Version 1.0

Application Instructions – Preparatory

The purpose of preparatory projects is to develop project ideas in a more specific and focused direction, to examine the need for the project outputs among end users and stakeholders and to build up transnational partnerships.

The call for Preparatory project proposals is a continuous call. This means that submissions are welcome anytime and ideally conclude with the presentation of a main project application by the end date of a call for main project proposals.

This document is part of the application pack, which is available in eMS and the programme website, http://www.interreg-npa.eu/for-applicants/preparatory-project-call. The application pack further includes guidance documents and templates that should be submitted as supporting documents together with the application.

Within the application form there are a number of sections that must be completed for the application form to be deemed admissible. Please carefully consider all questions in the application form discuss them within your project partnership and jointly develop the activity plan.

The application form will initially be used to evaluate your project's contribution to the overall objectives of NPA 2014-2020, and will subsequently be used as a tool for assessing your final report.

Please note that all essential information about the project must be presented in the application form - only complementary information is to be given in annexes.

Please feel free to contact the Joint Secretariat and the Regional Contact Points for further advice and assistance on preparing a proposal. Contact details are available on the NPA website, www.interreg-npa.eu.

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1. About eMS

Applications must be submitted through an electronic monitoring system (eMS). This document provides instructions for completing the application form in eMS.

eMS is a programme monitoring system with a communication portal, which allows programmes to collect and store all necessary project and programme information and communicate with beneficiaries electronically via a secure online communication portal. INTERACT has developed this software for the benefit of all ETC programmes.

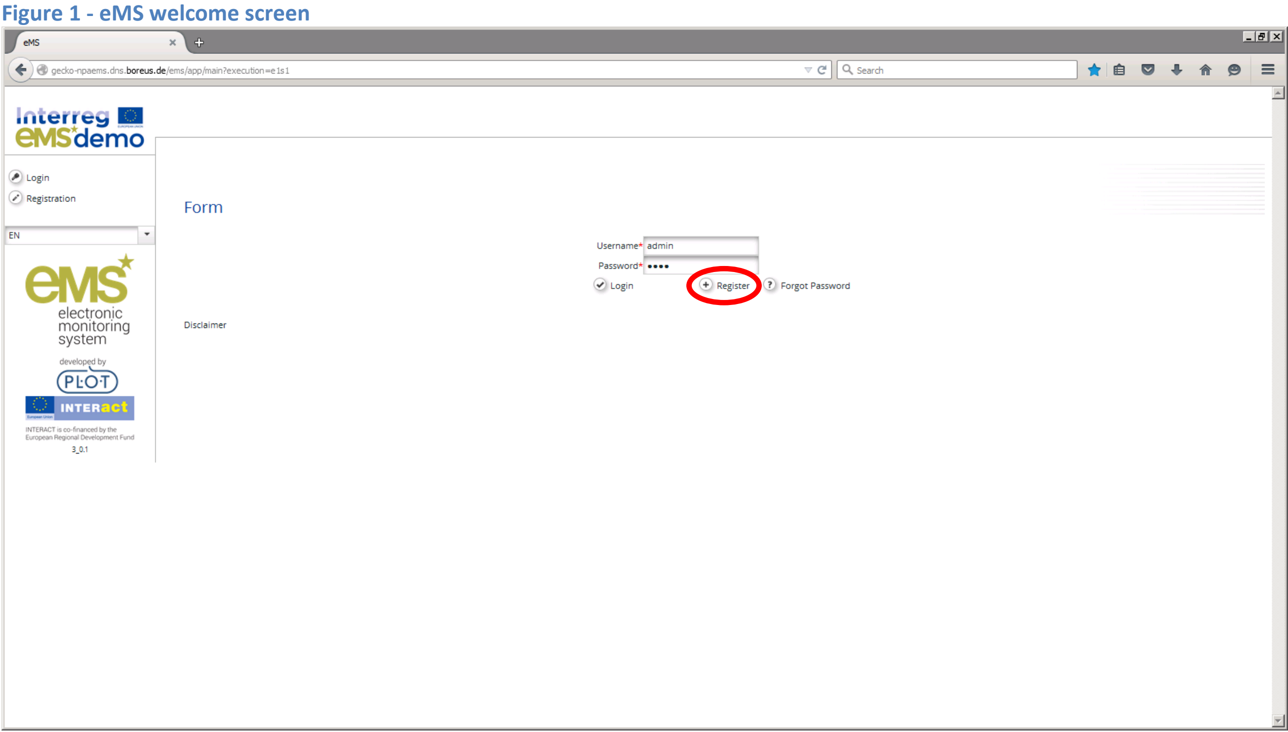
Disclaimer: eMS is a new system for both the programme and the applicants, and it is partially still under development. For this reason, we ask for your understanding in case something should not work quite as it should.

