PROGRAMME START – UP MANUAL
Developed for The Regional Secretariat CTI-CFF

Version 2.0 Draft September 29, 2017

Prepared by: FA / PIS

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Glossary
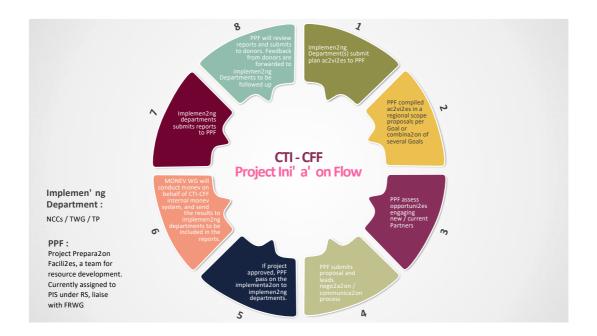
Terms

(Prelude / Introduction)

Programme Start-Up Manual is a document to provide detailed guidance for CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat Programme Team, Project Implementing Partners, Collaborators and CTI-CFF Development Partners of the approved projects in the implementation phase from contracting to project closure, including reporting obligations, payment of the contribution and other programme-related requirements set in the Contract. The project implementation has to be executed according to the regulations and rules relevant for the financial instruments of the programme and additional regulations as set by Collaborators or Funders. This Manual describes the implementation rules for the programme, as well as the joint requirements for all partners. For specific problems related to particular operations, the Regional Secretariat should be contacted for advice.

This Manual outlines the steps to be taken during the project implementation. As soon as a programme monitoring system is available for supporting the tasks of the project partners and lead partners, this Manual will be revised accordingly.

CTI-CFF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FLOW

CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat coordination role in sharing information on projects and activities within coral triangle areas under CTI-CFF initiatives include project development management. Specifically, Project Preparation Facilities is (will be) the Department under CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat that would serves as The Clearing House to ensure planned projects are inline with CTI-CFF Goals and reaching out all CT6 Members.

Project Preparation Facility

History of how PPF came to surface and what would be the role

Note: to be consolidated by Governance Working Group & Cross-Cutting Themes Senior Manager, Jasmin M. Saad, in consultation with Chair of GWG

Project Initiation Flow

Stage 01
IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENTS / PARTNERS
CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat through PPF is managing and accepting all request to collaborate within CTI-CFF Initiatives from internal entities such as National Coordinating Committees (NCCs), Managers of RS CTI-CFF (Working Group Managers and Technical Programme), Working Groups' Committee; and from external entities: CTI-CFF Development Partners, Collaborators, or prospect Implementing Partners. The requests can be in a form of funding a project or of supporting projects. For those requesting a funding support, proposals must follow **Programme Manual of CTI-CFF.** For those requesting to fund a project, the nature of funding supports must meet the requirements set up in **CTI-CFF Regulations and Procedures.**

Stage 02
PROPOSAL REVIEWS

PPF will identify and categories incoming request based on Implementing Partners (IP) and Funding Partners (FP). For Implementing Partners, PPF will review plan of activities, proposals and budgets of Partners that are aligns with CTI-CFF Regional Plan of Actions' Goals and Priorities. PPF may joint several requests into a single proposal that would reach bigger areas or all CT6 Countries areas, supports several Goals or support Priority Actions.

Stage 03
ENGAGING PROPOSALS WITH FUNDING SUPPORTS
To finance the listed proposals and activities, PPF will engage IPs to the right Funding Partners. PPF will also seek and identify funding opportunities to ensure planned projects and activities by Implementing Partners receive supports.

Stage 4
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TO FUNDING PARTNERS
Upon finding the right partners, PPF will be the lead department to establish communication, negotiations and coordination with Funding Partners. PPF will work together with Departments within Regional Secretariat such as Finance and Administration and Programme Department to ensure proposals meet the requirements of funding opportunities. Further communication between Implementing Partners and Funding Partners will be handled by PPF in this Stage.

Stage 5
PROJECTS APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION
At times PPF succeeded in connecting project proposals to its funders, PPF will handover the following process to dedicated Departments and or Implementing Partners. PPF will initiate an Inception Meeting inviting stakeholders related to the approved projects: Implementing Partners, Funding Partners, NCCs and Regional Secretariat team. In this occasion, briefing with Implementing Partners regarding Funding Partners terms, conditions and requirements on proposal implementation and reporting will be conducted. **Programme Manual** will be use as Guidelines for Implementing Partners to implement projects funded by CTI-CFF Funding Partners. PPF must receive copies of reports of the approved projects.

