposed actions under the 2 objectives fall within the maximum budget limit of 6.000.000 euro. |
| **BUDGET** |
|  | Could you please provide a full list of eligible expenditures for the projects to be submitted under the Concept notes call? | A list of eligible expenditure is not available for the call for concept notes, as this call is available for concept notes that could be financed from different financing sources. Regarding the concept notes that could be financed under the Interreg VI-A Ro-Bg Programme, an applicant guide along with a list of eligible expenditure will be available for selected concept notes. At this stage, it is only necessary to provide an estimated budget of the project idea. However, in order to have an idea of the types of expenditure that may be eligible under the Interreg VI-A Ro-Bg Programme, you may consult Regulation EU 2021/1059 (Interreg Regulation) which presents the categories of eligible expenditure in articles 37 to 44. Equally, you may consult the [Project Implementation Manual](https://interregviarobg.eu/assets/2024/01/pim-interreg-vi-a-romania-bulgaria.pdf) for details about how rules on the eligible expenditure are implemented (see notably pages 32-35). Finally, you may consult the Programme website for examples of eligible expenditure categories from the previous calls for projects under the Programme (<https://interregviarobg.eu/en/calls-for-proposals>). |
|  | We're currently assessing the possibility of applying to the current call under ITS and we were wondering if you can clarify for us the matter of the maximal budget for operations.Context: the guidelines and the methodology for assessment, both documents currently available on the interreg VI website, mention different figures: the guidelines briefly mention a range of 300.000 - 6.000.000 euros while the second document offers a range of 300.000 - 3.500.000 detailed between hard and soft operations. | The methodology for assessment of the ITS is a document drafted by the Interreg VI-A Ro-Bg Programme bodies and it presents the general criteria for assessing the ITS, not individual project ideas. The proposed budget for the submitted concept notes should be within the 300,000 to 6,000,000 Euros limits, as it is written in the guidelines.  |
| **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA** |
|  | 1. Does the distance from a project location to EuroVelo 6 is calculated in a straight line from the specific location of the project to EuroVelo6?2. If a project has included  multiple locations at different distances from EuroVelo, how are the points granted calculated upon evaluation? | 1. The distance between the main intervention of the project and the EuroVelo6 will be calculated based on maps, on the existing road infrastructure, and on the GPS coordinates that the applicant will provide in the Concept Note.
2. The distance that will be assessed under the ”Proximity to the EuroVelo6 route” criteria is the distance from the main intervention of the project to the EuroVelo6 route (see Table 3. ITS prioritization criteria). In accordance with the Guidelines, ”the main intervention of the project defines its most important output which may be an investment but also an activity. If compared to other interventions of the project, the main intervention will be defined by applying the following criteria, in this order: budget, number of people benefiting from that output, duration of the activity. If all activities cannot be not related to a certain location, then the place of the main intervention will be the headquarters of the lead partner”.
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|  | In accordance to the Criteria "Proximity to the EuroVelo6 route", different points are granted, to different distances: for eg. 20 points if the main intervention is located on the course of the EuroVelo6 route, and 10 points are granted if the main intervention is located within 10-20 km distance from the course of the EuroVelo6 route.Based on this example, and having in mind that each project partner will develop interventions, please clarify what would be the points granted in the following situation:-LP`s main intervention will be located on the course of the EuroVelo6 routeand-PP1`s main intervention will located within 10-20 km distance from the course of the EuroVelo6 routeThe same goes for the **second criteria "Effective support for cycling tourism": please clarify what would be the points granted in the following situation:**-LP will target over 30 km of cycling routes to be endowed with support facilities and substantial safety featuresand-PP1 will target 12 km of cycling routes to be endowed with some support facilitiesThe chances of having the same geographical proximity to the EuroVelo6 route or the same necessities of endowment, for both project partners (or 3 partners), is low, and in this context, it is important for the beneficiaries to understand how the points will be granted, specifically for these 2 criteria (above mentioned) | The distance that will be assessed under the ”Proximity to the EuroVelo6 route” criteria is the distance from the main intervention of the project to the EuroVelo6 route (see Table 3. ITS prioritization criteria). In accordance with the Guidelines, page 28, ”the main intervention of the project defines its most important output which may be an investment but also an activity. If compared to other interventions of the project, the main intervention will be defined by applying the following criteria, in this order: budget, number of people benefiting from that output, duration of the activity. If all activities cannot be related to a certain location, then the place of the main intervention will be the headquarters of the lead partner”.So, if the main intervention of the project is located on the course of the EuroVelo6 route, the project idea could get the maximum scoring for the criterion "Proximity to the EuroVelo6 route". For the criterion ”Effective support to cycling tourism”, the distance of the cycling routes created/significantly upgraded within the project will be calculated as a cumulative result of all project partners. The same cumulative approach will be used to assess the endowments, on condition that partners ensure an equivalent level of endowment. Please take into consideration:* on one side, to describe how your project satisfies the conditions to consider a cycling route or lane as being “significantly upgraded”, as explained in section 2.4, point 4 of the Guidelines and
* on the other side, to describe how your project satisfies the cumulative or alternative conditions concerning the endowments and the length of cycling routes or lanes, as the case may be.