2. Access and Registration

2.1 Access

The eMS system can be accessed on the following link: ems.interreg-npa.eu.

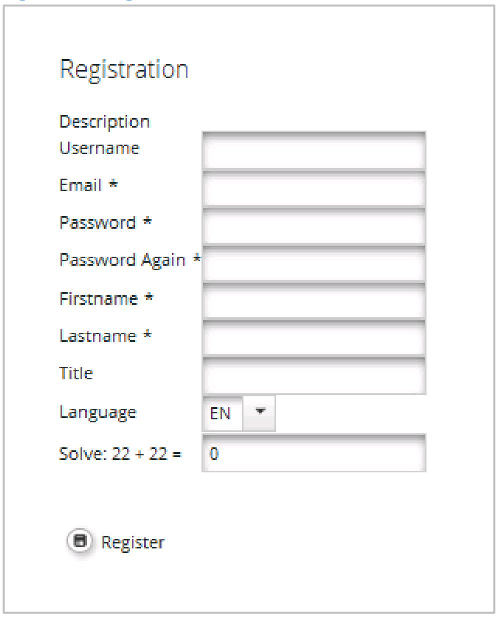
Figure 1 - eMS welcome screen



2.2 Registration

To use eMS, you must first register by clicking on “Register” on the welcome screen (Figure 1). As the user, you will then be asked to provide a set of credentials (Figure 2). Following your registration, a confirmation e-mail is automatically sent to your e-mail address. Only after receiving confirmation, will you be able to log in to the eMS and create an application form. **Note: If you do not receive an activation e-mail within a couple of minutes, please contact the Help Desk, who can activate your account manually.**

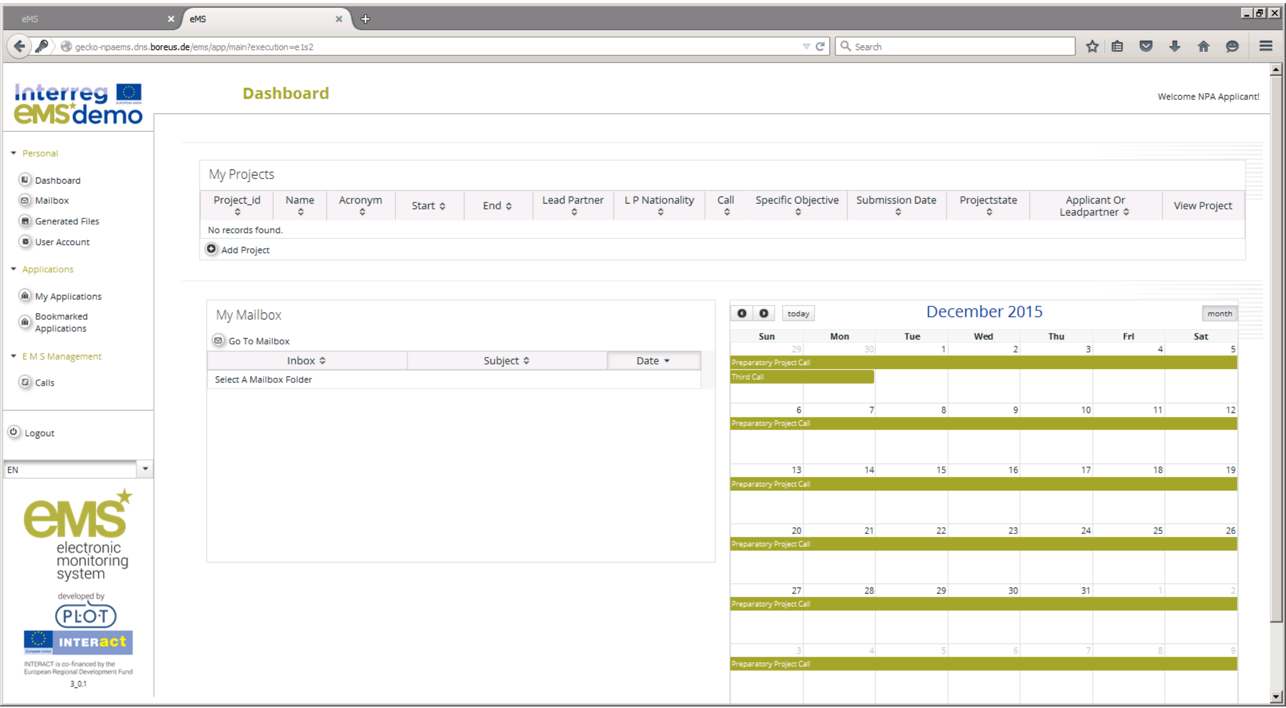
Figure 2 - Registration form



2.3 Dashboard

After logging in, you will enter the dashboard. The main functions can be found in the menu on the left hand side, such as your mailbox, generated files, user account, and so on. The central part of the dashboard shows any generated applications, your mailbox and a calendar.