Stage 6
PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION
PPF will liaise with Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group (MONEV-WG) to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of projects under CTI-CFF Initiatives. MONEV-WG will submit their reports to PPF team with recommendations (if any) to the Implementing Partners. PPF will forward the findings and recommendations to IPs to be followed up for improvement of project implementation.

Stage 7
REPORTING
Implementing Partners should submit reports to PPF. PPF will review reports to check if the projects implementation are conducted accordingly and meet the Outcomes as stated in the Approved Proposals.

Stage 8
SUBMISSIONS OF REPORT AND CLOSING OF PROJECTS
If reports from IP meet the requirements of Funding Partners, PPF will forward to Funding Partners for final reviews and feedback. When all is achieved, PPF will assist with the formal

closure of the projects. CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat will document the process and conduct reporting to be submitted at the Senior Officials Meeting on a yearly basis.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing a Programme

Project overview and goal should be based on Five Goals detailed in the Regional Plan of Actions (RPOA). The embodiment of RPOA at country level is detailed in National Plan of Actions (NPOAs) on each member's CTI-CFF Six Member Countries.

Logical Framework Analysis can be found from the resume of RPOAs (if project is regional level) or from NPOAs (if national level).

Estimated financial figures are available in the NPOA of each Member State, however, details of implementation budget should be consulted to each NCC before submission of proposals.

Programme core focus, scope, expected Outcomes, measurable indicators, activities, target beneficiaries, and implementing partners would come from Programme Senior Manager and Technical Working Group Senior Manager.

Note: For issues not reflected in the RPOAs but valid to identify global context or regional needs (i.e. marine debris, skills and capacity gaps, funding constraint, coral bleaching (relate to Goal 4 but not specifically identified in problem analysis thus haven't been address in the action level) – project proposal development appraisal to new collaborators is amenable without prior approval of NCCs.

Writing of Proposal

Collaborators / Development Partners normally have concept proposal format and budget format. If not available, consult Programme Service → Technical Programme Senior Manager ← to acquire CTI-CFF official project proposal forms

Intensive discussions and consultation with Technical Programme and FRWG Senior Manager should be conducted during proposal writing processes.

List of documents to be prepared upon submission of proposal is available in the Donor Compliance Check List document in this **link.**

Every project is different, but all projects start from one idea developed in order to achieve specific objectives with defined but limited resources and within a scheduled time frame. Hence, the main stages of project development should have below aspects identified to ensure successful proposal development:
   - Defining the objectives, results and outputs
   - Building the partnership
   - Constructing the work plan/activities
   - Setting up realistic budget and timeframe
   - Logical Framework Analysis

When the projects are offered by and established Donor Institutions, the proposals should principally comply with the specific Programme's and Calls of reference's requirements. Hence, the information given in the next sub-paragraphs will relay only on some general aspects of the steps listed above and are intended to be additional to the ones contained in the relative Call and Applicants' Manual, providing practical guidance and advice for Lead Applicants and potential Final Beneficiaries on some aspects of the developing project idea mainly to have clearly in mind what to do in order to plan adequately the needed resources.

Objectives, expected results and outputs

The most important step in developing the project proposal is to define the objectives and the expected results clearly and precisely since the beginning of the development process. 'Good' objectives and results clearly express what kind of changes and effects the project intends to bring about.

Generally speaking, the **objective** specifies positive aspects of a desired future situation to be reached.

According to what actually needed in the Proposal Application Form (PAF), objectives are defined at two distinct levels:
- <u>Goal</u> is the expectation and the effects/benefit of the project in the long-term on beneficiaries' territories and for Programme's area beyond the specific project purpose and the temporary funding received;
- <u>Specific Objectives</u> are what the project is going to achieve concretely at the end of the project lifetime. What are the changes produced in the field tackled and on the project target groups.

Both of them must be concrete, quantifiable and realistic. Thus it can be useful in defining them to answer to the following questions:
- What type of change/s is/are going to be achieved in the short and long run?
- Quantify the type of changes that are going to be achieved
- Where shall the change/s happen?
- For whom is it going to be done (project target group/s)?
- By when does it have to happen?

