



Call for B-Light Scheme Project Proposals

in the frame of the
INTERREG V-A SLOVAKIA-HUNGARY
COOPERATION PROGRAMME

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1. Introduction

The Hungarian Prime Minister's Office acting as the Managing Authority of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic acting as the National Authority are announcing the Call for B-Light Scheme Project Proposals in the frame of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme. The aims of the Programme are explained in detail in the [Cooperation Programme](#) document.

The B-Light Scheme is an SME development funding scheme aimed on fostering linkages between SMEs operating on different sides of the border by supporting joint SME development projects with built-in special local project generation and mentoring mechanisms.

The B-Light Scheme technically acts as one single CBC project implemented by a consortium of project partners that changes (grows) throughout the project period. The project is initiated and launched by the Project partners [PPs]: the Lead Beneficiary [LB] and the Beneficiary [B] which are enterprise development organizations from the two sides of the border. The PPs submit the B-Light Scheme project proposal and, after the project was approved by the Monitoring Committee, LB signs a Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority and the LB and the B parallelly sign a Partnership Agreement as an Annex to the Subsidy Contract. After that, following a selection procedure, SMEs enter the project as B-Light Partners [B-Lights] by signing the Partnership Agreement with the LB. As more and more SMEs enter the Scheme, the partnership grows bigger and bigger.

In the project, Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary manage the Scheme and provide different business support and consultancy services to SMEs. B-lights implement joint investment projects to establish new business cooperation.



The original application of the Project Partners already contains the full budget of the B-Light Scheme, covering both the financing of the business support activities of the LB and the Beneficiary and the financing of the future activities to be implemented by the B-Light Partners. This practically means that financial allocation for the future B-Light Partners is included in the B-Light Scheme project Application Form as a separate budget from the budget of the LB and the Beneficiary. Later, as SMEs enter the partnership, this part of the budget is gradually allocated to them as B-Light Partners.

2. Priorities and objectives

In line with the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme the B-Light Scheme will be implemented within the **Priority Axis 1 [PA1]: Nature and Culture** and must contribute to its **Specific objective: To increase the attractiveness of the border area.**

This Specific objective is targeted at better utilization of the regions endogenous natural and cultural potential in supporting the sustainable development of local economies; increase in social, economic and territorial cohesion by supporting joint cultural activities and activities concerning to nature preserving and protection; improving social, economic and territorial cohesion by supporting joint cultural and nature conservation activities; and increase in the number of visitors in the programme area.

3. Results and outputs

The B-Light Scheme and the activities of B-lights implemented within the scheme must contribute to the Specific objective of the PA1. The achieved results must contribute to the Programme specific result indicator and the relevant Common and Programme specific output indicators must be fulfilled:

PROGRAMME SPECIFIC RESULT INDICATOR:

ID	Indicator name	Measurement unit
R110	Total number of visitors in the region ¹	number/year

COMMON AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS:

ID	Indicator name	Measurement unit
CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support ²	enterprises
CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants ³	enterprises
CO09	Sustainable tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	visits/year
CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status	ha
O11	Length of reconstructed and newly built 'green ways'	km



Note that the Common and Programme Specific Output Indicators which form the bases of the performance framework indicators of the Priority Axis (see Chapter 4 of this Call) are obligatory for every B-Light Scheme Project Proposal submitted under this Call.

For information related to definition and specification of the indicators please refer to Annex 2 of the [Cooperation Programme](#): Methodology and action plan for defining the indicators.

¹ A visitor in accommodation establishment of tourism is a person (except staff and owner) using services of temporary accommodation establishment regardless of country of permanent residence. Children are also included in the number of visitors. The visitor uses accommodation services for the reason of holiday, business trip, participation in sport event, training course, symposium, stay in spa and convalescent centres, visit of friends or relatives, participation in church events, etc.

² Number of enterprises receiving support in any form from ERDF (whether the support represents state aid or not). Enterprise is an organisation producing products or services to satisfy market needs in order to reach profit. The legal form of enterprise may be various (self-employed persons, partnerships, etc.). Note that multiple counting needs to be eliminated (i.e. an enterprise receiving grants more than once is still only one enterprise receiving grants).

³ Number of enterprises receiving support in forms of non-refundable direct financial support conditional only to completion of project (grants).

Besides the predefined Programme Specific Result Indicator and Common and Programme Specific Output Indicators set in the Cooperation Programme, the Applicants of B-Light Scheme Project Proposal may select from among the Project Specific Output indicators set in this Call which the most complement with the actions planned to be implemented either by the Project Partners and by the future B-Light partners.

PROJECT SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS

ID	Indicator name	Measurement unit
PS01	Developed surface/capacity affected by investment	m ²
PS02	Developed natural surface affected by investment	ha
PS03	Number of developed documents (strategies, curricula, action plans, methodologies etc.)	pc
PS05	Number of women participating in project activities, events	person
PS06	Number of new working places	pc
PS07	Number of sustained working places	pc
PS09	Number of newly implemented infrastructure	pc
PS10	Number of developed systems and services (monitoring, transport, etc.)	pc
PS12	Number of organized professional events (conference, workshop, seminar, study tour, exchange programme, etc...excluding project management meetings)	pc
PS13	Number of institutions/organizations involved in professional events	pc
PS14	Number of new webpages	pc
PS15	Number of cross-border thematic articles, media appearances	pc
PS16	Number of developed documents related to the investment (studies, analyses, feasibility studies, technical plans etc.)	pc

4. Performance Indicators

In line with the Cooperation Programme the B-Light Scheme project must contribute to the performance indicators of the Priority Axis as follows:

ID	Performance indicator	Measurement unit	Milestones for 2018	Target value 2023
CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants ⁴	enterprises		40
K0001	Number of calls for SMEs	number	1	1
F0001	Total amount of submitted expenditure for validation	EUR	200 000	11 764 750.89

For information related to definition and specification of the performance framework indicators please refer to the [Cooperation Programme](#).