Figure 3 - eMS Dashboard



3. Getting started in eMS

In order to correctly complete the application form in eMS, you need to have a good understanding of the main concepts used by the NPA 2014-2020, described in chapters 1 and 2 of the Programme Manual. This includes but is not limited to: the Priority Axes and their specific objectives, the result focus of the programme and expectations for main project outputs, the concept of transnationality, and the expectations for the partnership constellation and the project budget structure.

The graph below describes the different steps in submitting an application in eMS.

Figure 4 - Steps in the application submission process

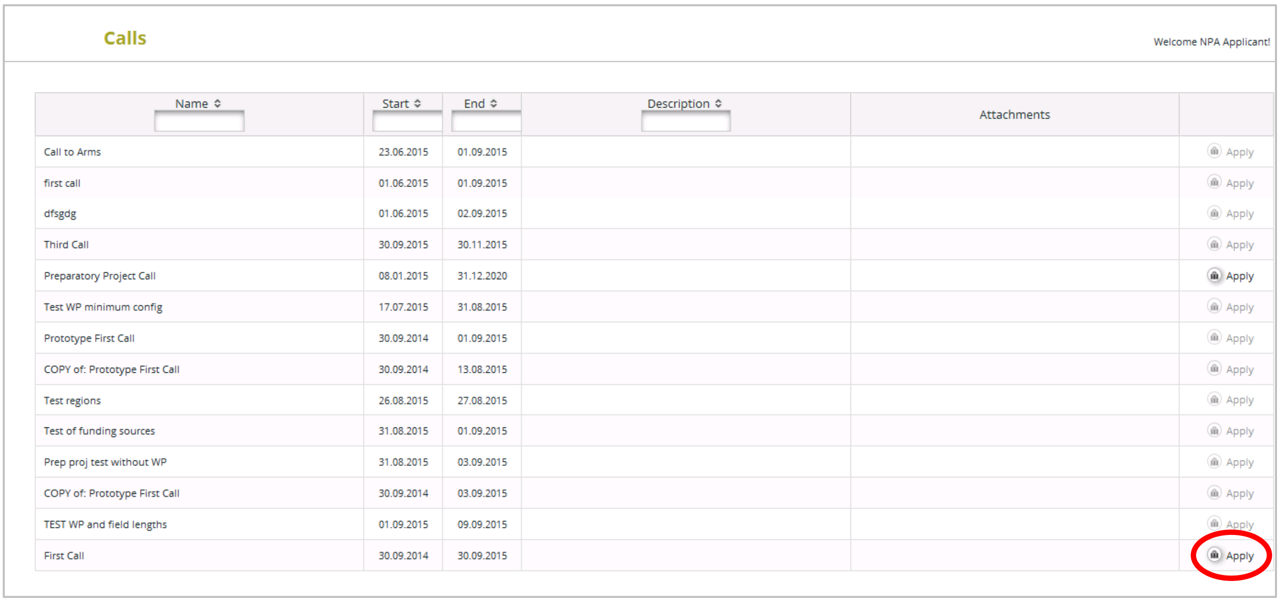
3.1 General Tips and Tricks

Please read the following instructions carefully!

- eMS allows you to save your work and resume a data entry session **at any time**, before finally submitting an application or report to the programme.
- To avoid a loss of data, please remember always to **save your information** before leaving a section! The save button is either in the upper left corner or at the bottom of the page. If you are filling in a longer section, we recommend that you also save the information regularly in between, in case your internet connection is lost or a technical issue occurs.
- Certain fields are **mandatory**, and in these cases the page cannot be saved unless these fields contain information. eMS will highlight missing fields at the top of the page.
- As a general recommendation, please be careful using **command keys** to navigate in the system such as Enter, PageUp/Down, etc. Remember that you are working in a browser, and these commands may interfere with data input.
- When copying information from other documents, such as Word or Excel files, we strongly recommend that you use **command keys to enter the data**. For example (Windows):
    - Ctrl + C: copy
    - Ctrl + V: paste
    - Alt + Tab: switching between open programs/documents
- Please note that certain text fields have a **limited number of characters**. If you try to input a longer text into such a field, you may experience that the text will be cut or that you may not be able to paste the text.

