



Guidelines for Applicants

Call 1

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1. Background

The National Contact Points of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) agreed on 8 July 2013 on the need to provide financial support to facilitate the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

At the moment, project idea owners are suffering from a **lack of funding** to initiate and to implement projects with relevance for the Danube Region. **Priority Area 10: Institutional Capacity and Cooperation (PA 10)** coordinated by the City of Vienna, has been entrusted by the European Commission to set up a **new pilot initiative**, "START - Danube Region Project Fund", (hereinafter referred to as "START") in order to address this need. The operational implementation of START is ensured by **EuroVienna EU-consulting & -management GmbH**, affiliated entity of the City of Vienna (hereinafter referred to as "Implementing Body - IB").

2. Objective and main principles

Objective

- The **objective of START**, in accordance with Commission Decision C(2013) 6180 of 27.09.2013, is to "*kick-start project development in the Danube Region and to facilitate the financing of transnational projects*".
- START is to help organisations and institutions in the Danube Region to develop and implement their project ideas. The provided support is in the form of **Seed Money**, meaning that beneficiaries receive an early pre-financing for their projects.

An instrument for the EUSDR

START aims to support projects:

- From the entire **Danube Region** which covers 9 EU Member States (Germany (*Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg*), Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia), 3 EU Accession Countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro) and 2 Non-EU Member States (Moldova and Ukraine (*part of Ukraine located in the Danube Region*)).
- Addressing issues from **all Priority Areas (PA)** of the EUSDR:

Pillars	Priority Area	
Connecting the Region	PA 1A	Mobility – Waterways
	PA 1B	Mobility – Rail – Road – Air
	PA 02	Energy
	PA 03	Culture & Tourism
Protecting the Environment	PA 04	Water Quality
	PA 05	Environmental Risks
	PA 06	Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soil
Building Prosperity	PA 07	Knowledge Society
	PA 08	Competitiveness
	PA 09	People & Skills
Strengthening the Region	PA 10	Institutional Capacity and Cooperation
	PA 11	Security

For more information about the priorities and main targets of each area, please visit the EUSDR webpage: www.danube-region.eu/about/priorities.



Budget

The total START budget amounts to **€ 900.000,00**. 95% of the budget is financed by the **European Commission**, 5% by the **City of Vienna**.

Duration

The START initiative is running until the end of 2016, 2 calls for project proposals are foreseen.

A pilot initiative

As START is a pilot-initiative, a **flexible approach** is used and adaptations may be brought between the first and second call, to best reflect the needs that may occur and provide the most appropriate support.

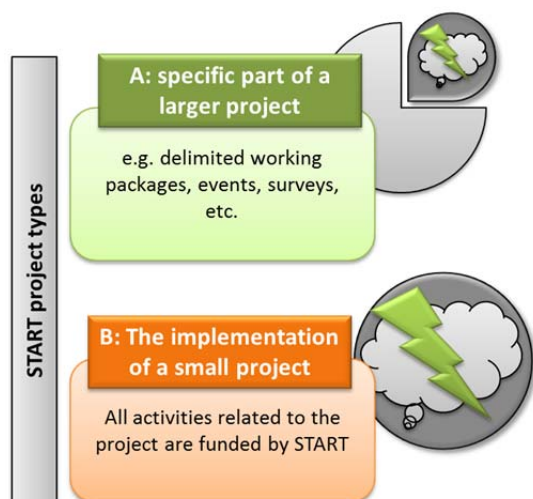
Complementary with other supporting instruments

START is a new type of support, which complements existing instruments in the Danube Region such as the **Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects - TAF-DRP** (technical assistance in the preparation phase of a project provision by external experts) and the **Danube Financing Dialogue - DFD** (support in match-making between project promoters and potential financiers).

3. Set up of a START Project

3.1 Size of projects

START is designed to support two different types of projects:



A. A specific part of a larger project:

For larger projects, whose total value and duration goes beyond the framework of START (yet below 25M€), the Fund supports the implementation of a specific phase or work package(s) of the project. By the end of the START support, these work packages are completed. In such cases, the applicant will be asked to justify that START supports would bring a major step forward for the project implementation. Whether the remaining part of the project is to be financed from EU, national, private donors or own resources, is not relevant for the START application.

