

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Meuse – Rhine (NL – BE – DE)

Detailed Subsidy Rules
for the Second Call for Proposals
under cross-border
cooperation programme

Interreg Meuse-Rhine
(NL-BE-DE)

PROVINCIAL BULLETIN¹

Official name of rules:	Detailed subsidy rules for the Second Call for Proposals under cross-border cooperation programme Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)
Title for citation:	Detailed subsidy rules for Second Call for Proposals Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)
Name of revoked rules:	Not applicable
Resolved by:	Province of Limburg (NL) Executive in its capacity as Managing Authority for the programme Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)
Topic:	Detailed subsidy rules for Second Call for Proposals Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)
Legal basis or capacity on which the rules are based:	Decision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of 17 December 2022, no. WJZ/22253869, entailing delegation of the Managing Authority and the audit authority for the Interreg programme Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) 2021–2027.
Effective date:	The day after the day of publication in the Provincial Bulletin
Term rules are in force:	The day after the day of publication in the Provincial Bulletin until 31 December 2024
Responsible cluster:	Cluster EMR

¹ This is the English translation of the Detailed Subsidy Rules for the Second Call for Proposals for Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE), first published in the Dutch language on 1 March 2024 in the Provincial Bulletin (Provinciaal Blad), no. 2820, going into effect on 2 March 2024. In case of differences in interpretation, the published text in the Dutch language will prevail.

Introduction

The Province of Limburg (NL) Executive in its capacity as Managing Authority for the cross-border cooperation programme Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) in accordance with the decision approving the programme by the European Commission of 14 November 2022, as well as in accordance with the decision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of 17 December 2022, no. WJZ/22253869, entailing delegation of the Managing Authority and the audit authority for the Interreg programme Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) 2021–2027.

In consideration of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments;

In consideration of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy;

In consideration of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund;

Whereas on 8 February 2023 the Monitoring Committee agreed to the general principles underlying these detailed subsidy rules, including the Cost catalogue Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) 2021–2027;

Whereas on 1 February 2024, the Monitoring Committee agreed to the specific provisions underlying these detailed subsidy rules for the Second Project Call;

Whereas the Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the Cooperation Programme Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) under the financial framework of the European Regional Development Fund for the development of the Meuse-Rhine area into

1. A smarter Meuse-Rhine-area;
2. A greener, low-carbon Meuse-Rhine area;
3. A more social Meuse-Rhine area;
4. A Meuse-Rhine area with better cooperation governance.

Whereas the eligibility of activities for expenditure can be defined broadly, and this broad definition is intended to achieve optimal achievement of the objectives, the Managing Authority will review whether the total of government contributions to the subsidy recipient does not exceed the amount of state aid permitted under the provisions of European law. Specifically, for

the purposes of the determination of whether state aid is justified, the Managing Authority considers the following regulations on state aid applicable:

- a. Regulation (EU) 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187/1 of 26 June 2014, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021, OJ L 270/39 of 29 July 2021;
- b. Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to the *de minimis* aid, OJ Series L of 15 December 2023.

Resolve on 27 February 2024 to establish the following subsidy rules:

DETAILED SUBSIDY RULES FOR SECOND CALL FOR PROPOSALS INTERREG MEUSE-RHINE (NL-BE-DE)