Based on the description of the project intervention, the highest possible scoring will be awarded, depending on the respect of conditions described within the criterion. If the project will deliver over 30 km of **newly built or substantially upgraded** cycling routes or lanes, endowed with support facilities **and** substantial safety features, the project idea could obtain the maximum scoring for the criterion "Effective support for cycling tourism". |
|  | For the second criteria Table 3 ITS project ideas prioritization criteria, "Effective support for cycling tourism": please clarify what would be the points granted in the following situation:-LP will target over 30 km of cycling routes to be endowed with support facilities and substantial safety features and - PP1 will target 12 km of cycling routes to be endowed with some support facilities | Please see the answer above.  |
|  | Please provide an accurate and objective clarification on the following prioritization criterion: *Effective support for cycling tourism – the project leads to newly built / significantly upgraded cycling routes or lanes and/or to the creation or installation of support facilities and/or safety features, as follows:**Excellent (20 p) = over 30 km of cycling routes or lanes, endowed with support facilities AND substantial safety features*1. What is meant by “the project leads to” – is it implied that the project has to envisage cycling infrastructure such as cycle lanes/paths leading to an acknowledged by ITS velo route (such as Dunav Ultra)?
2. Can you explain in detail the formulation *“and/or to the creation or installation of support facilities and/or safety features”*, in particular the and/or part in the following example: A project idea with location directly on the official EV6 envisages installation of bike boxes (repair and charging stations), markings for cyclists, signs with EV6 route directions and sightseeing spots, etc., but does not envisage building of or rehabilitation of existing bike lanes or paths. Does it qualify for the maximum points?
3. Can you provide an exact definition of “cycling route” as understood under the prioritization criteria?
4. What exactly is meant by “AND substantial safety features” – can you please provide an indicative list and/or example?
 | 1. The project is expected to create new cycling infrastructure or to significantly upgrade existing cycling infrastructure – lanes/paths and connected infrastructure, thus contributing to the development of the EuroVelo6 route.
2. A project should lead to newly built / significantly upgraded cycling routes or lanes and/or the implementation of support facilities and / or safety features, as follows:
* 20 points = over 30 km of cycling routes or lanes, endowed with support facilities AND substantial safety features
* 15 points = between 15 and 30 km of cycling routes or lanes, endowed with support facilities and/or safety features
* 10 points = between 10 and15 km of cycling routes or lanes endowed with some support facilities and/or safety features OR support facilities and/or safety features installed on more than 30 km of roads or existing cycling routes or lanes
* 5 points = between 0.5 and 5 km of cycling routes or lanes OR some support facilities and/or safety features installed or created on existing cycling routes or lanes
* 0 points = N/A or the information is not available.