B. The implementation of a small project:

For small projects, START co-finances implementation of the entire project (incl. preparation activities, if any). By the end of the START support, all project activities are completed and project objectives are reached. The "Seed Money character" of START will enable especially organisations which have limited financial resources, like NGOs or local associations, to implement their project ideas.



3.2 Types of activities

Within the two types of projects mentioned above (A and B), START can support two types of activities:



The application form provides a set of pre-defined indicators, corresponding to the types of activities supported by START:

- **N° of project concepts** – this applies to preparation activities e.g. a project strategy, action plan, project description
- **N° of project budget plans**
- **N° of project applications** – this applies to applications for funding (e.g. from EU or other sources) submitted
- **N° of meetings** and total meeting hours (for all meetings) – this applies e.g. to partner meetings, other working meetings
- **N° of seminars** and total seminar hours (for all seminars) – this applies e.g. to workshops, trainings etc organised by the project partners
- **N° of events** and total number of participants (for all events) – this applies to larger events e.g. conferences, networking events organised by the project partners
- **N° of studies/publications** and total pages of all publications – this applies e.g. to surveys, studies, reports, position papers, PR-publications. The number of copies distributed is not requested.
- **N° of IT-Tools** – this applies e.g. to a website/homepage, a database, etc.

Additional; project-specific indicators and corresponding targets can be defined by each project.

The implementation of planned indicators and targets must be documented in the midterm and final report (see also Section 10).

3.3 Project duration

Project duration is minimum 6 months, maximum 1 year.



3.4 Budget and financing support

- The allocation of START to an individual project can range **from 10.000€ to a maximum of 40.000€**.
- START co-finances up to **90%** of the project's budget.
- The **remaining minimum 10%** must be provided by the project partners (funds must come from own resources or from other donors) and cannot come from other EU sources.
- For provisions regarding payments, see Section 9.3.

Project budget - Example 1:

Total project costs	START contribution	Partners' contribution
25.000€	22.500€	2.500€
100%	90%	10%

Project budget - Example 2:

Total project costs	START contribution	Partners' contribution
50.000€	40.000€	10.000€
100%	80%	20%

3.5 Official language

The official language of START is **English**. The application documents, reports and other documents are to be completed in English. The subsidy contract will also be in English.

3.6 Main conditions to be fulfilled

3.6.1 Basic eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants	<u>Eligible applicants are:</u> • Bodies established under public or private law, not having a predominant industrial or commercial character, and having legal personality including small organisations, non-governmental and civil society organisations. International organisations are also eligible. • Organisations located in the Danube Region (seat or department dealing with the project) → Preference is given to applicants from non-governmental and non-profit organisations, municipalities and local governments
	<u>Not eligible are:</u> • Individual persons



Project partnership	- The project partnership must consist of at least two partners from two countries of the Danube Region. - In duly justified cases, organisations from other countries may also become partners - In exceptional and duly justified cases, projects with only one partner can also be supported, if the activities and/or results are relevant for the Danube Region. Justification must be provided in the application form. → One partner has to take the lead and acts as the "Applicant"; this must be clearly indicated in the application form. The maximum number of partners is limited to 6 (incl. applicant). → Upon selection of the project the applicant will act as "Lead partner"; the lead partner is the contractual partner of the IB and is responsible for management, communication, implementation and coordination of activities among the partners.
Geographic scope of the project	Project activities must take place in the Danube Region. Travel/meetings outside the Danube Region are only eligible if necessary to implement the project activities.
Public interest	Projects have to reveal public interest. START does not support projects with a predominant commercial interest.
Connection to other support schemes	Access to START is not solely opened for projects that have received support from the TAF-DRP or DFD (see Section 2), nor is it excluded to combine support from these different schemes. Double-funding is excluded!