Chapter 1 General provisions

Article 1 Definitions

For the purposes of these rules, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a. Audit Authority: The director of the “Auditdienst Rijk” of the Netherlands is designated as the Audit Authority, as referred to in Article 45, paragraph 1, of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, for the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme and as referred to in Article 2, paragraph 2 of the decision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of 17 December 2022, no. WJZ/22253869, entailing delegation of the Managing Authority and the Audit Authority for the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme.
- b. Cooperation programme: Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme; programme as referred to in Article 3, paragraph 1 (a), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, approved by the European Commission on 14 November 2022 (2021TC16RFCB001); this programme can be consulted on the website <http://www.interregmeuserhine.eu>;
- c. Cost catalogue: catalogue with further details of eligible and ineligible costs for the cooperation programme drafted on the basis of Article 37, paragraph 2, of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 and approved by the Monitoring Committee on 8 February 2023 and published on the website of the cooperation programme (<http://www.interregmeuserhine.eu>).
- d. De minimis aid: aid that meets the conditions for exemption from registration as set out in Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to the *de minimis* aid, Pb EU Series of 15 December 2023, including any amendments thereto to be adopted in the future.
- e. Enterprise: unit that engages in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form and the manner in which it is financed.
- f. ERDF: European Regional Development Fund.
- g. General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER): Regulation (EU) 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187/1 of 26 June 2014, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021, OJ L 270/39 of 29 July 2021.
- h. Lead partner: a legal person or partnership acting as subsidy applicant on behalf of a partnership.
- i. Managing Authority: Provincial Executive of the Province of Limburg is designated as Managing Authority (as referred to in Article 45, paragraph 1, of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 for the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme and as referred to in Article 2, paragraph 1 of the

decision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of 17 December 2022, no. WJZ/22253869, entailing delegation of the Managing Authority and the Audit Authority for the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) 2021-2027 programme.

- j. Monitoring Committee: the committee charged with the monitoring of the performance of the cooperation programme in accordance with Article 28, 29 and 30 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059.
- k. Output and result indicators: indicators as referred to in Article 16, paragraph 1 under (a) and Article 22, paragraph 3 under (d. ii and e. ii) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, and the Commission staff working document on Performance, monitoring and evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund in 2021-2027, and as elaborated in chapter 2 of the cooperation programme document.
- l. Programme area: territory of the Meuse-Rhine area, as defined in chapter 1.1 of the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme document.
- m. SME: the category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in Annex 1 of the General Block Exemption Regulation.
- n. State aid: any aid granted as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
- o. Steering Committee: the Steering Committee acts under the responsibility of the Monitoring Committee to select operations (project selection) that contribute to realising the programme goals in accordance with Article 22 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059.

Article 2 Objective of the rules

The rules make subsidy available for projects that contribute to the objectives of the Cooperation Programme as described and incorporated into the Cooperation Programme, being the development of the Meuse-Rhine area into:

- 1. A smarter Meuse-Rhine-area;
- 2. A greener, low-carbon Meuse-Rhine area;
- 3. A more social Meuse-Rhine area;
- 4. A Meuse-Rhine area with better cooperation governance.

Article 3 Applicant and beneficiary

- 1. Subsidies under these rules can be applied for by a lead partner.
- 2. A public or private legal entity in the partnership as referred to in Article 14, paragraph 1 (4) and (5) and Article 18, paragraph 1 (4) and (5), may be the beneficiaries of the subsidy.

Article 4 Obligations of subsidy recipient

The granting of a subsidy is subject to the following obligations:

1. The recipient of the subsidy performs the project in accordance with the project plan on which the subsidy was granted, does not start before 1 January 2025, and completes it no later than the moment specified within the subsidy grant.
2. The subsidy recipient will report to the Managing Authority prior to the change of a project for which subsidy is granted, any proposed change pertaining to
 - a. the subsidy recipient;
 - b. the activity to be performed or the objectives to be achieved;
 - c. the percentage amount of hours dedicated to the project by one or more individual employees;
 - d. the percentage amount of hours dedicated to the project by a new employee who was not known in the application;
 - e. the financing of the project;
 - f. the planning or timeline, and/or;
 - g. other changes compared to the project plan.These changes are subject to the approval of the Managing Authority.
3. Alongside the provisions of paragraph 2, the subsidy recipient will immediately notify the Managing Authority in writing at the moment that it becomes likely that the obligations imposed under the decision for the granting of the subsidy will not be met, or will not be met in a timely manner and/or in full.
4. The subsidy recipient keeps records that are set up in such a way that all costs incurred and paid can be specified and checked at all times in a simple and clear manner in accordance with terms and conditions as stated in the Cost catalogue Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) 2021-2027.
5. The subsidy recipient is obliged to cooperate with all audits considered necessary for the performance of the programme.
6. The Managing Authority may also impose other obligations on the subsidy, including reporting requirements on the material and financial progress.

Article 5 Grounds for rejection

1. An application may be rejected if:
 - a. The project does not contribute to the objectives of the cooperation programme as defined in article 2.
 - b. It is not submitted by an applicant as defined in the first paragraph of article 3 and/or does not benefit the beneficiary as defined in the second paragraph of article 3.
 - c. It fails to comply with the provisions of chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this document.
 - d. The subsidy application is not fully received or received outside the period given in article 13 for step 1 and article 17 for step 2.

- e. The subsidy application pertains to activities aimed at the regular operations of an enterprise or institution.
 - f. The project does not fulfil the European regulations on issues such as state aid and/or public procurement.
 - g. The total eligible cost of the project amounts to less than € 150.000.
 - h. The applicant is an enterprise against which there is an outstanding recovery order as defined in paragraph 4(a) of Article 1 of Regulation (EU) 651/2014 of 17 June 2014, by which certain categories of aid are, under Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, considered to be compatible with the internal market (OJ L 2014, 187).
 - i. The enterprise in question can be considered to be in difficulty as defined in part (c) of the fourth paragraph of Article 1 of the General Block Exemption (Regulation (EU) 651/2014).
2. Without prejudice to the provisions of the first paragraph, the Managing Authority may decide to reject some or all of an application if it is clear that any or all of the intended financing will not be granted by the other co-financing parties.

Chapter 2 Content aspects regarding Second Call for proposals

Article 6 Specific objectives

The second call for proposals will be opened for projects that fit within the following priorities and their specific objectives (SO) or Interreg specific objectives (ISO):

Priorities	Specific objectives
1. A smarter Meuse-Rhine area	SO 1.i Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies.
	SO 1.iii Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments.
2. A greener, low-carbon Meuse-Rhine area	SO 2.ii Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein.
	SO 2.iv Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account ecosystem based approaches.
	SO 2.vi Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy.
3. A more social Meuse-Rhine area	SO 4.i Enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure and promoting social economy.
	SO 4.ii Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible

Priorities	Specific objectives
	infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training.
	SO 4.v Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-based and community based care.
	SO 4.vi Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.
4. Better cooperation governance in the Meuse-Rhine area	ISO 1.ii Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions.

Chapter 3 Financial aspects Second Call for proposals

Article 7 Subsidy ceiling

- The Monitoring Committee has determined the subsidy ceilings for the ERDF contribution per priority axis of the cooperation programme for the Second Call for proposals as follows:

Priority	ERDF amount
1	€ 18.562.802
2	€ 20.000.000
3	€ 15.200.000
4	€ 1.838.020
Total	€ 55.600.822

- In case there are more projects of good quality than the subsidy ceiling, the Monitoring Committee can decide to increase the subsidy ceiling within a certain flexibility margin. A flexibility margin of up to 10 percent per priority may be applied above the amounts shown in the table above.

Article 8 Amount of subsidy

- The amount of the ERDF subsidy is maximum 50% of the project's total eligible costs.
- If the applicant applies for less than 50% of the eligible costs as referred to in the first paragraph, then only the subsidy percentage applied for will be granted.
- Where there is state aid and the activity meets one of the conditions of the second paragraph of Article 11, the amount of subsidy granted will only be such that the total of

government contributions to the subsidy recipient does not exceed that permitted under European law provisions governing state aid under the General Block Exemption Regulation or what is allowed within the framework of the *de minimis* regulation.

Article 9 Eligible and ineligible costs

1. Eligible and ineligible costs are governed by the rules and conditions as set out in the Cost catalogue Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) 2021-2027.
2. In case of state aid granted under application of the General Block Exemption Regulation or another exemption, then only the costs identified in the applicable article of the General Block Exemption Regulation or other exemptions on the basis of which the subsidy is granted are eligible for expenditure.