5. Horizontal Principles

The Programme as well as each project supported within the programme has to act in respect of Horizontal principles [HP] regardless of the Specific objective addressed. The three principles are the Sustainable development, Equal opportunities and non-discrimination and Equality between men and women. Each principle is supported by measures, some of which shall be applied by Beneficiaries.

Obligatory horizontal principles

According to the Programme document three measures concerning the HP are mandatory for all projects. These requirements have to be respected in each project that contains activities concerned. Applicants with the signature of the Application form declare that these will be respected. In case these requirements are not respected, the project will be rejected without any possibility for further completion.

Obligatory requirements– relating to HPs – are the following:

1. Investments negatively affecting nature, fauna and flora, and biodiversity, have to be accompanied by compensatory measures and damage mitigation.
2. Projects including construction and/or renovation works have to choose climate-friendly architectural solutions and cost-optimal levels of energy performance according to the Directive 2010/31/EU.
3. In case of investments to inland waterways and/or infrastructure, projects have to be implemented in accordance with Art. 4 of the Directive 2000/60/EC and the river basin management have to be respected.

Programme specific measures

The Programme and Project specific measures shall ensure that Applicants not only respect the Horizontal principles during the implementation; but they shall find concrete actions in order to increase awareness of these principles and foster a behavioural change.

⁴ Milestone for 2018 for the performance framework indicator will be set in the Subsidy contract of the selected B-Light Scheme Project Proposal.

Applicants must choose at least one measure concerning each Horizontal principle and describe the project's contribution to its fulfilment from qualitative and quantitative point of view. Applicants shall describe their contribution to the chosen Programme specific measures in the Application form.

Sustainable development

Basic pillars of the Sustainable development are the environmental, economic and social sustainability. The main purpose of the sustainable development is to ensure the environmental, social, and economic sustainability with special emphasis on protection and improvement of the environment. During the Programme implementation the Polluter pays principle⁵ have to be applied and the selected projects must contribute to the requirements of environmental protection, resource efficiency, reduction climate change mitigation and adaptation to this change, resistant towards disasters, at the same time enables shift towards the quality prevention of environmental resources.

Programme specific measures regarding Sustainable development are the following:

- Project contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emission by reduced usage of hazardous material for the environment;
- Project reduces the consumption of energy, water and limited resources and increase the usage of renewable energy;
- Project increases the energy efficiency and usage of recycled materials,
- The project pays attention to efficiency and rational approach to funds and resources and goes beyond cost-optimal levels according to Directive 2010/31/EU.
- In case project involves purchasing products the requirements set out in Annex III of the Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU) is respected.

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Projects shall contribute to prevention from any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation. In particular, projects shall take into account the accessibility of the results for persons with disabilities.

Programme specific measures regarding Equal opportunities and non-discrimination are the following:

- Project must be transparent and must take into account non-discrimination principles.
- Project ensures accessibility of people with disabilities to newly developed services.
- In case of the employment initiatives the project gives preference to the social inclusion and gives advantage to Roma people and to people living in deep poverty.

Equality between men and women

The project shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective should be taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation as well. The main objective of the principle is to decrease the horizontal and vertical gender segregation in every sector of the economy.

Programme specific measures regarding Equality between men and women are the following:

- Project increases access to employment opportunities for women and supports flexible working hours.
- Project promotes female entrepreneurship and self-employment of women;

⁵ The party responsible for producing pollution is responsible for paying for the damage done to the natural environment.

- Project ensures minimum 50% in number of women or disadvantaged persons participating in joint education and training activities, events;
- Project supports equal pay initiatives at the workplace.

PA specific measures

However Horizontal principles are applicable regardless of the Priority axes, the Programme introduced specific measures which are applicable only in the frame of the selected Priority axis. Applicants are obliged to choose **at least two PA specific measures** regarding the relevant PA and describe the project's contribution to its fulfilment. Applicants may add other Project specific measures if they are relevant in terms of the project. Project specific measures within the PA1 are as follows:

- Project shall build environmental and cultural awareness and respect and provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Project provides direct benefits for conservation and generates benefits for both local people and local economy.
- Project shall design, construct and operate low energy demand or nearly zero-energy buildings.

6. Available funds

The overall European Regional and Development Fund [ERDF] support for the B-Light Scheme (including the management costs devoted for the Lead Beneficiary and the Beneficiary as well as the actions implemented by the future B-light partners) within the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme is **10 000 000 EUR**. The Monitoring Committee reserves the right not to award all available funds.

The Application form of the Project Partners (LB and Beneficiary) contains the costs related to management of the B-Light Scheme as well as financial allocation for the future B-light partners and their activities. Later, as SMEs enter the partnership, this part of the budget is gradually allocated to them as B-Light Partners.

Costs related to management of the B-Light Scheme by the Lead Beneficiary and the Beneficiary shall be proportionate to the overall use of funds by the B-Light partners but may reach maximum 15% of the total B-Light Scheme project budget.

7. Source of finance

Each Beneficiary (including LB, Beneficiary and B-Light partners) of the B-Light Scheme can receive maximum of 85% European Regional and Development Fund [ERDF] contribution. The ratio between the national co-financing and own contribution is set based on the legal form of the partner.

Total eligible expenditure of the Beneficiary registered in Slovakia will be financed as follows⁶:

⁶ Source of financing is in line with the valid Financing Strategy of ESI Funds (<http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=9349>)

Type of organisation	ERDF contribution	State co-financing	Own contribution
State administration organizations	85 %	15 %	0 %
Other public administration organizations	85 %	10 %	5 %
Private sector out of state aid schemes ⁷	85 %	5 %	10 %

Total eligible expenditure of the Beneficiary registered in Hungary will be financed as follows:

Type of organisation	ERDF contribution	State co-financing	Own contribution
Central budgetary organization ⁸	max. 85 %	max. 15 %	min. 0 %
Other than central budgetary organization	max. 85 %	max. 10 %	min. 5 %

Total eligible expenditure of the Project Partner registered in Hungary will be financed according to 4.§ of Government Decree 126/2016 (VI.7.) on the implementation of programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Instrument for Pre-accession funds in connection with the territorial co-operation in the 2014-2020 programming period.⁹

Applicants are required to demonstrate the availability of own contribution (if relevant) in the *Declaration of the B-Light Scheme Project partner* (Annex I. to the Call). If own contribution or a part thereof are secured from the budget of a municipality, city or county besides the Declaration of the B-Light Scheme Project partner, a resolution of the respective council must be attached to the application. The resolution must state the name of the project and the amount of allocated commitments.

8. Form of finance

The total budget of the B-Light Scheme project proposal consists of ERDF contribution, the national co-financing and the own contribution of the Project Partner (if relevant). No ERDF can exceed 85% of the total forecasted eligible costs of the B-Light Scheme. State co-financing is provided only to the management organizations involved in the Application form to this Call (Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary). No state co-financing is provided to the B-Light beneficiaries.

The ERDF support provided to Beneficiaries is non-repayable grant. The ERDF funding will take the form of reimbursement to all Beneficiaries (Lead Beneficiary, Beneficiary and B-Light beneficiaries). For Beneficiaries registered in Hungary the ERDF contribution of the contracted ERDF allocation of their project part might be entitled for advance payment from national resources according to Government Decree 126/2016. (VI.7.) on the implementation of programmes financed by the

⁷ The Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary must note that the public support must be assessed in line with the State aid rules according to the EU legislation. In cases when State aid rules will have to be applied, the ratio between sources of funding might be changed.

⁸ Central Budgetary Organisation; Based on the definition of Act CXCV of 2011 on the state economy, Article 7 – a budgetary organisation is a legal entity established for the purpose of carrying out public functions defined by law or the deed of foundation. Central budgetary organisations - according to Act CXCV of 2011 on the state economy, Article 8 section (1) a) - are budgetary organisations established by the Government, the Parliament or the Minister. Central budgetary organisations belong to the central sub-system of the Hungarian state economy.

⁹ Please be informed that the exact percentage and the amount of own contribution will be established in line with Hungarian legislation in force at the time of the Monitoring Committee decision.

European Regional Development Fund and the Instrument for Pre-accession funds in connection with the territorial co-operation in the 2014-2020 programming period¹⁰.

The amount of the national co-financing for Lead Beneficiary or Beneficiary registered in Hungary is available as advance payment according to the Government Decree 126/2016. (VI.7.) on the implementation of programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Instrument for Pre-accession funds in connection with the territorial co-operation in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Lead Beneficiary registered in Slovakia will contract the ERDF funds with the Prime Minister's Office in Hungary as Managing Authority in Subsidy contract. Beneficiary registered in Slovakia will conclude the national co-financing contract with the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development in Slovak Republic as National Authority.

Lead Beneficiary registered in Hungary will conclude Subsidy contract with the Prime Minister's Office in Hungary as Managing Authority for the ERDF funding of the project. Beneficiary will conclude the Hungarian national co-financing contract with the Prime Minister's Office in Hungary.



State co-financing is provided only to the management organization of the B-Light Scheme project indicated in the submitted Application form (Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary). No state co-financing is provided to B-Light beneficiaries.

The conclusion of the Subsidy contract is a prerequisite to signing the national co-financing contract.

9. Duration of the B-Light Scheme

The time schedule of the activities must be planned carefully. The activities shall be planned and organised in chronological order. The partners shall have a clear idea about how each implementation step is built upon the other. The start and end date of implementation of the B-Light Scheme project is stipulated in the Subsidy contract. The start of the project implementation may be planned for the day after the day of submission of the Application form as earliest. The start date of the project implementation is the start date of eligibility period of the costs included in the Subsidy contract.

In line with the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme the B-Light Scheme providing support for SMEs **must be fully operational by the year 2018 and minimum 40 SMEs must receive support by the year 2023.**



The B-Light Scheme project must complete its implementation in time which allows timely closure of the Programme, but not later than June 30, 2022. When planning the activities Project partners must follow the performance indicators stated in the Cooperation programme.

In case the B-Light Scheme project fails to meet these requirements and requirements

¹⁰ 126/2016. (VI. 7.) Kormányrendelet a 2014–2020 programozási időszakban az Európai Regionális Fejlesztési Alap és az Előcsatlakozási Támogatási Eszköz egyes, határon átnyúló együttműködési programjainak végrehajtásáról.

of the N+3 regulation or fail to deliver the contracted results, the MA is entitled to de-commit the project by reducing the original project budget and the corresponding ERDF contribution.

10. Information and publicity

Projects must constantly communicate throughout the project life-cycle by using appropriate communication tools depending on the size and needs of the project. Projects may use various forms and means of communication in order to disseminate/communicate the aims, results and outcomes of the projects to stakeholders, key decision-makers and the public in general.

In order to ensure a proper level of publicity for the project the Programme introduced minimum requirements in means of communication. Projects may use different kinds of information and publicity measures such as publications, photographs and audio-visual productions, promotional materials, adverts (paid articles or any kind of advertisements), whose costs must be planned ahead. For the obligatory minimum publicity requirement and further details on information and publicity please see the *Application form* and the *Visibility guide for projects* published on Programme website.

11. General rules and requirements for the B-Light Scheme

Eligible applicants

According to the legal status the following organizations are eligible to apply for present Call for the B-Light Scheme project proposals:

- A. public authorities
- B. companies with a majority state ownership
- C. chambers of trade and industry

Minimum criteria for the B-Light Scheme Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary are listed in Chapter 12.

Exclusion criteria

Applicants are eligible only if the following conditions are met:

- their legal personality is in accordance with the legislation of Slovakia and Hungary and are exclusively legal entities;
- they have their seat in the eligible programme area. However, exceptions can be possible in cases where the different organisational setup of an Applicant makes it necessary;
- they have fulfilled their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions and/or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the Managing Authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- they are not bankrupt or being wound up, are not having their affairs administered by the courts, have not entered into an agreement with creditors, have not suspended business activities, are not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are not in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- they have not been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of 'res iudicata';

- they have not been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Managing Authority or the National Authority can justify;
- they have not been the subject of a judgement which has the force of 'res iudicata' for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or for any other illegal activity detrimental to the Community's financial interests;
- they are not subject to a conflict of interests connected to their participation in the present Call;
- they are not guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the MA/NA as a condition of participation in the Call or in failing to supply information;
- they have not attempted to obtain confidential information or to influence the Monitoring Committee or the MA/NA/JS during the assessment process of the current or a previous Call.

Geographical criteria

Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary of the B-Light Scheme project have to be registered or have to have a branch office in the Programme area. In cases when the regional/local branch implementing the project is not a legal entity, the headquarters have to be identified officially as the responsible partner with indicating the existence and proving the registration of the regional/local branch inside the programme area.

In Slovakia 5 self-governing regions and in Hungary 8 NUTS III level regions are eligible as set out in the following table:

Eligible NUTS3 regions of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme

SK010	Bratislavský samosprávny kraj	HU221	Győr-Moson-Sopron megye
SK021	Trnavský samosprávny kraj	HU212	Komárom-Esztergom megye
SK023	Nitriansky samosprávny kraj	HU102	Pest megye
SK032	Banskobystrický samosprávny kraj	HU313	Nógrád megye
SK042	Košický samosprávny kraj	HU312	Heves megye
		HU311	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén megye
		HU323	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megye
		HU101	Budapest főváros

Geographical coverage

B-Light Scheme project proposal must cover the whole programme eligible area. Strategy for implementation of the B-Light Scheme must demonstrate the territorial coverage of the whole programme area of the actions planned to be implemented.

Partnership criteria

In order to be considered eligible, Lead Beneficiary of the B-Light Scheme Project proposal has to act in partnership with one Beneficiary from the other side of the Slovak-Hungarian border. The Lead Beneficiary ensures the efficient implementation and bears the overall responsibility for the implementation of the B-Light Scheme itself, as well as for the activities of the Beneficiary and the B-lights entering the partnership at later stage. Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary must prove the ability to coordinate the scheme with many Project partners (B-lights) involved in the B-Light Scheme from the

two countries. Knowing the specificities of the border region and having on-site experience in both counties will be taken into account when selecting the potential applicants.

Cooperation criteria

The partnership shall be composed of Beneficiaries that may be linked professionally to the project and may have major contribution and impact within the partnership. A good partnership should include organisations that are relevant for dealing with the common challenge or capitalizing on the joint asset identified by the project. The partners should have complementary expertise, and there should be a balanced selection of organizations in terms of split between the Member States and different sectors. The strength of the partnership can be described via the following cooperation criteria that are present in good territorial cooperation projects¹¹:

Joint development

The project idea is jointly developed and planned by the Project partners.

In order to fulfil the criteria both Project partners (Lead beneficiary and Beneficiary) should contribute to the development of the project, including joint development of objectives and outputs, budget, timing and responsibilities for activities to achieve the objectives. Project partners should identify knowledge and experience, which each partner brings to the project and what each partner expects to get from the project.

Joint implementation

The activities, outputs and results are jointly carried out by the Project partners.

In order to fulfil the criteria the Lead Beneficiary bears the overall responsibility for the project, while all Project partners take responsibility for different parts of the implementation. Each Project partner is responsible for coordinating at least one activity, ensures that planned activities are carried out, milestones are met and unexpected challenges to implementation are dealt with.

Joint staffing

All Project partners provide staff to support the project activities.

In order to fulfil the criteria both Project partners (Lead beneficiary and Beneficiary) have a defined role and allocate staff (internal or external) to fulfil this role. Project partners work together on the project. Partners should not merely carry out activities in parallel without coordination and exchange. Staff members coordinate their activities with others involved in the activity and exchange information regularly.

There should be no unnecessary duplication of roles in different Project partners. The Lead Beneficiary is generally the employer of core project staff, but other Project partners should also allocate staff according to their responsibilities within the project. It is essential that the Lead Beneficiary allocates sufficient resources for the overall project management.

Joint financing

At least 5% of project budget is invested at each Beneficiary.

The project has a joint budget with funding allocated to Project partners according to the activities they are carrying out. In order to fulfil the criteria each Beneficiary should have disposal of at least 5% of the project's total budget.

¹¹Article 12(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013

Eligible expenditures

The total ERDF contribution allocated for implementation of the B-Light Scheme project is 10 000 000 EUR. This ERDF allocation will be used for financing the implementation of the costs associated with the administration of the B-Light Scheme by the Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary as well as for activities implemented by the B-Lights entering the project partnership at later stage. The share of total cost devoted for overall management of the B-Light Scheme by the Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary cannot be higher than 15% of the total allocation.

Expenditures subject to reimbursement within the B-Light Scheme project must occur in the given duration period indicated in the Subsidy contract, which becomes the eligibility period of expenditures of the project.

To be deemed eligible for co-financing, all expenditure must observe the *Guide on eligible expenditures* published on the programme website as well as relevant Programme, national and EU regulations.



Under the provision of this Call, the Preparation costs (budget line 1) and costs related to Infrastructure and works (budget line 7) are excluded from among the eligible costs of the B-Light Scheme management organizations (Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary of the submitted Application form).

State Aid Rules

The Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary must note that the public support must be assessed in line with the State aid rules according to the EU legislation. In the frame of the B-Light Scheme only de minimis aid may be granted for the activities implemented by the B-lights¹². The De Minimis regulation allows small amounts of aid – less than 200 000 EUR over 3 rolling years – to be given to an undertaking for a wide range of purposes.

Please, note that setting-up state aid scheme is Member State’s responsibility and if the state aid scheme is not available until contracting with the B-lights, the Member State shall not provide national co-financing.

12. Minimum criteria for the B-Light Scheme Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary

The following minimum eligibility criteria must be fulfilled by Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary:

Minimum eligibility criteria	Lead Beneficiary			Beneficiary
	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type A,B,C
Relevance and experience				
The main objective/activity of the applicant organisation, according to its founding document(s), is directly related to economic and trade development or enterprise development.		+	+	

¹² According to COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid.

Minimum eligibility criteria	Lead Beneficiary			Beneficiary
	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type A,B,C
The applicant organisation must have at least two years of experience in supporting development and expansion of the SMEs on national and international markets.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must have at least two years of experience in economic and trade development or enterprise development, targeting SMEs.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must have at least two years of experience in cross-border economic and trade development or enterprise development, targeting SMEs.	+	+	+	
The applicant organisation must have experience with identification of competitive enterprises and business opportunities on national and international markets.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must have experience with finding adequate business partners for the enterprises in the international markets.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must have at least two years of activities in the eligible area of the Programme.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must possess of knowledge of relevant national and international legislation as well as relevant EU policies.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must have experience with establishing SME development programmes.	+	+	+	
Professional capacity and staff requirements				
At the end of the last closed financial year the Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary together must have at least 10 permanent staff of which at least 5 working on the thematic fields related to the current call (economic and trade development, enterprise development, tourism development).	+	+	+	+
The team members selected for the B-Light Scheme must have at least 5 years' experience in EU project management or in the field of SMEs grants. The team members must have excellent command of English.	+	+	+	+
Economic and financial criteria¹³				
The applicant organisation must have an average annual turnover of minimum 200 000 EUR (two hundred thousand) in the last two closed financial years.	+	+	+	+
The applicant organisation must have a balance sheet total of minimum 10 000 000 EUR (ten million) by the date of submission of the Application form.		+	+	
The level of cash and cash equivalents of the applicant organisation must reach a level of at least 400 000 EUR as an average of the last two closed financial	+	+	+	

¹³ Exchange rate to be calculated based on the average yearly exchange rate of the national currency/EUR.

Minimum eligibility criteria	Lead Beneficiary			Beneficiary
	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type A,B,C
years.				
The level of cash and cash equivalents of the applicant organisation must reach a level of at least 100 000 EUR as an average of the last two closed financial years.				+
The applicant organisation must ensure own co-financing related to management of the B-Light Scheme (according to national rules stated in Chapter 6 of the Call)	+	+	+	+

13. Mandatory Annexes to Application form

Application form for the B-Light Scheme must be submitted with the following mandatory annexes which are, according to their relevancy, obligatory for each Project partner of the B-Light Scheme project proposal:

GENERAL ANNEXES

Annex 1: Declarations of the B-Light Scheme project partners (G1)

Declaration of the B-Light Scheme project partner is a declaration on honour filled in, signed (and stamped) by the legal representative(s) of each Project partner in native language. There are two different templates available in the Call depending on the registered location (country) of the Project partner (Annex I.A; Annex I.B).

Annex 2: Declaration on partnership (G2)

Declaration on partnership is proving that the B-Light Scheme project proposal was prepared jointly and the Project partners wish to implement the B-Light Scheme project in partnership. The declaration is texted in English and has to be signed by the legal representative(s) of each Project partner (on a separate piece of paper - Annex II.).

Annex 3: Letter(s) of foundation (G3)

Each Project partner – except municipalities and public organizations established by law in case they are not performing economic activity – is obliged to attach the copy of the Letter of foundation of the organization issued in national language.

Annex 4: Resolution(s) about the own contribution (G4)

In case the own contribution or a part thereof is secured from the budget of a municipality, city or county, a resolution of the respective council must be attached to the application in national language. The resolution must state the name of the project and the amount of allocated own commitments.

SPECIFIC ANNEXES

Annex 5: Copy of the registration list(s) of the employees to the Social Insurance Authority (Sociálna poisťovňa) / National Tax and Customs Administration (Nemzeti Adó- és Vámhivatal) (S1)

Each Project partner is obliged to attach the copy of the registration list(s) of the employees to the register kept by the Social Insurance Authority (Sociálna poisťovňa) / National Tax and Customs Administration (Nemzeti Adó- és Vámhivatal) in national language. The specific annex is to prove that at the end of the last closed financial year the Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiary together had at least 10 permanent staff employed by the organizations.

Annex 6: Copy of the financial (profit and loss) statements for the last two completed financial year (S2)

Each Project partner is obliged to attach the copy of the financial (profit and loss) statements for the last two completed financial years of the organisation in national language¹⁴.

Annex 7: Copy of the balance sheets (S3)

Each Project partner is obliged to attach the copy of the balance sheets of the organisation in national language¹⁵ as follows:

- Balance sheet valid to the date of submission of the B-Light Scheme project proposal
- Balance sheets for the last two closed financial years

Annex 8: Strategy for implementation of the B-Light Scheme: Enterprise development concept (S4)

Strategy for implementation of the B-Light Scheme must follow the following structure:

- Purpose of the B-Light Scheme
- Expected results and outputs
- Implementation structure of the B-Light Scheme (institutions, stakeholders, tasks and responsibilities)
- Detailed budget (description of financial requirements for the B-Light Scheme implementation including all required human capacities):
 - The required human capacities (internal: budget sublines 2.1 and 2.2 and/or external: budget line 5.5 if relevant) shall be described in detailed listing all planned positions separated on the level of budget items, description of tasks and required financial resources per each position)
 - The planned external expertise and services (budget line 5 and related sublines when relevant) shall be described in detailed on the level of the budget items including financial resources required.
- Implementation and financial plan

¹⁴ Exchange rate to be calculated based on the average yearly exchange rate of the national currency/EUR.

¹⁵ Exchange rate to be calculated based on the average yearly exchange rate of the national currency/EUR.

- Eligibility of B-lights (legal, territorial, sectoral, professional, financial, exclusion criteria etc.)
- Eligible activities to be carried out by SMEs (with the possible connections to the projects financed within PA1 of the Cooperation Programme).
- Scope of territorial coverage in the whole programme eligible area
- Methodology of ensuring the interest and involvement of B-lights
- Model of financing (ERDF, national contribution and own contribution)
- Possibilities for pre-financing B-lights
- Description of B-Light Scheme implementation processes:
 - calls for B-lights project proposals;
 - project mentoring;
 - application process;
 - assessment procedure (formal, eligibility and quality assessment of B-lights)
 - selection procedure (including the establishment of a Steering Committee, description of its functions in the selection procedure involving the MC members to respect multi-governance and partnership approach and ensuring the flow of information between MC and SC;
 - Contracting procedures;
 - verification of costs and reporting;
 - payment procedures and monitoring;
- Sustainability and horizontal measures
- Publicity activities
- Risk management related to smooth implementation of the B-Light Scheme and activities implemented by B-lights and well as to the sustainability of outputs and results

14. Submission procedure

Deadline for submission of applications: 24/04/2017

Language of the Application: Application form and the following mandatory annexes must be submitted in English language: General annex 2 and Specific annex 8.

General annexes 1, 3, 4 and Specific annexes 5, 6, and 7 as well as any other supporting documents may be submitted in Slovak, Hungarian or English.

The complete list of the mandatory Annexes is described in Chapter 13. If relevant, Applicants are obliged to use predefined templates attached to the Call.

Form of submission: Application form has to be signed (and stamped) by the statutory representative of the Lead Beneficiary and submitted by the given deadline. The signed (and stamped) Application form will not be the subject of any completion or amendment procedure during the administrative and eligibility assessment. However, in case the formal and eligibility compliance of a project proposal cannot be judged properly or if deficiencies are identified, the JS summons the LB via e-mail or registered postal letter to submit a completion of documents or any clarification requested from the JS within a given deadline. Completions can be made only one time during the formal and eligibility assessment process.

Application form and mandatory annexes shall be submitted in paper form in one original and two copies verified¹⁶ by the statutory representative(s) of the Lead Beneficiary and electronically in three copies on CD/DVD. The CD/DVD shall contain all documents in .xls, .doc and (if signed and scanned in) .PDF format.

Method of submission: Application form and its annexes shall be submitted either by registered mail or by a courier service. Applications submitted by any other means (e.g. e-mail or fax) will be rejected. Evidence of the timely submission by post or courier service will be constituted by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. (In case the timely submission cannot be checked by the postmark, the Joint Secretariat is entitled for asking the deposit slip.)

Application form and its annexes shall be submitted to the following address:

Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Joint Secretariat
Széchenyi Programme Office Nonprofit Ltd.
1053 Budapest, Szép u. 2., IV. floor.
Hungary

Application submitted or delivered at other addresses will be rejected.

The envelope containing the application is to be sealed and properly marked including the following information:

- address to which the application is submitted,
- full name and address of the Lead Beneficiary,
- Identification code of Call for proposals: SKHU/1702
- Wording: "Application form for the B-Light Scheme, Interreg V-A SKHU Cooperation Programme".

For detailed information please contact directly the Joint Secretariat. Contact or queries can be made via the programme's website (www.skhu.eu).

The Project partners, by submitting the project proposal to the present Call, duly consent to the fact that the Data Manager (Prime Minister's Office of Hungary) and the Technical Data Processor (Széchenyi Programme Office Nonprofit LLC) will manage all the personal data included in the application package and provided in the contracting or project implementation phase, in particular with regard to the data managed in the monitoring and information system. Hungarian Act CXII of 2011 on the Right to informational self-determination and on the freedom of information shall apply to the protection of personal data and to the disclosure of information of public interest. The data are managed upon the voluntary consent of the Lead Beneficiary / Beneficiary, according to Paragraph (1) of Article 5 of the above-mentioned Act.

15. Selection process

The selection process follows the *Methodology and criteria for selecting operations for Call for proposals* approved by the Monitoring Committee of the Program however the Application forms for the B-Light Scheme project proposals will be selected **in two round selection process**. The aim of this Call is to select those Applications which will be forwarded to the second round of the selection process.

¹⁶ First page of each copy of the Application form must be signed (and stamped) by the statutory representative of the Lead Beneficiary with the following statement: Copy of the Application form and its annexes is identical with the original.



Only successful Application forms selected in this Call will be forwarded to the second round of the selection process.

16. Selection steps

The project evaluation steps of the first round of the selection process comprises of the following phases:

- 1) Administrative assessment
- 2) Eligibility assessment
- 3) Quality assessment

The assessment criteria for each step of evaluation process are specified in the assessment grids approved by the MC and attached to this Call. Lead Beneficiary is notified about the results of the evaluation steps as follows:

- The decision about the result of administrative and eligibility assessment signed by the JS is distributed to the Lead Beneficiary after the administrative and eligibility assessment has been closed for all submitted applications.
- The decision about the results of the quality assessment signed by the MA is distributed to the Lead Beneficiary after the respective MC on which the decision has been adopted.

Administrative assessment

The administrative assessment includes check of admissibility and completeness criteria and is carried out by the JS on the basis of 4-eye principle. At each stage, the MA may carry out sample checks to satisfy itself about the correctness of the assessments. The evaluation grid of administrative assessment is available as Annex to this Call (see *Administrative assessment grid*).

Admissibility criteria

The first key condition that must be met by Lead Beneficiaries upon submitting their applications is that the application has to be submitted in a predefined form in paper format signed (and stamped) by legal representative(s) of the Lead Beneficiary within the given deadline.

In case the submitted application does not meet the admissibility criteria, there is no possibility to complement or any later resubmit the application under the same Call; therefore the application is automatically rejected under the given Call.

The fulfilment of the admissibility criteria of submitted application will be checked in maximum 15 calendar days from the respective submission deadline. In the cases when the fulfilment of the admissibility criteria is not obvious, the JS can ask for decision of the MA. If needed, the National Authority can also be involved. Applications fulfilling the admissibility criteria are forwarded to the next step of administrative assessment.

Completeness criteria

The next step of the administrative assessment is to check whether the application is accompanied with all required annexes. Apart from the above admissibility criteria, this part of the assessment process allows the Lead Beneficiaries to **complement missing mandatory annexes** within a given deadline. The option for complementing required documents/making corrections **can be used only**

once. During the check of the completeness criteria, clarification can be asked by the Joint Secretariat.

Proposals are checked in the shortest possible timeframe. In case the submitted application does not meet the requirements for mandatory documents, the Lead Beneficiary is requested by the JS via e-mail or postal letter to submit the missing mandatory annexes. **The deadline for completing the application form with missing mandatory annexes is 14 calendar days from the day of delivery of the completion request of JS by Lead Beneficiary.**

In case missing documents are not submitted to the JS within the stated deadline, or if the application does not meet the criteria, the assessment procedure for the concerned application will be stopped and the project proposal will be rejected. Applications fulfilling the completeness criteria are forwarded to the next step of assessment process which is eligibility assessment.

Eligibility assessment

The eligibility assessment shall ensure that only eligible project applications are considered for the further project selection procedure. This evaluation step has no quality ranking. Eligibility assessment criteria are examined by attributing “fulfilled” (YES) or “not fulfilled” (NO). Applications fulfilling the eligibility assessment criteria are forwarded to the next step of assessment process which is quality assessment. The evaluation grid of eligibility assessment is available as Annex of this Call (see *Eligibility assessment grid*). During the eligibility assessment, clarification can be asked by the Joint Secretariat.

Quality assessment

Those applications that succeeded in the above steps of the assessment process will be further evaluated in terms of their quality. The quality of each application is assessed against a set of criteria laid down in the quality assessment grid. The evaluation grid of quality assessment is available as Annex to this Call (see *Quality assessment grid*). The quality assessment criteria are grouped into following two main categories:

Strategic evaluation

Strategic evaluation is aimed on assessment of the:

- project environment and coherence,
- relevance of the submitted proposal for the set objectives,
- level of cross-border cooperation,
- added value,
- project partnership and
- sustainability of project results.

Operational evaluation

Operational evaluation assesses

- feasibility of project activities,
- management capacities,
- requested financial resources,
- project working schedule as well as
- horizontal principles.

The main categories of quality assessment listed above are further divided into the sub-criteria with pre-defined scores and thresholds (see the *Quality assessment grid*).

Each application can receive maximum of 100 points from which 65 points threshold have to be gained by the application in order to be proposed for approval in the first round of selection process. The achievement of minimum 65 points threshold doesn't automatically mean co-financing for the project, applications which reached the threshold will be forwarded to the second round of the selection process.

The quality evaluation will be performed under the coordination of relevant programme authorities.

17. Decision of the Monitoring Committee

On the basis of the quality assessment results and thresholds achieved by the applications, the programme implementation authorities prepare a summary of the applications submitted under the present call and, if necessary, relevant recommendations for the Monitoring Committee. Based on the results of the quality assessment the MC can make its decision:

- a) projects proposed for approval (threshold above 65 points)
- b) projects proposed for approval with condition (condition set by the assessors and/or JS and confirmed by MC)
- c) projects proposed for rejection (threshold below 65 points)

The MC members will be provided with the results of the evaluation process and assessment grids in due time prior to the MC meeting.

18. Complaint procedure

According to Article 74(3) EU Regulation No. 1303/2013 the Beneficiaries may submit complaint. Within the Programme terminology, the term "complaint" refers to three different cases:

- Complaints against a decision of the MA/JS during the project implementation are based on the Subsidy Contract concluded between the MA and the Lead Beneficiary and follow the rules laid down in the Subsidy Contract;
- Complaints related to FLC have to be addressed to the responsible National authority (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR and Prime Minister's Office in Hungary) or administrative body according to the setup of the management, financial and control system and applicable national rules.
- Complaints may be raised against the project assessment process and the correctness thereof. The procedure regarding this type of complaint is described below.

Handling of the complaint

The rules set in this section are providing transparent complaint procedure against decisions taken by Programme bodies during the project assessment and selection process. The Lead Beneficiary is the only one entitled to file a complaint. The right to complain against a decision regarding the project selection applies to the Lead Beneficiary whose project application was not selected for co-financing during the project assessment and selection process.

The complaint is to be lodged against the communication issued by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat as the MA/JS' communication is the only legally binding act towards the Lead Applicant during the project assessment and selection process.

The complaint can be lodged only against the outcomes of the eligibility assessment. The complaint should be submitted in writing by postal mail to JS of the Programme within 14 calendar days after the Lead Beneficiary had been officially notified by the MA/JS about the results of the project selection process. The complaint shall be written in English and shall include:

- a) Name and address of the Lead Beneficiary
- b) Reference number and acronym of the application which is a subject of the complaint
- c) Clearly indicated reasons for the complaint, including listing of all elements of the assessment which are being complaint and/or failures in adherence with procedures limited to eligibility criteria
- d) signature of the legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary (scanned signatures are accepted)
- e) Any supporting documents (no additional content-related information than the one included in the proposal is allowed).

The relevant documentation shall be provided for the sole purpose of supporting the complaint. No other grounds for the complaint than eligibility assessment will be taken into account during the complaint procedure.

A complaint will be rejected without further examination if submitted after the set deadline or if the formal requirements set above are not observed. In case the complaint is rejected on these reasons, the MA/JS conveys this information within 10 working days to the Lead Beneficiary. After the receipt of the complaint the MA assisted by the Joint Secretariat, examines the complaint and prepares its technical examination regarding the merit of the complaint.

The complaint will then be examined on the basis of the information brought forward by the Lead Beneficiary in the complaint and the technical examination prepared by the MA by the Complaint Board.

The Complaint Board is the only body entitled to review a complaint against a decision regarding assessment and selection of projects co-financed by the Programme. The Complaint Board comprises of three members; MA, NA and JS. Impartiality of members of the Complaint Board towards the case under review has to be ensured. If this cannot be provided, the distinct member shall refrain from the distinct case's review and be replaced by another impartial member.

The Complaint Board will have 30 calendar days to provide a binding decision. This can be extended once with an additional 30 calendar days in case further information is needed. The decision - if the complaint is justified or to be rejected - is taken by the Complaint Board by consensus. In case it is justified, the project will be forwarded to next step in assessment process.

The decision of the Complaint Board is communicated by the MA/JS in writing to the Lead Beneficiary within 7 calendar days from the receipt of the Complaint Board decision.

The decision of the Complaint Board is final, binding to all parties and not subject of any further complaint proceedings within the Programme based on the same grounds.

Proposals rejected after the quality assessment will receive official communication from MA/JS with the reasons for rejection. Further details on the reasons for rejection can be requested on demand from JS and the Lead Beneficiary can have an insight in the evaluation grids within 7 calendar days after the receipt of the notification letter on the rejection.

19. Clause

"Application form for the B-Light Scheme" provided in .xls format is the template for submitting the Application to the present Call. Nevertheless the Managing Authority of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme reserves the rights – in order to ensure further data-processing in the Monitoring system - to call the B-Light Scheme Project partners for adjusting the B-Light Scheme Application form to a format compatible with the Programmes` Monitoring system at a later stage of

programme implementation. The format compatible with the Monitoring system will serve as a base for the B-Light Scheme implementation.

20. Concluding provisions

The Managing Authority may modify the terms of the Call for B-Light Scheme project proposals by amendment at any time prior to the deadline for submission of applications. The amendments may not affect the eligibility and the evaluation criteria. In order to afford reasonable time for Applicants to fulfil the modified terms of the call, the Managing Authority may extend the deadline for the submission of applications. If the Applicant submitted the Application before publishing an amendment, the Applicant cannot suffer disadvantage due to the modified terms of the conditions.

The Managing Authority after consultation with the National Authority may decide to cancel the procedure of the Call for B-Light Scheme project proposals at any stage, but particularly if

- there have been irregularities in the procedure, in particular where these have prevented equal treatment;
- exceptional circumstances or force majeure render the normal implementation of the planned actions impossible.

If the Call for B-Light Scheme project proposals is cancelled, the information on cancellation will be published on the www.skhu.eu website. Any potential losses from cancellation are not entitled for compensation.

21. Annexes to the Call:

Annex I/A, II/B: Declaration of the B-Light Scheme Project partner– template

Annex II: Declaration on partnership – template

Annex III: Application form – template

Annex IV: Administrative assessment grid

Annex V: Eligibility assessment grid

Annex VI: Quality assessment grid

Annex VII: State aid guide