3.6.2 Quality criteria

Relevance for the EUSDR and the Priority Area	Projects need to contribute to the objective(s) and /or action(s) of one or more Priority Areas, as defined in the EUSDR Action Plan: http://www.danube-region.eu/component/edocman/action-plan-eusdr-pdf.
Macro-regional dimension of the project	Supported projects shall have a macro-regional dimension (in terms of partnership/location of activities) and / or impact. A project implemented locally can also be considered as relevant, e.g. cleaning action on the river bed will have an impact on the river's transnational environment.
Added-value of START Expected change to the status quo	- START support is aimed at projects which could not be implemented without START funding. - Project activities need to improve the status quo of a situation. - If the project is a specific part of a larger project or at its preparatory stage, the partnership should provide details on the overall project.

Beside the basic eligibility and quality criteria the IB will ensure as far as possible that selected projects are **from all Danube Region countries and address all Priority Areas of the EUSDR**. Details of the assessment procedure see also in Section 6.



4. Application Procedure

The application procedure runs as follows:

The application form is available for download on the homepage of PA 10 - Institutional capacity and cooperation: <http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu> from the 18th of July until the 17th of September 2014.

To be considered for selection, the application form must be completed, signed by the legal representative of the applicant's organisation and submitted through an **online application tool**, which will only be opened **from 15th to 17th of September, 24:00 CET**. The link to the online tool can be found in the application form.

The application form must be uploaded to the online application tool, both as signed scan and as open Word file. No additional documents are requested. Hard copies of the application documents will be required at a later stage, for selected projects only. Belated applications, or applications not submitted through the online tool will not be assessed.

Timeline for the application procedure

18th July 2014	Launch of the 1st Call – application form can be found at: www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu
Until 14th September 2014	Preparation of applications. If questions arise, PACs can be contacted www.danube-region.eu/contact/contact-pacs-ncps .
15th to 17th September 2014 (until 24:00 CET)	Online submission of applications: Applicants must register for the online application tool and upload the completed application form (signed scan + open Word version)

5. Formal check by the IB

All applications submitted via the online application tool will be formally checked by the IB.

The following criteria will be checked:

- Is the application complete and submitted correctly?
- Is the applicant (partnership) eligible?
- Is the project eligible? (location, requested amount)

Incomplete applications or applications where formal criteria are not fulfilled will not be subject to further assessment. Applicants concerned will be informed.

6. Pre-selection of applications by the PACs and their Steering Group

PACs receive all applications relevant for their Priority Area (PA) and conduct the pre-selection procedure with their Steering Group according to following criteria:

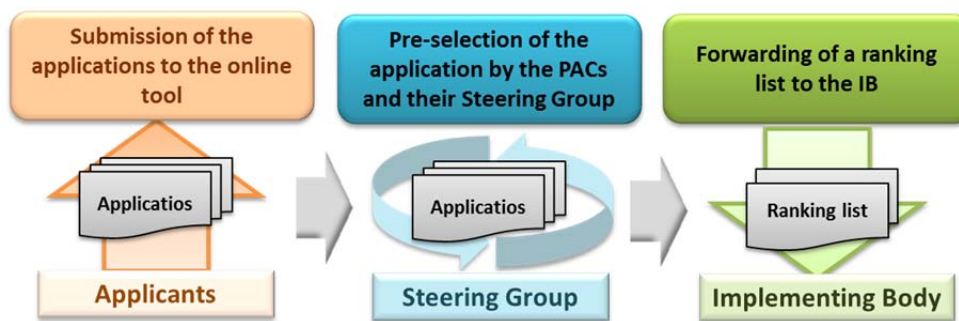
- Relevance of the partnership
- Relevance of the project for the EUSDR and the identified Priority Area
- Macro-regional dimension or impact of the project



- Quality of the application (consistency, clarity, feasibility of the project)

PACs inform the IB about the results of their pre-selection and forward a ranking list of the pre-selected projects for final check.

