



MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



ROMANIA



MINISTRY OF REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS



DECISION no. 20
of 20th of May 2018

Regarding the complaints lodged against the Monitoring Committee Decision no. 72 of 22nd of March 2018, approving the List of approved and rejected projects submitted under the third call for proposals for the Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme - deadline 23rd of October 2017

Having regard to the following:

- Monitoring Committee Decision no. 51 of 2nd of August 2017 approving the Complaint Panel for the Eols and full applications submitted under the 3rd call for proposals, priority axes 1-3, Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme, step 1 and 2,
- The Complaint Procedure of Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria,

the Complaint Panel of Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme has adopted this:

DECISION

Article 1. The present document rejects the complaint lodged by *Foundation for development of North-West Bulgaria*, lead beneficiary of the project *The culinary tradition of CB region* - code 545 and registered by CBC ROC with the number 6440/03.04.2016, appealing the score received at technical and financial evaluation. The project has received a score of 49.5 points and thus it was rejected from financing.

Article 2. The applicant provided a self-assessment of the application. For 6 out of the 23 criteria the score is the same with the ones granted by the assessors. For 17, the score is higher:

- a) Q1 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 1 point granted. According to the Assessor's Guide provisions, 2 point are to be granted if the proposal contributes to Danube Strategy and EU 2020 Strategy and the project proposal clearly defines the way in which the implementation of the project objectives is related to the achievement of at least one priority of each of the strategies. However, according to the information provided in the application form, the applicant failed to provide good evidence and measurement of project contribution to the implementation and achievement of proposed results of the EU 2020 strategy and, moreover, no

clear priority of the 2020 EU Strategy was identified¹. Therefore, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.

- b) Q 4 - 10 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 7 points granted. Based on the information provided within AF, and taking into consideration total budget value requested for financing applied on total allocated per PA 2, corresponding on the percentage of contribution for first output indicator 2,32% (1 integrated tourist product) and 8,70% (2 strategies) from the second one, reported to 1,29% requested financing, a proportionate contribution was considered. However, according to the information included in AF, the contribution to the OI 6c.c *Number of common strategies, policies or management plans for valorising (including raising awareness) the cultural and natural heritage through its restoration and promotion for sustainable economic uses* was of 4 strategies. This contribution requested clarifications. Therefore, considering the information included in AF and clarifications, the score awarded within evaluation stage is more than justified. Therefore, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- c) Q 5 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 0 points granted. The applicant failed on promoting clear and relevant green solutions within AF as well as in the complaint. Therefore, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- d) Q 6 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 1 point granted. No justification of the proposed score is provided in the complaint. Therefore, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- e) Q 7 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 0 points granted. Based on the information provided in AF and the complaint, the applicants failed on clearly justifying the proposed score, as well demonstrating that a wider joint problem is tackled by the project with a joint solution which brings benefits to the border area. Therefore, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- f) Q 8 - 1 point (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 0 points granted. The applicant failed on justifying the proposed score. Based on the information included in AF, as well as in the complaint, no specific measures are proposed (except those minimum required by the law). Thus, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- g) Q 12 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 1 point granted. The applicant provided no justification of the proposed score. Based on the information included in AF, not all the partners have experience in the field addressed by the project. Therefore the score awarded by evaluators is in line with the information included in AF. Thus, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.

¹ Quote from application form *The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It emphasizes smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as a way to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, improve its competitiveness and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market economy. With investing in the cultural and historic heritage in the CBC region, promoting the development of the tourism and providing opportunities for new business initiatives the project is directly contributing to two of the targets of the EU 2020 Strategy - increase of the employment (through promoting the development of the tourism sector); reducing the number of people in risk of poverty or social inclusion (through socializing and popularizing small villages and towns as interesting niche points for tourism).*