Chapter 4 General information application

Article 10 Application system

Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) uses a two-step approach for approving projects. Two different application forms will be used for step 1 and for step 2. **Step 1** is intended to assess **the fit of a project idea** into the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme. After the project has successfully passed this first step, in the sense of having a positive decision from the Managing Authority, the project can proceed to step 2. **Step 2** is intended to **assess in detail the appropriateness of a complete project proposal** in the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme.

Article 11 General criteria

1. The general criteria for the subsidy are as follows:
 - a. The project has a maximum duration of 3 years (36 months);
 - b. The start date for implementation of eligible activities under the project is 1 January 2025 at the earliest;
 - c. A project has to fit within one of the targeted priorities and specific objectives within this second call for proposals (Article 6).
2. In case of state aid, in order to be eligible for subsidy the project must:
 - a. Fit within one of the articles of the General Block Exemption Regulation, meet the conditions of that particular article and meet the general and procedural provisions of Chapters I and II of the regulation in question; or
 - b. meet the conditions specified in the *de minimis* regulation; or
 - c. meet the conditions of another exemption.

Chapter 5 Application procedure, planning, assessment criteria, quality assessment, decision and decision period for step 1

Article 12 Submission of application in step 1

A subsidy application for step 1:

- a. must be submitted to the Managing Authority;
- b. can only be submitted through the electronic system JEMS;
- c. comprises at least:
 - the fully completed application form in the electronic system JEMS for step 1.

Article 13 Period for submission of application in step 1

- a. The subsidy application for step 1 can be submitted as of 25 March 2024 and has to be received by the Managing Authority no later than 26 April 2024, 12:00 hours (noon).
- b. For the date of receipt, the date of receipt of a complete subsidy application in the JEMS system is decisive.
- c. In the event that the electronic JEMS system is not accessible, the submission period may be extended if the cause of the inaccessibility is connected with server problems on the Managing Authority's server. This is subject to the following provisions:
 - i) In the event of inaccessibility between 25 March 2024, 0:00 midnight, and 26 April 2024, 0:00 midnight, an extension will only be applied if the system is inaccessible for more than 8 uninterrupted hours.
 - ii) In the event of inaccessibility between 0:00 midnight and 11:00 AM on 26 April 2024, an extension will only be applied if the system is inaccessible for more than 2 uninterrupted hours.
 - iii) In the event of inaccessibility between 11:01 AM and 12:00 PM on 26 April 2024, an extension will only be applied if the system is inaccessible for more than 30 minutes.
- d. The duration of an extension will in all cases be equal to the duration of the interruption.

Article 14 Assessment criteria for step 1

In the assessment process of step 1 applications, a distinction is made between assessing the grant eligibility requirements and assessing the selection criteria.

14.1 Grant eligibility requirements for step 1

The grant eligibility requirements will be administratively checked by the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat. When a step 1 application does not meet all of the grant eligibility requirements below, the concerning application will not be assessed against the selection criteria.

	Requirement
1	The application has been submitted within the defined call for proposals period in JEMS.
2	The application has been formulated in the three programme languages (FR, DE, NL), and in English.
3	All mandatory fields for the step 1 application in JEMS have been properly filled in.
4	The project involves at least two partners from two different Member States within the programme area, or at least one cross-border organisation (e.g. an EGTC).
5	All partners (lead partner and other partners in the partnership) have a legal personality.
6	The project does not start before 1 January 2024, has a maximum duration of 36 months and does not end after 31 December 2029.

14.2 Selection criteria for step 1

The selection criteria for step 1 are shown below. The selection criteria are there to assess the quality of applications. Applications will be assessed by the Steering Committee.