Application procedure:



7. Final plausibility check of pre-selected applications

The plausibility check is conducted jointly by PAC10 and the IB.

The applications are assessed in relation to following plausibility elements:

- Adequacy between project objectives, planned activities and budget
- Expected change of the status quo
- Are the planned indicators and the targets realistic?
- Is the timeline for implementation of activities plausible?

As START is targeted at the entire Danube Region and all Priority Areas, the geographic and thematic balance will be considered within the assessments, as well as the budget available for the call.

8. Selection

After final consultation with the PACs, PAC 10 will send a decision letter to each applicant until the **end of November 2014**.

The decision can be:

- Approval
- Approval under conditions
- Non-approval

If the project is approved under conditions, either:

- The conditions for approval are indicated in the decision letter, (the applicant can reject the offer of support if the required conditions are not acceptable)
- The application form is adopted by the IB, according to the conditions indicated in the decision letter (**approved version of the application form**). This document will be part of the subsidy contract.

The list of selected projects will be published at: <http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/start>.



9. Contracting

Subsidy contract

A subsidy contract will be concluded between the IB and the selected applicant ("lead partner", in case of projects with several partners) after all outstanding aspects have been clarified.

This subsidy contract confirms the final commitment of the EU grant to the project and forms the legal and financial framework for the implementation of the project activities.

A draft subsidy contract will be sent to the lead partner for signature. The **approved version of the application form** is an integral part of the subsidy contract. The contract must be signed and returned within four weeks to the IB. In case the subsidy contract is not returned in due time, the funds will be released and used to finance other projects.

Partnership Agreement

The project partners have to provide full support to the lead partner to ensure the successful implementation of the project. In order to ensure high quality and fulfilment of project objectives it is recommended, but not required, to conclude a Partnership Agreement between the lead partner and project partners. The Partnership Agreement formalises the division of mutual responsibilities and rights of partners.

10. Project Implementation

10.1 Main conditions

The project partners must implement the activities foreseen in the application form according to the conditions set in the subsidy contract.

10.2 Reporting

The documentation of the project activities and project costs (real costs and unit costs) is conducted via an **online reporting tool**.

Two mandatory reports are required:

- **Midterm report:** halfway through the implementation of the project (exact date will be defined in the subsidy contract), the lead partner has to deliver a midterm report. The report outlines the project activities, outputs and incurred expenses for the reporting period. The report is due within 4 weeks after the end of the reporting period.
- **Final report:** one month after the project is completed (exact date defined in the subsidy contract), a final report has to be submitted. The final report summarises the project activities, outputs and total expenses incurred for the entire project period.

A copy of each report will be forwarded by the IB to the supporting PAC. Project partners are expected to provide any information requested by the PACs during and or after the project implementation. This is specified in the subsidy contract.

Each report must be documented (activities and costs) via the online reporting tool. In addition, required originals (e.g. invoices, timesheets – see detailed requirements in Sections 10 and 11) must be sent by postal mail together with the final report.



10.3 Payments

The payment to the lead partners will be composed of one or two **pre-financing payments** and a **final payment** as follows:

- A **pre-payment of 50%** of the EU grant will be paid after signing the subsidy contract by the IB and the lead partner. This pre-payment provides the cash-flow necessary to begin project activities.
- A **second pre-payment of 25%** can be requested by the lead partner after submission of the midterm implementation report. The second pre-payment will only be paid, if at least **30%** of the approved budget has been spent and declared. The IB reserves the right to conduct sample or detailed checks on invoices and documentation of unit costs, before releasing the second pre-payment.
- The **balance** will be paid after validation of the final implementation report and related expenses by the IB. The value of the pre-payment(s) will be deducted from the final payment.

In any case, it is not possible to receive a higher amount than approved in the subsidy contract, even if the project declares higher total costs.

10.4 Recovery

The IB reserves the right not to pay the grant or part of the grant and/or to request reimbursement of amounts unduly paid, especially in following cases:

- if no expenses are proven at the midterm report and no explanation is provided by the lead partner, the IB reserves the right to stop the project and to request reimbursement of the pre-payment;
- if the final eligible costs are lower than the pre-payments, the difference must be reimbursed by the lead partner to the IB.