- h) Q 13 - 1 point in self-assessment vs. 0 points granted. The Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion as no beneficiaries² had been involved in a partnership that implemented contracts (financed via the ROBG Programme) where they had at least 70% financial execution (considering their own budget).
- i) Q 14 - 15 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 5 points granted. The project proposes the development of one integrated tourist product and 2 strategies. However, no clear information on what the integrated tourist product will consist of, how it will be used by the targeted groups (or by the relevant stakeholders that activate in the tourism field and that may be interested in using such integrated tourist products) and how the results will be reached. Moreover, it is not clear how and when the two strategies developed under this project shall produce results that may contribute to the achievement of the project (including the generation of a certain impact/inclusion on the local public policies on tourism and cultural field). Also, it is not clear how the Strategy for prevention and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage will be reviewed and adopted by the local municipalities such as Municipality of Calafat, Montana, etc. Concluding, the logical link between problems, objectives, resources, activities, outputs and results is weak. Therefore, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- j) Q 15 - 15 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 5 points granted. Based on the information included in the AF, the description of the activities is not satisfactory but they seem achievable and therefore the project could be considered as consistent from technical point of view. Therefore, considering also the justification from above, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- k) Q 16 - 5 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 4 points granted. Based on the information provided in AF, this criterion was scored with 4, as activities listed mostly follow a logical time-sequence, except of 'Project Preparation' which does not follow a logical time-sequence (start date March 2018-End March 2018). Consequently, the score awarded by the assessors is justified and the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- l) Q 18 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 1 point granted. According to Assessor's Guide, 1 point is awarded when the *proposed information and publicity activities correspond partially to the project scope and purposes*; 2 points are awarded when - *Yes they are fully corresponding*. According to the information included in AF some of the activities/parts of activities proposed are not fully relevant for the projects and not focused on the promotion of the project results (e.g. activity promotional materials). Therefore, the score awarded by assessors is considered justified and the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- m) Q 19 - 10 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 5 point granted. Based on the information provided within AF, corroborated with the clarifications

² The only partner that had implemented projects financed by CBC Romania-Bulgaria Programme 2007-2013 is Calafat-Duiven Association. The financial execution was below 70% considering its own budget.

provided by applicant, it can be considered that the project results can be achieved and measured with the proposed activities scope, schedule and budget. However, the general description provided in AF is general and weak and it is unclear how the results of this project shall be sustained after the implementation of the project (e.g. which will be the number of tourist overnights generated by the integrated tourist products after the project is finalized; how the initial generated number of the tourist overnights is sustained afterwards).

Moreover, the project contributes to result indicator "Number of tourists overnights the CBC region" with 500 overnights, which represents 0.09% of the target output indicator to be achieved, using 1.29% of the available funds, which proves a minor contribution to the result indicator.

Therefore, considering all these, the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.

- n) Q 20 - 3 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 2 points granted. The information included in AF in relation to the target groups and the correlation with the proposed activities is quite general. Moreover, the involvement of some parts of the target group, which is major for the project success, is not well developed or considered (e.g. the involvement of SME's and local municipalities should be more considered, including during the development of the integrated tourist product or of the strategies). Therefore, the score awarded by assessors is considered justified and the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- o) Q 21 - 3 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 2 points granted. The information included in AF in relation to the target groups and the problems talked is general. However, the role of some parts of the target group is not fully considered by the applicants (priority should be given to some parts of the target groups/more attention should be paid as their involvement in tackling the problems raised by the project is crucial). Also, there are some target groups that were not considered at all by the project (e.g. education/training centre and school could be considered by the project as they have a major role in conserving the culinary traditions - as cooking schools). Therefore, the score awarded by assessors is considered justified and the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.
- p) Q 22 - 2 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 1 point granted. The applicant provides information regarding the activities envisaged after the completion of the project. However, only part of activities is well described and feasible (e.g. is quite unclear and unreal how the cross border municipalities will include in the content of the documents a chapter dedicated to future options and possibilities for funding; measures for the development of local culture heritage and tourism will be part of each annual municipal plan for development of the municipalities, considering the fact that these municipalities were not involved/did not cooperate with the project partners when the integrated tourist product and the 2 strategies were developed. According to the AF information, they were informed on the results of the project). Moreover, no information on how and who will financially support the development of these activities (e.g. the update of the website; the extension and enrichment with new recipes of the integrated tourism product etc.). Therefore, the score

awarded by assessors is justified and the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.

- q) Q 23 - 15 points (maximum) in self-assessment vs. 7.5 points granted. Based on the information provided within AF, corroborated with the clarifications submitted by the applicant, there is a sufficient correlation between activities and budget, but budget is not sufficiently justified. For example, within Annex AF.7 it was identified that the services included do not correspond with provided offers and independent evaluation. These aspects were clarified by the applicants. Moreover, budgetary cuts were proposed, the total eligible budget being reduced with 11%.

Therefore, considering all these, the score awarded by assessors is justified and the Complaint Panel rejects the complaint for this criterion.

Article 3. The decision of the Complaint Panel is final, binding to all parties and not subject of any further complaint proceedings within the Programme.

Signed by

Members of the Complaint Panel

Signature



Member 1 - Managing Authority representative, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania

Signature

Member 2 - National Authority representative, Ministry of Regional Administration and Public Works, Bulgaria



Signature

Member 3 - External Expert (from the Evaluation Unit), Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania