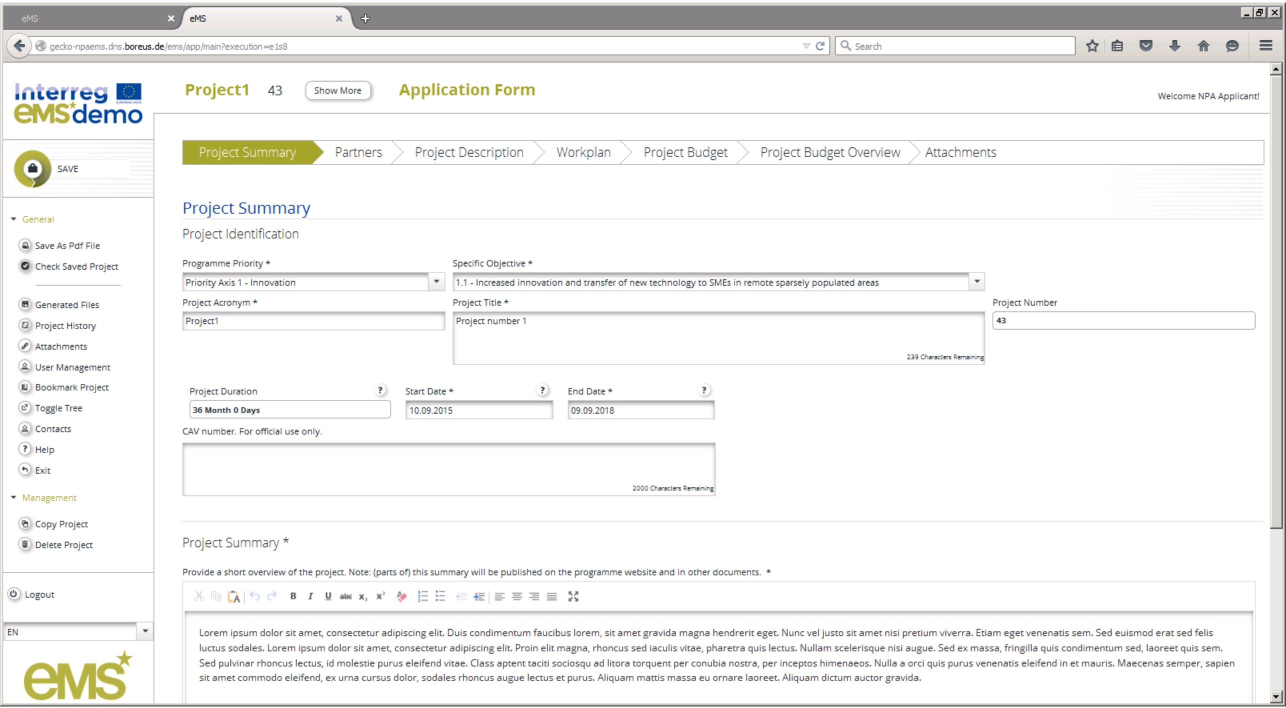
3.2 Creating an application

To create a new project, click on "Add project" on the Dashboard or on the page "My applications". In the list of calls, you will need to select the Preparatory Project call, and click on "Apply" behind the call name.



You will now see the application form, divided into different tabs. After completing the first tab "Project summary", click on "Save" in the top-left corner. Congratulations, you have now created a project!

Figure 5 - Application start page



3.3 Assigning Other Users

If you prefer to work on an application with multiple persons, it is possible to assign other users to the project application.