The **Outcomes / Expected Results** are direct and immediate advantages resulting from the project's activities and from the production of the outputs, they are the effects to which the outputs lead to and tell us about the benefit of funding the outputs. Compared to outputs, results imply a qualitative value, even if they should also measured in concrete units (see below the Indicators section).

Outcomes should be **SMART** – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound. When planning the project results, the partnership can reach a common understanding answering the following questions:

- What kind of positive change does the project aim at?
- Where will the change happen?
- Who will be affected by the change?
- When will the change happen?
- What should be the quality of the planned result?
- What is the cross-border value of the result?

In addition, a project should define also outputs, which, practically, tell us what has actually been produced with the money given to the project. The project outputs are tangible deliverables and visible products of the project directly resulting from the activities carried out in the project (e.g. manuals, specific products delivered, # of events, # of trainings or workshops, and so on). They are typically measured in concrete units (see below the Indicators section). When planning the project outputs, the partnership can reach a common understanding answering the following questions:

- What is the content of the outputs (e.g manual, training provision)?
- Who will be using the outputs (e.g manual, training provision) after the project?
- Who will be participating (e.g manual, training provision) after the project?
- How will the outputs (e.g manual, training provision) be used after the project?

When submitting the Application Form, both the defined results and outputs should be measured by indicator targets (*target value*), which define the level of achieving to be reached respectively for results and for outputs. The realization of the defined indicators will be taken into consideration to monitor the project performance, thus projects should indicate a realistic unit for the defined results and outputs that are likely that the project can achieve.

Indicators

The indicator targets set by a project in the Application Form define its level of ambition, help to monitor progress throughout implementation and allow the project to claim that objectives have been met at the end of the project whether the objectives have been achieved. Outcome would require several Outputs to be achieved and directly contributed to the achievements of an Outcome.

Therefore, the definition of the outputs and Outcomes indicators requires a special attention. The table below shows some (not exhaustive and only for illustration purpose) examples of indicators set respectively for outputs and for results:

Output Indicator (Immediate result of the project)	Outcomes Indicator (Effect/consequence of the immediate result)
Number of regional workshops on Blue Carbon held	Number of blue carbon initiatives / policies improved / implemented
Number of students receiving cross learning scholarship on Climate Change related subjects from University	

Partnership of CTI-CFF	
Number of participants attending training on CCA	

All indicators should be expressed in quantity (such as 'the number of', 'percentage of') in order to be able to measure results and outputs objectively, but they need to be completed by qualitative aspects (such as addressed target groups, in which place the change is produced). In case it is measured something that already exists (number of people employed in an area) or project is built on the results of a previous project, the baseline figure (the starting value) will not be zero, thus the starting point should be defined.

To set a good indicator system at a project level, the indicators should also be S.M.A.R.T, which means:
- *Specific:* is it clear what exactly will be measured, in what geographical area measurements will be made, what units (number of participants, euros, kms etc.) will be used etc.?
- *Measurable*: will the project be able to collect accurate information to measure progress towards the targets set? The information required for measurements should be quite easy to collect. It should be aware that different regions and Countries collect data in different ways, thus all partners should be able to monitor and report on the indicators selected.
- *Achievable*: closely linked to identifying what changes are anticipated as a result of the project work and whether the results planned are realistic (e.g. decrease in water pollution by XX rather than no water pollution);
- *Relevant*: will the indicators measure all of the project's key activities?
- *Timed:* stating when something should happen (e.g. increase in visitor numbers by the end of the project).

It is noted that it is not always easy for projects to set up a correct and clear indicator systems. Firstly, in many cases there is confusion between Outputs and Outcomes indicators. Secondly, many of the indicators cannot be measured because sometimes no baseline information was provided, sometimes no relevant data are available and often indicators are too vaguely defined or not logically linked (e.g. investing in a specific output should lead to a specific result and not to another one).

Therefore the definition of the project indicator system is very important and should be not underestimated by the partnership, which shall agree in what exactly needs to be achieved by the project since the beginning. As well as everything else in the application, all project partners, under the coordination of the Lead Applicant, should identify indicators. All the partners should:
- Discuss the choice of indicators, who among them will contribute to the different indicators,
- Identify the baseline data to benchmark the progress achieved,

- Consider whether other projects are working on similar issues and whether there is an opportunity to use some of their indicators and build on their work (avoid repetition).

Active involvement of all partners in the setting up of project indicators during the development stage facilitates partner performance throughout the implementation stage and outlines the division of responsibilities from a very early stage.

Last but not least, the project indicator system chosen by the partnership shall also be consistent with the Programme's indicator system. The IPA Adriatic CBC Programme has a number of core indicators on Priority level distinguished by result and outputs. They will serve to assess whether Priority objectives are being met. Each project therefore needs to demonstrate a clear contribution also to the Programme's indicator system of the Priority which the project refers to.

During application process, the project will be required to point out results and outputs indicators according to both those defined by the Programme and to those chosen specifically for the projects reflecting the specific activities and aims.

At the Programme level, through the periodical Project Progress Report, information about the achievement of the outputs and results by the projects will be collected in order to measure progress on all important project activities and aims and, finally, verify how all different projects are contributing to achieve the Programme's objectives. The success of the Programme is connected to the success of the financed projects, in other words, if projects will achieve their objectives, and reach their targeted results and outputs indicators, even the Programme will achieve its objectives.

Finally, just to sum up, in order to develop a project indicators system consistent with project objectives and activities and outputs and also with the Programme, the partnership can consider the following points as guide:

		Checklist for defining indicators

Consistent with Programme:		What are the Programme's indicators specific for the related
		 - Priority?
		
		 - Which of these indicators will the project contribute to?
		   Will the project make a direct contribution to the
		 - Programme/Priority
		   indicators?

Consistent with the		- Are envisaged results related to project objectives?

project objectives:	- Is there a logical flow between objectives/activities and results
	  Are results clearly defined, realistic (achievable) and precisely
	- quantified
	  according to the project objectives?

Nature of the envisaged outputs:	- What should be produced by the end of the project?
	  What type of outputs is the project going to deliver – soft (e.g.
	- network
	  establishment) or hard (on the ground implementation work)?
	- Can you provide quantitative or qualitative measurements for output? If the
	  indicators are qualitative have you secured a methodology to assess the
	  progress made?
	  At what level, local, regional, national, international, the outputs
	- will be
	  produce?

Target groups:	- Do the selected indicators identify specific target groups? - Are there indicators measuring involvement/degree of influence of the project?

Each project is asked to find best suitable indicators fitting to the particular planned results and outputs of the project. These indicators should even help the projects to evaluate their performance and achievements by themselves at a given stage. In fact the defined indicators developing the project may also require adjustment during the implementation phase due to external conditions. At the end of the project, in case the set targets will not be reached, an explanation should be given in the Final Report (see § 8.1 of), but this does not automatically mean that the project has failed.

The work plan

Another important step in developing project proposal is the construction of the work plan.

A well-structured work plan should help a project to organize its activities, having a clear and detailed understanding of the actions listed, their duration, their dependencies and their sequence applying a cross-border approach.

In the Application Form, all projects are asked to describe their activities specifying also the involvement of the partners. The work plan defined in the Programme's Application Form is structured in different Work Packages (WPs). Each Work Package enables the project to break down its work in actions, easily grouped according to WP's focus.

There are three pre-defined Work Packages in the Application Form. The following sub-paragraphs will give to the project partners useful information in order to elaborate two of them: the "*Project management and coordination*" work package and the "*Communication and dissemination*" work package.

Project management and coordination activities

In a broad sense "*project management*" concerns coordination of project's activities, monitoring and reporting of project progress in terms of activities and resources.

Moreover project management regards also the definition of the management structures necessary to implement the project activities (such as the human resources' team and the project's decision making body), the methods to be used to ensure a proper information flow among partners (internal communication), and the method for internal evaluation and accounting system.

Management structures

Since the project developing phase, the partnership should agree on the decision making process and (if possible) should envisage a project's decision making body such as a project's steering committee, or management board, or an advisory group.

Irrespective of its name, such a committee, which should guarantee an adequate representation of all partners, will be the main decision making body during the entire project lifetime and thus it will oversee strategic planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and achievement of outputs/results.

The role and the responsibility among the partners should be agreed on and clearly defined by the partners all together. It is recommended that the coordination and management procedures remain as transparent and simple as possible.

Project team

The management of a cross-border project is a challenging and time-consuming task. Therefore it is suggested that the human resources devoted to the project should have experience in the management of previous projects (such as in cross-border cooperation or other international projects), be able to handle the challenges of different languages and cultures, and should enable the partnership to work together as a team.

Each partner can appoint (internal or external) specific human resources to carry out the project activities. However the Lead Beneficiary, which will have the responsibility to ensure an efficient and reliable management and co-ordination system for the whole project, should appoint (internally) or contract (externally) a project coordinator and a financial manager.

The **project coordinator (or project manager)** is the person responsible for co-ordinating the whole project's work among the involved partners, for ensuring that tasks are fulfilled according to the scheduled timeframe, the foreseen resources and the division of responsibilities among partners; for monitoring the progress of the project; for ensuring proper information flow with the Programme bodies, as well as with and among the project partners. In practice, he/she should be able to act as a driving force in the partnership in order to achieve smoothly the project's objectives.

The **project financial manager** is the person responsible for an adequate and orderly project accounting, for properly financial managing of the total budget and for monitoring financial progress of the project.

The project coordinator and the financial manager should work in close contact with each other, with the partners' organizations and with the Programme's bodies in order to establish effective project management.

They should cooperate mainly in preparing and submitting the Project Progress Report (project activity and financial reports) to the Managing Authority/Joint Technical Secretariat. Since the Programme official language is English communication with the Managing Authority/Joint Technical Secretariat must be in English and thus it is strongly recommended that these persons are familiar with English.

Information flow between the partners

It is important to envisage a good communication flow among partners agreeing on means, modality and timeframe for the internal communication since the beginning.

The main subjects of the internal communication within the project are:

- To share information that partners need in order to work together,
- To inform constantly about project progress,
- To identify problems and overcome them if necessary,
- To take decisions on project changes (if needed).

When teams are working together over long distances between different Countries, good internal communication flows are important. *Good* in this context means that information needed for working together has to be shared among all partners and to be **concrete, clear and timely** during the project lifetime. Insufficient communication can easily lead to conflicts and problems; too much information or irrelevant information can, on the other hand, make confusion.

Therefore to ensure a good communication flow in a complex, multinational and long-distance environment as in the cross-border cooperation projects, the following aspects should be kept in mind:

- A clear language, that is also easy to understand for non-native speakers, should be used (being the language of the Programme, English is suggested);

- Vague messages should be avoided and it is preferable to be as concrete as possible;

- In case of using technological means, all partners have to get the technical access/capacity and the skills to use these tools without creating extra work for others.

The **project meetings** remain the basic pillar to guarantee an effective communication within the project as moments to afford *vis a vis* the management and coordination tasks and to build up a certain level of confidence and trust. There are different views on what the "ideal" frequency of project meetings is. Surely only one meeting per year would not be enough; some projects find appropriate to meet every three months, others every six months. This choice depends on the size of the project in terms both of funding and of number of partners. It should be taken into account, however, that although large partnerships can benefit from more frequent meetings to communicate on a "face to face" basis, at the same time, it is difficult to arrange meetings for a large number of people to be available on a certain date. The number and frequency of the project's meetings should be decided early on, also in order to plan correctly the needed resources. The basic meetings to be arranged are the kick-off meeting, interim meetings (to discuss progress, reporting) and the final meeting (to evaluate outputs and initiate project closure). The results of meetings are to be documented and communicated to all partners as minutes and specific decisions taken to address issues/problems.

A way to reduce the need for physical meetings, which can be more timely and costly, is to use video-conferences. It is however stressed that while they are extremely useful, they cannot replace the basic need for face-to-face meetings for some key occasions (for example, the kick-off meeting).

As mentioned above, projects can envisage the use of **technological means** to facilitate the communication activities among partners, mainly the day-to-day work. In this respect, while phone, fax and e-mail are the most commonly used tools, such cross-border cooperation projects often may have a need for additional, more sophisticated technologies that can support collaboration. The implementation and use of such systems should be planned well (including financial resources and time for their set-up) in order to ensure benefit for the project and not creating extra work for partners' organizations. The use of technological tools and devices can improve the working efficiency of the team. For instance it could be useful to envisage an online storage of documents, which is a good way to ensure that all partners have easy access to the latest information and documents, templates, etc. It could be useful to use also shared internet-based workspaces for collaboration among team members. These are often a combination of storage and management platforms, which can be highly valuable for teams working together over long distances.