In order to consider a cycling route or lane as “significantly upgraded”, it has to meet at least six out of the ten practical characteristics, inspired by Cycling Design Best Practices (2023), available at https://www.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cycling-Design-Best-Practices-Report.pdf.1. From the perspective of indicators, as well as from the perspective of the assessment criteria, the definition is embedded in the EuroVelo network. More precisely, in line with the Methodological descriptions of Interreg VI-A RO-BG indicators SO 5.2., available at <https://interregviarobg.eu/assets/2024/01/guidance-on-monitoring-programme-indicators-annex-5-so-52.pdf> the dedicated cycling infrastructure includes cycling facilities separated from roads for vehicular traffic or other parts of the same road by structural means (kerbs, barriers), cycling streets, cycling tunnels, etc. For cycling infrastructure with separated one-way lanes (ex: on each side of a road), the length is measured as lane length.
2. Measures for road safety may include: complying with standards related to traffic signalling systems and/or additional development of infrastructure dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians, such as tunnels, bypasses, bridges, overpasses walkways and protected cycling paths. The applicants can propose other features, in line with current EuroVelo standards or guidelines.
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|  | How for example will be taken decision which is the main territory, when a project includes measures at 60 km in Romania and 100 km in Bulgaria, and it will connect the end points of Eurovelo6 route - Constanta, Durankulak and Balchik? It connects the end points, but it is still not located along the length of the Eurovelo6 route? How the points will be calculated? | The assessment criteria ”Proximity to the EuroVelo6 route” will be applied to the main investment in the project, which is determined by the applicant, by applying the following criteria, in this order: budget, number of people benefiting from that output, duration of the activity There could be just one “main investment” in the project, which will be determined by the above-mentioned criteria (the investment with the biggest budget). If your project involves a cycling route which is considered as “main investment” and if it connects directly to the EuroVelo6, then the maximum number of points will be awarded. This is the most advantageous situation. Awarding 20 points is justified by the fact that the main investment has a direct link to EuroVelo 6, so, the proximity is fully ensured. If, in a hypothetical case, the main investment would have been situated at 15 km from the EuroVelo 6 (e.g. a high value investment in a cultural heritage site), independently of where any other smaller investment from that project would be situated, for this criterion the project would receive 10 points. |
|  | When measuring the “*Proximity to the EuroVelo6 route*” prioritization criteria, does *“course of the EuroVelo6 route*” include the buffer area (study area), or only the official linear EV 6 route? Example: If a potential applicant is located within the buffer area (as shown in the map below), but further than 20 km from the official line of the EV6, does it get 20 or 0 points? | The proximity will be assessed against the EuroVelo6 route. If the main intervention is located further than 20 km distance from the course of the EuroVelo6 route, within the eligible ITS area, the assessment will result in awarding 5 points. Please consult here the map with the buffer areas: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1VLo4-T-hl9S0wnShGFTRakYKgM-t-pQ&ll=44.24752546612556%2C24.63814105273439&z=9>.  |
| **LETTER OF COMMITMENT** |
|  | With respect to Annex 3 Letter of Commitment under call 1 for concept notes under the Integrated Territorial Strategy for the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area: The Letter of Commitment should be signed by each partner in the project or only by the lead partner? (the form within the guide solely indicates the lead partner) | According to the format, the Letter of Commitment should be signed by the lead partner. |
| **PROJECT DURATION** |
|  | Are there any limits for the project duration, apart from not exceeding year 2029? | There are not yet formal duration limits set for this call, except that projects do not have to extend beyond 30 June 2029. Still, we recommend applicants to keep their implementation calendar optimized, depending on the types of activities envisaged through their project and to indicate a clear number of months. For example, for the Interreg VI A Romania-Bulgaria Programme, you may refer to the following indicative (not mandatory, but recommended) time limits for implementation: 36 months for hard projects (involving significant volume of investment activities) and 18 months for soft projects (without large investment activities). .  |
|  | In the guide, the maximum eligible duration for a project is not mentioned. Can you please specify this? Thank you for the swift response! | See the answer above. |