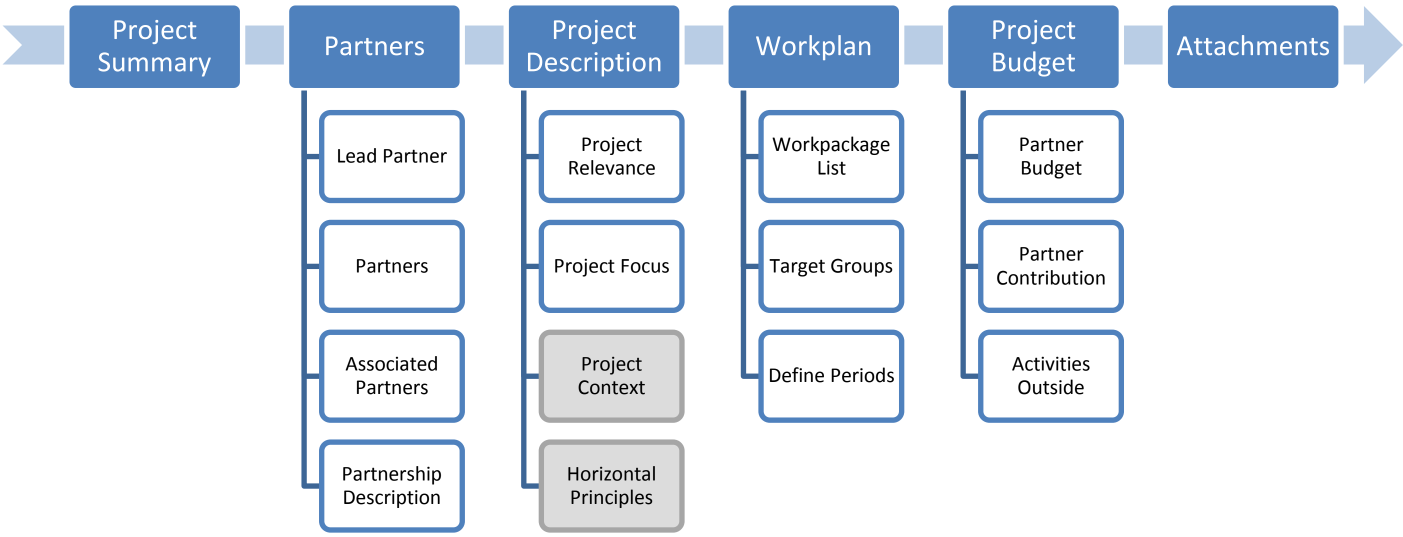
By creating an application in eMS, you will be considered the Lead Applicant, meaning that you are the person responsible for submitting the application. Additionally, you can grant the right to read or edit the application to other users. You can do this under the left-hand menu item “User Management”. However, before you can do so, the other users need to register in eMS and provide their user names to you as Lead Applicant.

After granting access rights to other users, it is possible to work in parallel on the application. **Note: please make sure that you are not working in the same section or sub section simultaneously, as this might result in a loss of data! For the same reason, please do not have the eMS open with the same user name in multiple browser windows.**

3.4 Workflow

The graph below shows an overview of the data entry workflow in the application form.

Figure 6 - Application data entry workflow – preparatory project



4. Completing the application form

4.1 Section A: Project Summary

This is the starting point for the application form. The application will not be created until this first tab in the application form has been completed and saved. You will then get access to the other tabs.

After completing other sections in the application form, this tab will show a complete project summary.

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Project Identification		
Programme Priority	Indicate which Priority Axis of the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme the project aligns with.	1.4
Specific Objective	Select one specific objective your project is contributing to.	1.4
Project Acronym	Abbreviation of the project name	
Project Title	State the title of the project. This will be the official name of the project during its implementation.	
Project Number (autonumber)		
Project Duration	State the start date and end date of project activities. **Note** that the project must be started as of the date of the formal funding approval and that the maximum project period is limited to **6 months**. Project activities are eligible from the date of submission of the application to the Joint Secretariat; any expenditure incurred is at the applicant's **own risk** before approval of the project.	
Start Date	Indicate the expected start date of project activities.	
End Date	Indicate the expected end date of project activities.	
Project Summary		
Short overview	This summary delivers the first impression of the project. In case the project is approved, this summary may also be used by the programme for communication purposes, therefore please make sure the text will be understandable by a non-expert audience and will be informative and appealing.	
Project summary in another EU language	Project summary in another EU language than English (for publication of a list of projects according to EU regulations)	

4.2 Section B: Project Partners

To enter information about the partnership, click on “Add new partner”. To add associated partners, click on “Add associated partner”.

Note: after entering and saving a partner, you need to click on the tab “Partners” to get back to the list view to be able to add additional partners.