The possible management and coordination outputs indicators that projects can plan may be the following (not exhaustive list):

- Number of steering group meetings organized by project;
- Number of videoconferences (if any) organized by project;
- Number of Project Progress Reports produced;
- Number of interim evaluations.

Communication and Dissemination activities

A separate Work Package (WP2) devoted to group all communication, dissemination and publicity activities is foreseen in the Application Form. During the project preparation stage, it is important to plan those activities and the financial resources needed for them.

External communication and information of project results to key stakeholders and target groups are essential to make the project visible as widely as possible. In some projects this can be a quite complex process, as different target groups need to be approached in different ways. External communication involves many aspects, but in general it is about everything relating to the project's appearance to the 'outside world'.

Therefore the following aspects should be clear in advance:

- **What** needs to be communicated and to what level of detail?
- **Who** needs to be informed?
- **Whe**n and how often they need to be informed?
- **How** they should be informed? What is the most appropriate medium?

In general, concerning the "who should to be informed", projects need to reach a wide range of media and stakeholders, including representatives from all levels of government, as well as the wide public. Depending on the objectives, the project partners shall identify relevant addressees, such as (list not exhaustive):

- Relevant stakeholders
- Policy makers at regional, local and national level
- General public
- Specific media
- Programme bodies.

Concerning 'how" the above mentioned target groups may be reached, the possible communication outputs and relevant indicators that the projects can plan may be the following:

- Number of public events advertising the projects organized by the project and number of expected participants at these events
- Number of newsletters issued and/or downloaded online
- Number of printed publications distributed
- Number of brochures/flyers produced

- Number of public events advertising the projects attended by project representatives (excluded the ones organized by project)
- Number of TV/radio/web streaming broadcasts
- Number of articles in international/national/regional/local press (newsletters, magazines etc.)
- Number of connections to the project website

Moreover, it is strongly recommended to envisage the definition of a more detailed project's communication and dissemination strategy in a **communication plan**, to be drawn up as soon the project starts in respect also of the Programme publicity rules.

In case specific skills and expertise are necessary to make sure that communication activities are carried out as professionally as all the other WPs, a skilled information/communication manager, who should preferably speak English, may be appointed, planning appropriately the needed financial resources.

The **communication manager** is the person in charge for the implementation of the communication plan, for the coordination of all the communication and publicity activities in accordance with the EU and Programme's requirements on information and communication and visibility of actions. In case no specific person will be appointed/contracted, the communication tasks can be carried out by other persons involved in the project, for example, the project coordinator.

In order to make the project more visible and to ensure the transparency of the activities and results, projects are recommended to set up a **website** and to regularly update it during the project lifetime.

The project budget

It is vital that projects start to consider financial issues from the very beginning. Every planned activity needed to meet the project objectives should be budgeted. All partners should be involved in this process and it is important to include also a realistic budget for the Lead Partner's project administration role. Obviously this requires preparatory work (including meetings when possible) during the development of the project application. Time invested in the developing phase, brings to construct a strong partnerships with clear responsibilities and well-justified budget allocations. Moreover consistently good preparation is the main factor for a smooth and successful project implementation.

An estimation of the funds potentially available can be an important factor in defining the scope of the project and all partners need to take responsibility for their own budgeting.

There is a three-step process that should provide the right level of accuracy: Resource planning, Cost estimating and Cost budgeting. These steps form the basis for cost control once the project is operational.

Resource Planning

First of all, project partners have to get a clear idea of what they want to achieve and how they plan to do it. Then they have to break this down into work packages and decide what is needed for completing each work package. It is particularly important to think about how different work packages fit together: the work of one partner often depends on the delivery of another partner's work, thus possible delays should be estimated and considered into the time plan.

Cost Estimating

Project partners should have a reasonable accurate picture of what will happen over the course of the project and then try to work out how much it will cost, developing an approximation of the costs of the resources needed to complete project activities. Some costs are reasonably easy to calculate. For example, you will know the number and type of staff required and the standard salary for this type of staff. Other costs are more difficult to be identified. For example, if you plan a pilot activity based on the results of initial research carried out by the project it will be impossible to know exact costs at the beginning. The best approach is to define a realistic maximum price for the activity.