In case of recovery procedure, the lead partner must reimburse to the IB the unduly spent funds, no matter by which project partner(s) these funds has/have incurred.

10.5 Modifications

Modifications in the content and the duration of the project as well as a budget increase are not foreseen.

In case the project lead partner encounters any difficulties in the implementation phase, he/she should contact the IB as soon as possible.

10.6 Control and audit

Project partners do not need to have their costs certified by a controller or auditor. The IB verifies the activities and expenses reported by lead partners in the online reporting tool before proceeding to the 2nd pre-payment and final payment.

After the project is concluded and the final report is delivered, the IB will check the final report and verify the reported outputs and the declared costs according to the eligibility rules specified below. The lead partner will be contacted if clarifications regarding the outcomes of the project or the project costs are needed. If the lead partner fails to bring clarification, the IB reserves the right to determine the final amount of the grant and to reimburse solely the documented costs according to the reported activities and the eligibility rules.

In addition to the controls by the IB, project reports and expenditure will be verified, at least on a sample basis, by an external auditor contracted by the IB for this purpose.

Further information about the eligibility of costs is provided in **Section 10**.



10.7 Ex-post availability of documents

After validation of costs, the IB will return the original documents to the lead partner. The originals of all financial and accounting documents concerning the activities financed under the Facility need to be kept available until seven years after the date of the final payment, e.g. in case of audits and verifications by the IB, the European Commission or the European Court of Auditors.

11. Eligibility of costs

In order to simplify the management of projects for both, the lead partner and the IB, to the highest possible degree, **unit costs** are used for most types of costs (personnel, meetings & events, accommodation, partly travel costs). The **potential difference between the real costs and the unit costs** is not considered as a receipt and does not have to be declared.

11.1 Basic eligibility rules

Following rules apply:

- Project expenditure must be linked to project activities and needs to be necessary to reach the project objectives.
- The amounts claimed (real costs or unit costs) are adequate for achieving the purpose of the project.
- Expenditure need to respect general principles of sound financial management (i.e., economy, efficiency and effectiveness).
- For real costs, the amounts claimed must have been incurred and paid, exclusively by one of the project partners listed in the validated application. This must be documented by the provision of a proof of payment. The expenditure must be included in the general accountancy of the concerned partner.
- All expenditure must be supported by documents directly attributable to the START project and project partner.
- All original documents necessary for the declaration of costs need to be sent to the IB with the project's final report.
- Expenditure must not stand in contradiction to eligibility criteria specified below.
- Activities and costs reported were neither in whole nor in part financed by any other EU co-financing.
- VAT is **not eligible**, whether it is recoverable or not for the project organisation.

11.2 Duration of eligibility

Project activities and related costs are considered eligible from the day of the notification of support (decision letter), if the subsidy contract is signed by both sides within the project's duration. The eligibility ends one month after the project activities are concluded, to cover final reporting activities. The exact dates will be indicated in the subsidy contract.



11.3 Publicity and information requirements

Project partners must ensure that suitable publicity is given to inform the public about the funding received from START. The START logo, the EU emblem and the textual reference: "Part-financed by the European Union" must be displayed on all outputs and publicity materials. The logos will be provided to the final beneficiaries.

12. Budget lines

Eligible expenditure covers the budget lines detailed hereafter. Any direct or indirect costs which are not included in any of these budget lines (e.g. equipment, investment etc.) are **not eligible**.

Budget	
Line 1	Personnel costs
Line 2	Travel and accommodation costs
Line 3	Meeting and event costs
Line 4	External services

Flexibility rule: The total amount of each budget line may be exceeded by **20%** as long as the total project budget is not exceeded. No specific request procedure is needed. Changes above the 20% limit are excluded.

12.1 Personnel costs (incl. general costs / overheads)

Personnel employed by project partners are staff, having either a **permanent or a temporary individual contract** with a project partner listed in the **approved version of the application form**.