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Partner … (autonumber)		
Partner Role in the Project	The first partner created is automatically assigned the role of the Lead Partner. Subsequent partners are automatically assigned the role of project partner.	2.1.3 2.1.4 2.1.5
Partner Name	State partner name in the original language	
Partner Name English	State partner name in English	
Abbreviation	Abbreviation of the partner name	
Department	Indicate if applicable	
Address		
Nuts0	Select the relevant programme partner country from the list. **Note:** If the partner is located outside the programme area, please tick the box “From All Regions”	Table 1 - List of eligible regions
Nuts2	Select the relevant NUTS region	
Nuts3	Select the relevant sub region	
Street + House number	Enter street name + house number	
Postal Code + City	Enter Postal Code + City	
Website	Enter the organisation’s website URL	
Legal and Financial Information		
Type of Partner	Select the relevant type of partner	2.1
Small or Medium Enterprise	Select Yes if the partner is an SME	2.1.1
Legal Status	Select if the organisation is public or private. **Note**: the legal status should be supported by a Legal Status Assessment Template.	2.1.2
Co Financing Source	Select the relevant funding source: • **ERDF** for Member State partners inside the programme area • **ERDF 20%** for partners from outside the programme area • **ERDFe NO** for Norwegian partners • **ERDFe IS** for Icelandic partners • **ERDFe FO** for Faroese partners • **ERDFe GL** for Greenlandic partners	Table 8 – Funding Sources NPA 2014-2020
Co Financing% (max = xx%)	Enter the correct intervention rate.	1.5.1

	Note: For preparatory projects, the maximum grant rate is **65% for all funding sources**. However, for SMEs the maximum grant rate is 50%.	
Vat Number	Enter VAT Number or similar for the organisation.	5.2
Recover Vat	Indicate if the organisation is able to recover VAT or not. **Note:** if the organization is <u>not</u> able to recover VAT, this must be supported by a VAT statement, such as a statement from the tax authority or a signed letter from the partner organisation, etc	5.2
Legal Representative		
Title	Type title	
Name	Type name	
Last Name	Type last name	
E-mail Address	Type e-mail	
Telephone	Enter telephone number	
Contact Person		
Title	Type title	
Name	Type name	
Last Name	Type last name	
E-mail Address	Type e-mail	
Telephone	Enter telephone number	
Experiences of Partner	What are the organisation's competences and experiences relevant for the project? Include role in the project.	2.1.1
Other International Projects	If applicable, please list other EU co-financed projects or other international projects the organisation has participated in and/or managed.	
Public Procurement Status	Please indicate if the organisation is following public procurement procedures. Answer Yes or No.	

Partnership Description

In this section, please provide some insight into the constellation of your current and envisaged partnership.

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Partnership Constellation	Please describe the rationale behind your partnership constellation. Use the points in Programme Manual section 2.1.1 as the basis for your description.	2.1.1
Potential partners found	Please list any potential project partners you have already approached, and where they are located.	
Partners sought	The Regional Contact Point network can help you in your partner search. Please indicate what type of partner organisation(s) you are looking to include in your main project, and where they should be located.	

4.3 Section C1-4: Project Description

Section C.1 Project Relevance

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Territorial Challenge		
What are the common territorial challenges that will be tackled by the main project?	When describing the project's relevance, demonstrate that the main project is relevant for all partner areas by taking into account the level of 'maturity in the field of intervention'. In addition, describe how the project will base its outputs on stakeholders needs and how stakeholder involvement during the main project is envisaged. Please refer to the challenges and potentials outlined in section 1.3.1 of the Programme Manual.	2.2.1
Products and services (outputs) envisaged in a main project proposal		
What is the expected main project's approach in addressing these common challenges and/or joint opportunities? What is new about the approach that the	• Please describe expected new solutions which will be developed during a main project and/or existing solutions that will be adapted and implemented during the project lifetime.	1.3.3

project takes?	• Please describe in what way the approach goes beyond existing practice in the sector/ programme area/ participating countries. • If possible, please refer to the relevant output indicators for main projects listed in the Programme Manual.	
Cooperation Reason		
Why is transnational cooperation needed to achieve the main project's objectives and expected result?	Describe what benefits the main project partners/target groups/project area gain in taking a transnational approach. Consider how the main project applies principles such as joint development, financing, implementation, and staffing.	1.3.3 1.4

Section C.2 Project Focus

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Specific Objective ... (automatically shows selected specific objective)		
How will the expected results of the main project contribute to changes sought by the programme?	Please refer to the programme strategy as outlined in the Programme Manual, section 1.3. Demonstrate that you are aware of the result sought by the Programme and describe how your project will contribute to it.	1.3

Section C.3 Project Context

For main projects only. Please skip this tab.

Section C.4 Horizontal Principles

For main projects only. Please skip this tab.

4.4 Section C.5-6 Work Plan

In addition to the project description in **Part C**, projects need to provide details about their work plan. The information entered in this section will form the basis for the project monitoring.