Cost Budgeting

Project partners should know the main activities, which partners will carry them out, the estimated start and end dates and the approximate resources (and therefore budget) required. The final step involves re-organising these figures to show the main categories of spending into the Project "budget lines", the partners that will spend the funds and on which year this will happen, which is the most important part of the agreement between the partnership on how the project is going to be implemented.

When developing the project budget, Project Partners are even encouraged to develop a more realistic project budget and spending plan from the start (ie Monthly Cashflow), to avoid underspending at the end of project implementation, thus, may lead to project extension with no cost extension – that takes further admin and financial procedures to follow.

All emails, starting from the sending of proposal and budget, and the following communications with Collaborators should be CC'd to RS Management Team, namely:
1. **Executive Director**
2. **Finance and Admin SM**
3. **HR and Admin Manager**
4. **Technical Programme SM**
5. **FRWG SM**

Proposal result announcement usually takes two months after the closing deadline. Upon approval, it will take between one to two months to actual receiving of first transfer.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

NOTE: ALL approved and accepted financial supports from Collaborators need to be formally reported to Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) prior to Programme Implementation

The approval of proposals will be sent by the Collaborator (Grant Funder) via formal email to the Grant Officer / person in charge of communication

Upon receiving the formal acceptance, the Grant Officer will need to do the following:
1. Requesting official forms for Reporting (Narrative and Financial)
2. Requesting procurement guidelines and financial standards
3. Requesting communication guidelines and rules or terms in using logos and or collaborator's name

Contracting Implementing Partner

Contracting Procedure
Contracting is the procedure carried out in order to conclude a Project Contract between the Implementing Partner (IP) and the Regional Secretariat (RS) as the coordinating body/entity of CTI-CFF Programme, for the implementation of a project approved by Committee of Senior Officials (CSOs). The contracting starts after the final RS approval of the project application, i.e. after the direct approval (without conditions) or after the successful fulfillment of conditions.

Following the RS notification about the final approval of the application, the IP has to submit the following documents in original format to RS within 2 (two) weeks from the date of receiving RS notification letter by email:

1. Statement on Project bank account:
- Document officially issued and signed by the Bank of the IP proving that a separate bank account has been opened for the project by the IP, (note: Must add samples as Attachments to this Manual – to be provided by Finance of Regional Secretariat) OR
- Document officially issued and signed by the Bank of the IP proving that the single bank account of the Organisation is available for the project. In this case, a separate sub-account or technical code or other technical arrangement allowing to identify, track and report all financial transfers and expenditure related to the project shall be used on the existing single bank account (note: Must add samples as Attachments to this Manual – to be provided by Finance of Regional Secretariat)

2. Proof of signature of the legal representative of the IP:
Document with Organisation's official letterhead and stamps stating the authorized signature of the person(s) entitled to sign the Contract and the Application for Reimbursement. The document must be signed by Authorized person and counter-signed by

one of legal representatives of the IP (Board members/Notary).

3. In case of changes in legal status of the IP, the documents proving the new legal status

4. Approved Application Form (PDF) to be signed and stamped by the legal representative of the IP Organisation; and Budget Form (MS Excel tables) signed by the legal representative of the IP on each page

6. Original Partnership Agreement – officially signed by the IP

Once the above documents submitted successfully, the Regional Secretariat team will prepare a Partnership Agreement Contract. The Regional Secretariat will send a Partnership Agreement and will have to be countersigned by Implementing Partner as a confirmation and approval of implementation of the approved Program. The Contract will be sent to the IP for signing in two originals, out of which one original remains with the IP. The IP has to send back to The Regional Secretariat the remaining one signed original within 2 (two) weeks from the reception. The estimated timeframe of the contracting procedure is in general one month, depending on the time needed for the IP to send all necessary documents for contracting. In case the necessary documents for contracting are not provided within three months from date of receiving Regional Secretariat's notification letter, the Regional Secretariat will be entitled to withdraw its offer and contract.

Starting up the project

The project implementation can start only after the final approval of the application marked by the signatory of Contract by Regional Secretariat (RS). Therefore, the expenditures related to the project implementation are eligible from the starting date of the project, which **cannot be earlier than the date of the final approval** of the application by the RS. The project implementation period, defined by its starting and end dates, is explicitly given in the Agreement Contract.