Costs related to staff working on the basis of **service contracts / invoices** (e.g. freelancers) shall be included under the budget line '**External services**' (see below).

Staff members of project partners are not allowed to operate as external service providers for the project.

The **standard hourly rates** are defined **per country** in the table below. The applicable rates refer to the **country of employment**:

Country	Standard hourly rate (EUR)
Austria	47
Bulgaria	8
Czech Republic	15
Germany	46
Croatia	25
Hungary	12
Romania	14
Slovenia	26
Slovakia	14

Country	Standard hourly rate (EUR)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10
Montenegro	10
Serbia	10
Moldova	9
Ukraine	17

If standard rates for any other countries are needed, they will be introduced by the IB.

The standard hourly rate is a **lump-sum** covering all costs of one working hour spent on project-related work (salary, taxes, social and health charges, any general costs/overheads - office rent, heating, electricity, phone, copy services, stationary/office supply as well as any other office running cost or management cost). The hourly rate can be reported for productive working hours only, **any non-working hours** (weekends, vacation, public holidays, sick leave, maternity leave etc.) **are not eligible**.



The employer of concerned staff remains responsible for compliance with applicable labour law.

Documentation and reporting

In order to declare personnel costs, final beneficiaries need to fill out a **timesheet** for each employee working for the project, listing all **project relevant working hours**. The timesheet for the relevant reporting period must be signed by the employee and the direct supervisor. A mandatory template for the timesheets will be provided by the IB to the beneficiaries.

The total working hours and the actual staff **and overhead costs** will not be checked by the IB. Total working hours need to be documented in case of audit.

The online reporting tool must be used to upload the timesheets and to declare total project working hours.

12.2 Travel and accommodation costs

The project may report costs related to **business trips** directly connected to specific and clearly identifiable project-related activities and **outside of the city of employment**. In general, destinations in the Danube Region are eligible. Any other location must be approved by the IB in advance.

Costs can be claimed as follows:

Travelling person	A. Inter-city travel: real costs (train, flight, bus, boat, car)	B. Hotel allowance: flat-rate	C. Subsistence allowance: flat-rate
Staff employed by a project partner	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
Third persons (experts, guest speakers, etc)	Eligible	Eligible	Not eligible

A. Inter-city travel

Costs for **inter-city travel** (i.e. travel going beyond the city borders) using rail, bus, airline or ferry services, can be reported as **real costs**. The most economical way of transport must be used. **Travel in first or business class is not eligible**, unless it is clearly proven that there was no other option or that this was the most economic/less expensive option (documentation of the justification is required).

Inter-city travel by car is possible only if **public transport is not available** or is **not the most economical option** (e.g. additional over-night stay would be required). In this case the car use can be reported based on a **mileage of 0.22 EUR/km** (covering all related costs such as highway fees, parking, etc); **real costs are not checked**.

Inner-city travel costs (metro, bus, tram, taxi, etc) **cannot be reported** as real costs, they are deemed to be covered by the subsistence allowance!

Documentation and reporting

After each travel, a travel report indicating the purpose of travel, duration (justification for overnight stay if applicable), location, project relevance and related costs must be filled in the online reporting tool.

In addition, all related documentation must be uploaded to the online reporting tool:

- **For real costs:** scans of original invoices, tickets, boarding passes. If travel costs exceed **€ 300,00 (incl. taxes)** per person, price comparisons must be provided (e.g. screenshots of alternative flight costs) to prove that the most economical option was used.
- **For car mileage:** distances must be documented (e.g. google maps).



B. Hotel allowances

The hotel allowances are set out in the table below. The applicable rates refer to the **country of destination**:

Country of destination	Hotel allowance per night (EUR)
Austria	130
Bulgaria	169
Czech Republic	155
Germany	115
Croatia	120
Hungary	150
Romania	170
Slovenia	110
Slovakia	125

Country of destination	Hotel allowance per night (EUR)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	135
Montenegro	140
Serbia	140
Moldova	170
Ukraine	190

The **allowance** is deemed to cover **hotel expenses (incl. breakfast and any taxes)**.