| **EUROVELO 6 ROUTE** |
|  | Can you clarify the eligible Euro velo 6 route on the territory of Constanta county-Dobrich region? | Please consult the map available on the Interreg VI A Romania-Bulgaria website: <https://interregviarobg.eu/en/eurovelo6>By clicking on the map, you will access a more detailed map.The map is also available at this link:<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1VLo4-T-hl9S0wnShGFTRakYKgM-t-pQ&ll=44.24752546612556%2C24.63814105273439&z=9> As decided by the Strategy Board, the exact delineation of the EuroVelo 6 route is defined in one of the annexes to the Strategy Board (annex 3 - https://interregviarobg.eu/sti1). The EuroVelo6 route is marked with red on the map. You may estimate the distance from your planned investment to the EuroVelo6 by computing that distance on the existing road infrastructure from your investment to the closest section of EuroVelo 6 route, as marked with red on those maps.The territory of Constanta county and Dobrich region is almost entirely included in the ITS area and, therefore, eligible. |
|  | Can you please clarify the exact route of Eurovelo 6, as we see that the assessment of projects also depends on the proximity of the intervention site to the route. A map is given in the guidelines on page 7. Does this mean that all points located on the red line are considered to be located on Eurovelo 6?On the other hand, again in the guidelines, on page 19, another map is given in which Eurovelo 6 is not marked in the same way as the mentioned above. Can you provide a relevant map which will avoid misunderstanding.  | See the answer above. If the main investment of your project is located on the red line (EuroVelo6 route), the project will receive the maximum number of points under the proximity criterion. Still, if your main investment is located further away from the route, the distance to the rout has to be assessed and the points will be awarded according to the assessment grid thresholds. |
|  | In regard to the Proximity to the Eurovelo6 criteria: what is considered as Eurovelo route for the Interreg program - are the connections between Silistra-Dobrich-Balchik and Silistra-Dobrich-General Toshevo-Durankulak considered as such? Should be the tourist route "Black Sea route" connecting the end points of Eurovelo6 Constanta, Durankulak and Balchik considered as eligible for the Interreg? | Please refer to the approved Integrated Territorial Strategy and its Annexes for details on the EuroVelo6 main and secondary routes, eligible for funding under the ITS and the Call for Concept Notes. You may also consult this map (<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1VLo4-T-hl9S0wnShGFTRakYKgM-t-pQ&ll=44.24752546612556%2C24.63814105273439&z=9>). Part of the Black Sea Route is eligible under the ITS and the Guidelines for Concept Notes. The connection between Constanta and Balchik is also part of the ITS territory. However, please consider the budget limitations stated in the Guidelines, compared to the activities and investments that are envisaged. |
|  | Please provide a working link to the “improved versions of the EuroVelo 6 route based on the Danube Cycle Plans project”, as all links provided in the ITS and its annexes lead to an inoperative website. An official map would be perfect.  | The map is available at <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1VLo4-T-hl9S0wnShGFTRakYKgM-t-pQ&ll=44.24752546612556%2C24.63814105273439&z=9>. |
| **INDICATORS** |
|  | Regarding RCR77, please clarify the following issue: "visitors" are counted only the ones that are accessing the project site, by paid ticket. If a project has, in theory, as main intervention, a natural landmark, so no tickets are applied, how can we report the number of visitors if only the ones with tickets are counted? | Please refer to the Methodological descriptions of Interreg VI-A Ro-BG indicators – SO 5.2 available at <https://interregviarobg.eu/assets/2024/01/guidance-on-monitoring-programme-indicators-annex-5-so-52.pdf> for guidance on indicators and how to measure them. The payed tickets were imagined as the most effective and reliable manner of counting visitors. Other methods could be accepted, if they provide a reliable, accurate and trusted method to count visitors. According to the 2021-2027 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION UNDER THE ERDF/CF AND JTF ANNEXES – PART A – The indicator RCR 77 does not cover natural sites for which an accurate estimation of number of visitors is not feasible.Therefore, the Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme and the Strategy Board could accept the monitoring of visitors of a natural site, even if not they do not access the site based on a payed ticket, provided that several conditions are met:* The natural site is classified as a tourist site;
* The applicant provides a reliable, accurate and trusted method of counting visitors (e.g. by installing dedicated monitoring equipment)
* The applicant takes responsibility for reporting visitors, allowing also methods of control.