Selection criterion	Weight
1: Contribution to the objectives of the programme/cross-border character	40%
a. How well is the cross-border problem or challenge that the project addresses justified? b. Does the project's overall objective contribute to the programme goals? c. Does the project contribute to at least one of the defined grand societal challenges? d. Does the project fit under the chosen specific objective? e. Has sufficiently made clear why cross-border cooperation is needed to address the problem or challenge? f. What is new / of added value compared to the already existing situation? g. Does the expected impact contribute to the envisaged objectives of the programme?	
2: Partnership	40%
a. Is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project? b. Is the partnership able and competent to let the described target group(s) benefit from the project outputs and results?	

c. Is the partnership able and competent to deliver the envisaged deliverables?	
3: Budget & value for money	20%
a. What about the estimated total budget? Is this reasonable compared with the (number of) partners involved, the planned basic structure of the project and the project duration?	
b. For overall judgement, is the expected impact of the project in line with the estimated budget (value for money)?	

14.3 Quality assessment and decision on the grant application for step 1

The degree to which applications meet each selection criterion, including the sub-aspects included, will be evaluated based on the score table below:

Quality assessment	Score
Outstanding	5
Good	4
Adequate	3
Weak	2
Insufficient	1

The quality assessment for step 1 goes as follows:

- Every applicable selection criterion will be awarded a single score.
- The points per selection criterion are totaled and weighted in order to arrive at a total score.
- In order to proceed to step 2 ("go"), an application has to score at least 3 points (unweighted) per applicable selection criterion, and thus also 3 points overall (weighted). An application which does not meet that requirement, will be rejected and cannot proceed to step 2 ("no go").

Article 15 Decision period step 1 application

1. The Managing Authority will take a decision on a step 1 application in the Interreg Maas-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme no later than five working days after the Steering Committee has provided its selection advice to the Managing Authority.
2. The Managing Authority will inform the applicant of its decision by means of an electronic message.

Chapter 6 Application procedure, planning, assessment criteria, quality assessment, ranking, decision and decision period for step 2

Article 16 Submission of application in step 2

A subsidy application for step 2:

- a. must be submitted to the Managing Authority.
- b. can only be submitted through the electronic system JEMS;
- c. comprises at least:
 - the fully completed application form in the electronic system JEMS for step 2;
 - a partnership agreement mentioning all members of the partnership;
 - Proof of any co-financing or intention to provide so, not being the own organisation's contribution;
 - If applicable, a declaration on the legal status of all members of the partnership that also evidences that the partnership does not include any enterprise(s) in difficulty as referred to in part (c) of the fourth paragraph of Article 1 of the General Block Exemption Regulation;

Article 17 Period for submission of application in step 2

- a. In the event of a positive decision in the context of the assessment of a step 1 application as referred to in Article 15, paragraph 1, of these detailed subsidy rules, the
- b. Managing Authority will include in its decision as of which moment a step 2 application can be submitted and when this application must be submitted at the latest.
- c. For the date of receipt, the date of receipt of a complete subsidy application in the JEMS system is decisive.
- d. In the event that the electronic JEMS system is not accessible, the submission period may be extended if the cause of the inaccessibility is connected with server problems on the Managing Authority's server. This is subject to the following provisions:
 - i) In the event of inaccessibility between the start of the submission period for a step 2 application and the final submission date for a step 2 application, an extension will only be applied if the system is inaccessible for more than 8 uninterrupted hours.
 - i) In the event of inaccessibility between 0:00 (midnight) and 11:00 AM on the final submission date for a step 2 application, an extension will only be applied if the system is inaccessible for more than 2 uninterrupted hours.
 - ii) In the event of inaccessibility between 11:01 AM and 12:00 (noon) on the final submission date for a step 2 application, an extension will only be applied if the system is inaccessible for more than 30 minutes.
- e. The duration of an extension will in all cases be equal to the duration of the interruption.

Article 18 Assessment criteria for step 2

As in step 1, in the assessment process of step 2 applications, a distinction is made between assessing the grant eligibility requirements and assessing the selection criteria.