Section C.5 Work Package List

Preparatory project activities should be described in the Work Package Preparation. **Note:** To edit the work package, click on the magnifying glass.

After filling in the work package, a Gantt chart will appear at the bottom of the work package list. This is considered to be an indicative plan and the Joint Secretariat will exercise flexibility (within reasonable limits) when monitoring project activities.

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Partners		
Select Partners Involved	Please select partners involved.	2.3
Summary		
Please give an overview of project management and project development activities.	Please start by describing briefly the role of each partner in the project. For each project activity, please give a brief description. In case of partner meetings and other project events, please indicate where they are envisaged to take place. Preparatory projects are expected to list any deliverables outlined in the conditions as deliverables under the relevant activity. Examples of deliverables could be meeting minutes, user surveys, feasibility studies, or documentation of potential main project activities.	2.1.3

4.5 Section C.6: Target Groups

Use this section to describe who is expected to use the potential products and services of a main project.

Please note that we expect you to build stakeholder engagement into the main project, e.g. in your (associated) partnership, through your communications work package, or if relevant, by having a work package dedicated to industry interface, if your envisaged end users are the private sector.

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Target Groups (select the relevant target groups from the list and click "Update target groups".)		
Description	Please specify the target group, e.g. a specific sector or demographic group. How will you involve target groups (and other stakeholders) in the development of the potential main project products and services?	
Target Value	This field is optional. If you can give an indication of the size of the target group, you can enter it here.	

4.6 Define Periods

In this section, the reporting period and reporting deadline for the preparatory project is set.

Preparatory projects have 1 reporting period, starting with the project start date and ending with the project end date. The reporting deadline is three months after the project end date.

Please check that the dates are correct, and click **Save** to confirm the periods. **Note:** if changing the project start or end date, please click **Recalculate Periods** to update the reporting period accordingly.

4.7 Section D: Project Budget

Note: For each partner, you should define BOTH the budget AND the contribution (match funding)! Remember that the project costs and the project finances should balance. You can check this on the tab "Project Budget Overview".

All costs for each partner must be entered per budget line. **Before you enter any costs, please double check that there is one reporting period!**

To specify cost items under a budget line, click on the + sign. If there is no + sign, this means that there is no possibility to specify items.

Note: In preparatory projects, it is **not allowed** to use the budget lines Equipment, Infrastructure and works, and Net revenue.

Please note that all costs entered in the budget tables must comply with the Eligibility Rules of the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020, your national legislation and the following EU Regulations:

- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
- Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014

Partner budget

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Budget by Budget Line		
Staff costs	Expenditure on staff costs shall consist of gross employment costs of staff employed by the beneficiary in one of the following ways: (a) full time; (b) part-time with a fixed percentage of time worked per month; (c) part-time with a flexible number of hours worked per month; or (d) on an hourly basis. **How to specify:** • Please make a new line for each staff function. • For **fulltime staff** and **part time staff with a fixed percentage**, please select the unit type **month**. Enter the number of months for each period under "Unit". Then enter the monthly amount under "Amount per unit". If applicable, please use of the comment boxes to indicate the fixed percentage. • For **part time staff with flexible number of hours** or staff contracted on an **hourly basis**, please select the unit type **hour**. Enter the number of hours for each period under "Unit", e.g. 860 (half of 1720 annual hours). Then enter the hourly rate calculated according	5.3.1 and factsheet on staff costs.

	to the instructions in the fact sheet. **Note**: if you are NOT using the standard 1720 hours for your calculation of the hourly rate, please use one of the comment boxes to state what annual working hours you are using for the calculation.	
Office and administration	Where the implementation of the project gives rise to indirect costs, they may be calculated at a flat rate. A flat rate of up to 15% of eligible direct staff costs without a requirement for demonstrating a calculation. A flat rate calculation covers all office and administration costs, i.e. there is no distinction between direct and indirect costs. To apply the flat rate, please tick the box “Budget flatrate office” at the top of the budget table. **Note:** If making any changes to the staff costs, remember to click the “Recalculate Budget” button. Direct office and administrative expenditure are limited to the following elements: (a) office rent; (b) insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g. fire, theft insurances); (c) utilities (e.g. electricity, heating, water); (d) office supplies; (e) general accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation; (f) archives; (g) maintenance, cleaning and repairs; (h) security; (i) IT systems; (j) communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards); (k) bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened; (l) charges for transnational financial transactions. **How to specify:** If using the 15% flat rate, no specification is needed. If using direct costs, please select from the cost categories above to specify the costs. Then describe a relevant unit, e.g. monthly costs, the number of units and the price per unit.	5.3.2 and factsheet on office costs.
Travel	Expenditure on travel and accommodation costs are limited to the following elements: (a) travel costs (e.g. tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees); (b) the costs of meals; (c) accommodation costs (for budgetary purposes, please use 150 EUR/night for hotel rooms);	5.3.3 and factsheet on travel costs.