 |
|  | In the indicators of the call, we have the phrases infrastructure / sites SUPPORTED. What activities would be considered "supporting" infrastructure and sites, can you please give particular examples? In terms of "cycling facilities", what particular facilities could be included, can you please give examples? | Please refer to the Methodological descriptions of Interreg VI-A Ro-BG indicators – SO 5.2 available at <https://interregviarobg.eu/assets/2024/01/guidance-on-monitoring-programme-indicators-annex-5-so-52.pdf> for guidance on indicators and how to measure them.In terms of cycling facilities for the infrastructure, please consult the existing numerous guidelines and best practice examples of the EuroVelo.One source of information is available here: <https://www.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cycling-Design-Best-Practices-Report.pdf>Please also consider national legislation and regulations.  |
| **OTHER** |
|  | Is it ok to create a bicycle lane along an existing road**by compacting the land** on the right and left sides of the respective road and be awarded points for the number of km of bicycle lane created? | In line with the Integrated Territorial Strategy, the present call for Concept Notes envisages the creation of high-quality bicycles lanes, in order to respond to the needs in the ITS region (*i.e.* poor bicycle infrastructure).Moreover, the Guidelines include references to Cycling Design Best Practices (2023), available at <https://www.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cycling-Design-Best-Practices-Report.pdf>.The construction of bike lanes along an existing road should comply with the national regulations and authorization conditions. We advise you to address the competent authorities in advance, to check for conditions. |
|  | Letter on the strategic importance of restoring and developing the railway line Tulcea–Constanța–Medgidia–Kardam. | The letter reveals an important local need, but it falls outside of the scope of the present Guidelines for Concept Notes. |
|  | NGOs are non-profit and usually lack own financial resources for large projects. How can NGOs secure funding to actively contribute to regional development? Are there specific funding mechanisms that support NGOs in implementing such projects?What is the required co-financing percentage for an NGO? | NGOs are eligible to participate as applicants under the present call, including as partners. The co-financing percentages are established in the Applicant Guides of the programs you are considering for the financing of the project idea. In general, for the Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme, the partner’s own contribution is 2%.If an NGO cannot implement infrastructure related activities, it could participate with soft measures in a larger project. |
|  | What documents are necessary to build a number of km s of bike road? Is it necessary to have approval from police or other local authorities? | The investment works on bicycle infrastructure are subject to the laws and regulations of the state and/or region. Please consult with the relevant authorities in your region, to gain a better understanding on the efforts required for planning such an investment.From the perspective of the current call, the maturity of the project idea will be assessed, in accordance with the Guidelines for Concept Notes. There are no documents requested at this stage, however in case the project is selected under the Interreg VI-A Ro-Bg Programme, documents may be requested at the moment of submitting the full application. |
|  | **Subject:** Inclusion of Project Proposal for Constanța Region – EV6 Interreg ProgramDear Sir/Madam,In the context of the upcoming meeting on [date], I would like to submit a project proposal for the Constanța region to be included in the Interreg program for EuroVelo 6. I kindly request that this proposal be added to the official project list.**Project Proposal:****Title:** Improvement of Cycling Infrastructure along EuroVelo 6 in the Constanța Region**Objective:** Expansion and modernization of cycling paths, along with the development of supporting infrastructure (e.g., rest areas, signage, secure parking facilities).**Measures:*** Upgrading existing sections of the EV6 to enhance safety and attractiveness for cycling tourism
* Establishing bicycle service points and charging stations for e-bikes
* Optimizing connections to other transport modes (e.g., railway stations, ferries)
* Promoting cross-border cooperation with Bulgaria to ensure uniform route quality

As the meeting time is limited, I will not be making a presentation but remain available for any further questions.Thank you for your support. I look forward to your feedback. | Please submit the project idea under the format of the Concept Note, accompanied by the Letter of Commitment, as required by the Guidelines for Concept Notes.  |
|  | With the submission deadline for project ideas approaching quickly, what is the maximum response time for answering questions by CIVITA? | The clarification questions differ in complexity and coverage. Thus, the questions are addressed depending on the date they have been received, and the time needed to provide answers depends on the content of the question. Also, an additional layer of checks and approval is applied to the provided answers, by the programme authorities. Please submit your questions with at least 5 working days before the deadline. Any other question received after this term may not receive the answer in due time (considering the necessary time for analysing, drafting replies, consulting within Programme structures or the Strategy Board, number of questions). |