18.1 Grant eligibility requirements for step 2

The grant eligibility requirements will be administratively checked by the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat. When a step 2 application does not meet all of the grant eligibility requirements below, the concerning application will not be assessed against the selection criteria.

	Requirement
1	The application has been submitted within the defined call for proposals period in JEMS.
2	The application has been formulated in the three programme languages (FR, DE, NL), and in English.
3	All mandatory fields for the step 2 application in JEMS have been properly filled in.
4	The project involves at least two partners from two different Member States within the programme area, or at least one cross-border organisation (e.g. an EGTC).
5	All partners have a legal personality.
6	The project does not start before 1 January 2025, has a maximum duration of 36 months and does not end after 31 December 2029.
7	The application is sufficiently similar in content to the short application that was positively assessed in step 1.
8	The project matches one of the priorities and specific objectives as defined in the programme document.
9	The project may be assigned to one of the intervention types for the specific objective concerned, as defined in the programme document and in accordance with Annex 1 to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.
10	The maximum ERDF co-financing rate as stated in the text of the call for proposal has not been exceeded.
11	For infrastructural projects or productive investments: The partners applying for ERDF funds have the necessary financial resources and instruments to cover operating and maintenance costs, to ensure their financial sustainability.
12	For infrastructure investments with an expected life span of at least five years: The project includes an assessment of expected climate change impacts.

18.2 Selection criteria for step 2

The selection criteria will be assessed by the Steering Committee. In order to be eligible for a subsidy, the subsidy application must obtain at least a score of 3 (i.e. adequate) under each of the following selection criteria:

Selection criterion	Weight
1: Contribution to the objectives of the programme/cross-border character	25%
a. How well is the cross-border problem or challenge that the project addresses justified? b. Does the project's overall objective contribute to the programme goals? c. Does the project contribute to at least one of the defined grand societal challenges? d. Does the project fit under the chosen specific objective? e. Has sufficiently made clear why cross-border cooperation is needed to address the problem or challenge? f. Is the project's approach to tackle the identified cross-border problem or challenge plausible and new (new for the partnership, new for the region, or new at all)? g. What is new / of added value compared to the already existing situation? h. Does the expected impact contribute to the envisaged objectives of the programme? i. In how far does the project contribute to other relevant strategies and policies? j. Are there synergies with other EU- or public-funded projects or initiatives, and to what extent does this project build on them? k. In how far does the project go beyond the current situation and build on available knowledge? l. Has the project work plan been built around cross-border activities? m. What about the contribution of the project to the programme's output and result indicators?	
2: Partnership	25%
a. Is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project? b. Is the partnership able and competent to deliver the envisaged actions? c. Has the added value of cross-border cooperation within the partnership been described sufficiently? d. If the partnership contains one or more partners from outside the programme area, do they bring an added value and impact on the programme area? e. Is the partnership able to serve the described target group?	
3: Feasibility	25%
a. Has the consortium presented a realistic project that can be executed within the financial limits and time plan? b. Is the work plan in relation to the budget coherent and realistic? c. Are the project management arrangements clear, realistic and appropriate? d. Are the project's communication strategy and activities (per work package) sufficiently elaborated?	

Selection criterion	Weight
e. Are the envisaged project outputs and results (translated into indicators) measurable, realistic and achievable? f. Is the project in line with the EU horizontal principles (sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, climate and biodiversity)? g. Have the long term plans (ownership, durability, transferability) been sufficiently clear described? h. For projects with investments: how risky is the project? Is a risk management strategy in place and has the partnership identified the main risks and relevant mitigation measures?	
4: Budget & value for money	25%
a. Is the budget sufficiently attributed to activities specifically oriented on cross-border cooperation? b. Is the overall budget reasonable compared with the planned activities / deliverables / outputs and the project duration? c. Does the budget breakdown include sufficient detail? d. Are the budgeted costs in line with the Cost Catalogue? e. Based on the requested budget, does the project contribute proportionately to the achievement of the output and result indicators (value for money)? f. Do the partners involved have enough budget available to do the things they propose and to maintain the results?	

18.3 Quality assessment on the grant application for step 2

The degree to which applications meet each selection criterion, including the sub-aspects included, will be evaluated based on the score table below:

Quality assessment	Score
Outstanding	5
Good	4
Adequate	3
Weak	2
Insufficient	1

The quality assessment for step 2 goes as follows:

- Every applicable selection criterion will be awarded a single score.
- The points per selection criterion are totaled and weighted in order to arrive at a total score.
- An application has to score at least 3 points (unweighted) per selection criterion, and thus also 3 points overall (weighted).

Article 19 Distribution of subsidy ceiling and decision

- a. The Steering Committee shall determine a score on the selection criteria for each project and thus the overall score.
- b. Each project that meets the requirement as mentioned in Article 18, paragraph 3, third point will be ranked by the Steering Committee according to its score (from high to low).
- c. The ranking of projects selected by the Steering Committee will then be transferred to the Managing Authority, which will then proceed to perform final technical checks and formal decision-making.
- d. The distribution of the subsidy ceiling per priority axis is made among the grant applications that qualify after assessment in Step 1 (Article 14), that sufficiently meet the selection criteria for Step 2 applications as stated in Article 18 and that have passed the final technical checks by the Managing Authority.
- e. For applications that meet all the requirements and conditions listed in paragraph d, the Managing Authority will take a grant decision based on the ranking, taking into account the available ERDF budget per priority axis as shown in Article 7.
- f. Applications which do not meet the minimum score requirements on the selection criteria, or which fall outside the subsidy ceiling based on their position in the ranking, will be rejected.

Without prejudice to the above provisions, the Managing Authority may decide to reject some or all of an application if it does not comply with the rules of the programme, or the rules the programme has to obey to.

Article 20 Decision period step 2 application

The Managing Authority will take a decision on a step 2 application under the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme no later than 26 weeks after the closing date for the submission of step 2 applications.

Chapter 7 Implementation and subsidy determination

Article 21 Payment and advances

1. The Managing Authority will make advance payments on the subsidy amount granted based on payment applications submitted by the beneficiary for the purpose as described in Article 74, paragraph 1 (a) and (i), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, up to a maximum of 90% of the subsidy granted.
2. Beneficiaries must submit a payment application twice per year.
3. A payment application will be part of the bi-annual progress report, consisting of a content part and a financial part (payment application). The content part has to contain the content progress of the project, including the realisation of the deliverables and the output and

result indicators as mentioned in the application form. The payment application has to comprise at least the declaration of the costs incurred.

4. Payment to beneficiaries will take place in accordance with Article 74, paragraph 1 (b), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, which means that the payment to the beneficiary has to be made no later than 80 days after the submission of the payment application.

Article 22 Subsidy determination

1. Within the time period specified in the grant letter, the beneficiary must submit an application for the determination of the subsidy to the Managing Authority, via the JEMS system, using the form specified for that purpose by the Managing Authority.
2. In the application referred to in the first paragraph, the beneficiary must demonstrate that:
 - a. the activities for which the subsidy has been granted have been performed.
 - b. the obligations in connection with the subsidy have been met.
3. The following supplementary documentation must be attached to the determination of the subsidy as referred to in the first paragraph:
 - a. a substantive final report;
 - b. documentation substantiating the reported value(s) for the output and result indicators;
 - c. final payment claim.
4. The Managing Authority will make a decision on an application for determination of the subsidy within 26 weeks.

Chapter 8 Final provisions

Article 23 Effective date

1. This decision goes into effect on the day after publication of the Rules in the Provincial Bulletin.
2. These rules expire as of 31 December 2024, provided that they continue to apply to subsidy applications received prior to that date by the Provincial Executive in its capacity of Managing Authority for Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) and subsidy decisions made prior to that date, including subsequent steps in the subsidy process.
3. These rules can be cited as “Detailed Subsidy Rules for Second Call for Proposals Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)”.