Documentation and reporting

The travel report (see above) must indicate the overnight stay. No additional documentation is required. **Real costs will not be checked.**

A. Subsistence allowances

The subsistence allowances are set out in the table below. The applicable rates refer to the **country of destination**:

Country of destination	Subsistence allowance per day (EUR)*
Austria	95
Bulgaria	58
Czech Republic	75
Germany	93
Croatia	60
Hungary	72
Romania	52
Slovenia	70
Slovakia	80

Country of destination	Subsistence allowance per day (EUR)*
Bosnia and Herzegovina	65
Montenegro	80
Serbia	80
Moldova	80
Ukraine	80

*** Subsistence allowances can be reported for employees of the project partners only.**

The subsistence allowance aims to cover **daily subsistence costs** such as meals, local transport (metro, bus, taxi, etc), any other expenses such as telephone calls, internet, etc.

Daily subsistence allowances are calculated according to the duration of the travel:

- Less than 12 hours: **50%** of the daily allowance;
- Between 12 and 24 hours: **100%** of the daily allowance;
- Each successive 12-hour period: **50%** of the daily allowance.



The **duration of the travel** is calculated from the **time of departure** of the transport used to the **time of its arrival** on return to the place of employment.

Solely for the purpose of settling expenses:

- **30 minutes** can be added to the departure and arrival times **for travel by train and bus**
- **2 hours** can be added before take-off and after landing **for travel by plane**.

Travel must be organised so that the time needed is **as short as possible** given the means of transport, and that it is **as cost-effective as possible**.

Documentation and reporting

The travel report (see above) must indicate the duration of the travel. The online reporting tool must be used to enter the travel data. No additional documentation is required, **real costs will not be checked**.

12.3 Meeting and event costs

For meetings and events with **more than five participants**, meeting and event costs **for external participants only** can be reported using the following unit costs:

Place of the meeting/event	Duration of the meeting/event	
	Half-day (up to 4 hours)	Full-day (more than 4 hours)
<u>at</u> the premises of a project partner	7,50 EUR per external participant*	15 EUR per external participant*
<u>outside</u> the premises of any partner (e.g. hotel, conference centre)	25 EUR per external participant*	50 EUR per external participant*

*Unit costs cannot be accounted for the staff members of the project partners. If only project partners take part in a meeting/event, no costs can be claimed.

Documentation and reporting

Each event/meeting for which unit costs are claimed must be entered into the online reporting tool (date, duration, location, number of internal/external participants, objective and outcomes, etc). In addition, the list of participants incl. signatures must be uploaded. **Real costs of the meetings and events are not checked**.

12.4 External services

External services necessary for implementing the project activities can be reported based on **real costs**.

In order to maintain ownership of the project by the partners, the management and general administration of the project cannot be contracted. Furthermore, **project partners** as well as their employees **cannot** be contracted as **external service providers**.

The beneficiary must select the most economically advantageous offer (not necessarily the cheapest), in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors. Any conflict of interest must be avoided.

The following specific rules with regard to procurement apply:

- Contracts with a value **below 500 EUR** (excluding VAT) can be paid on presentation of an **invoice**;



- Contracts with a value **between 500 EUR and 5,000 EUR** (excluding VAT) are subject to a procedure involving at least **three offers** or **price comparisons**;
- Contracts **above 5,000 EUR** (excluding VAT) are subject to a procedure involving at least **three offers**.

Each partner remains responsible to observe any stricter national public procurement rules. Compliance with such rules is not checked by the IB because they do not influence the eligibility of costs.

Documentation and reporting

In order to declare costs for external services, project partners need to enter the declared costs and upload scans of original invoices and documents related to the selection and contracting procedure, where applicable.

13. Follow-up and monitoring

The lead partner needs to ensure the sustainability of the project activities. If deemed necessary, **PACs may request** lead partners to provide a follow-up report.