	(d) travel visa costs; (e) daily allowances. **How to specify**: Please make a new line for each cost category, e.g. flights, accommodation, daily allowances. Then describe a relevant unit, e.g. number of people travelling, the number of units and the price per unit. Please use the comments box to provide details, e.g. purpose, and location. **Note**: travel outside the programme area should be justified, except for travelling to Copenhagen for meetings and seminars organised by the Joint Secretariat.	
External expertise and services	Expenditure on external expertise and service costs are limited to services and expertise provided by a public or private law body or a natural person other than the beneficiary of the operation. **How to specify:** please make a new line for each category of service, e.g. external consultant, meeting venues and catering, First Level Controller, etc. Then describe a relevant unit, e.g. daily rate, the number of units and the price per unit.	5.3.4 and factsheet on external expertise costs.
Equipment	Please leave empty, because costs of this type are not eligible for preparatory projects!	
Infrastructure and works	Please leave empty, because costs of this type are not eligible in the NPA!	
Net Revenue	Please leave empty, because this only applies to main projects.	
In kind costs	Please leave empty, because costs of this type are not eligible for preparatory projects!	

Define Partner contribution (match funding)

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Partner Contribution Rate	This section gives an overview of the programme co-financing, the partner contribution, the total eligible budget and the co-financing rate.	1.5 2.5
Source of Contribution		
Source of Contribution + Amount	Please enter the name of the organisation providing the match funding, usually the partner organisation. Other examples of match funding sources include national ministries, local and national authorities, universities, regional and local development institutions, etc.	

	Please note that this field is only valid for CASH contributions. **Note**: own work constitutes cash match funding! Please enter the amount in Euros. **All match funding contributions must be supported by signed match funding commitments.** You can add additional sources by clicking on the + button. In this case, please also specify if the match funding source is public or private.
Target Value	This field indicates the expected amount of match funding contribution based on the partner's cost budget and the chosen intervention rate.
In Kind Contribution	
In Kind Contribution Included	Please leave empty, because contributions of this type are not eligible for preparatory projects!
Total Amount	Please leave empty, because contributions of this type are not eligible for preparatory projects!

Activities Outside

Question	Instructions	Programme Manual section
Activities Outside	Please list any envisaged travel/activities outside the NPA programme area, e.g. a project presentation to a national authority in a capital city. Remember to justify how they will benefit the programme area. In the case of activities: please estimate the total amount, and the ERDF part of these costs. **Note**: Remember that travelling to Copenhagen is also travel outside the programme area.	Fact sheet on travel costs.

4.8 Section E: Attachments

The following supporting documentation is expected to be submitted together with the project application:

- Mandatory:
  - Match funding commitments for each partner - signed and scanned
  - Legal status assessment templates for each partner - signed and scanned

    - Lead Partner Signature Template - signed by legal representative for the Lead Partner and scanned
    - VAT statements for partners that are unable to recover VAT, such as a statement from the tax authority or a signed letter from the partner organisation, etc.
- Optional:
    - Supplementary information to support your application, e.g. graphs, Gantt charts, Letters of Intent. **Note**: all essential information about the project must be presented in the application form - only complementary information is to be given in annexes!

Click on the + Upload button to add new attachments.

Please do not upload attachments bigger than 2 MB!

5. Submitting the application

After completing the application form and attaching all necessary supporting documents, having saved your application regularly, you are recommended to save it as a Pdf File (menu item).

Before you are able to submit your application, you will need to click on "Check Saved Project" in the left-hand menu to activate the automatic checks. If any issues are found, such as missing or wrong data, you will need to correct this before you can save and check it again. Only after all checks are okay, you will be able to submit your application by pushing the "Submit checked project" button. **Note**: it is your responsibility to ensure that the data is correct according to the Programme Manual.

After submission, you as the Lead Applicant will receive an automatic email confirmation. Once submitted you are not able to make further changes to your application.

6. Help and Technical Support

For any problems you might experience with the eMS, please check eMS Helpdesk for solutions: https://npaems.freshdesk.com/support/home. On the Helpdesk page, you can also submit a ticket with your specific problem, which will be dealt with by a Joint Secretariat staff member, typically within one day.