Project management

Once the project implementation starts, project management and coordination has a crucial role to ensure successful implementation in order to achieve the project objectives. It is important that the partnership:

1. Establishes sufficient and effective management structure and procedures;
2. Ensures appropriate flow of information among the project partners within this management structure;
3. Constantly monitors the progress of implementation in order to identify potential risks   and deviations that might make necessary corrective interventions:
   a. Controls the quality of the work done and the deliverables, outputs produced;
   b. Keeps regular contact and communication with the Programme management team and the dedicated Regional Secretariat point of contact (Project Officer) of the project;

4. Evaluates at the end the result, what is achieved, how much it is in line with the original objectives, what the conclusions and the possible follow-up measures can be.

Immediately after the project approval, Implementing Partner (IP) should begin to activate / initiate the governance of the project, that were stated as part of Supporting Documents within Application Forms (AF), which in general consists in the following:
   A. Steering Committee (which is the decision making body inside the project)
   B. Detailed rules on the functioning of the SCOM are included in the Partnership Agreement
   C. Project management team
   D. Quality management structure

The size of the project management team can vary from one project to the other, yet at least **Four Key Positions** should be ensured for a proper implementation:

A. **Project Manager (PM)** can be nominated from the institution of the IP or can be externalized in case no internal resources are available. PM is responsible for:
   - Being the contact person between the project and the RS Officer
   - The overall management and coordination of the project implementation,
   - Daily monitoring of project progress with the support of existing team
   - Compilation of the content parts of the Progress Reports and timely submission thereof, achievement of project objectives within the planned period of time and quality control of delivered outputs
   - Keeping close contact with the Joint Secretariat and the partners

B. **Financial Manager (FM)** can be nominated from the institution of the IP or can be externalised in case no internal resources are available. An experienced financial manager is vital for the proper financial implementation of the project and for ensuring the timely reimbursement of funds. Therefore, in case the institution does not have the necessary expertise, then externalizing these services is recommended. FM is responsible for:
   - Permanent monitoring of all financial aspects, including internal management of funds, expenditures, spending rates, budget shifts, financial reporting

C. **Communication Manager (CM)** can be nominated from the institution of the IP or can be externalised in case no internal resources are available. CM is responsible for:
   - Developing and implementing project communication strategy
   - Defining communication objectives, approaches, activities and key messages to be sent out
   - Preparation of information materials and promotion items
   - Preparation and distribution of newsletters and press releases to identified stakeholders
   - Project information and promotional activities through various media channels

(printed medias, newspapers, online medias, radio / tv (if applicable), social media channels, etc)

- Coordination of communication within the partnership by setting up internal communication rules and monitoring tools, updating the information on the project section in the website, etc.

D. **Project Quality Manager (QM).** The partnership should set up from the beginning an effective quality assurance management. The quality assurance of the project outputs is mandatory for all the projects approved. This is related to deliverables set up in the Project's Logical Framework Analysis document that was sent out as part of Application Form (AF) Package. Without quality validation of the outputs, expenditure cannot be reimbursed. The quality management structure consists of experts responsible for proof reading, analyzing and reviewing the project outputs from a qualitative point of view. The Quality Manager could be supported by a mixed team of (internal and/or external) experts, forming either a quality management board or being individually involved in specific thematic reviews. **The programme requires that these experts are independent from the implementation team.** The partnership should also agree on internal procedures for the quality management, including follow up of the funding during the checks and measures for correction of the deficiencies. A Project Quality Manager (PQM) bears the responsibility for the information provided in the quality of the submitted reports. The quality assurance activity should always have a follow up, in the sense that the recommendations/ findings of the quality assurance manager should be implemented by the partnership and all these findings should be found in the quality report of the specific output. Thus, PQM is responsible for:

- Project evaluation
  At project level, the evaluation should offer a clear picture of the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, durability of the project results. Even though the evaluation is not mandatory at project level, the programme recommends that an evaluation of at least of the impact of the project at the level of the target groups should be done once during the project implementation. In general, the project can choose to implement different types of evaluation, such as:
  - Operational type of evaluation which analyse the effectiveness of the project management and implementation in terms of: procedures, workflow, project governance
  - Evaluation of the project achievements in terms of objectives outputs and results
  - Evaluation of the impact of the project at the level of the target groups
- Many projects are planning the evaluation already in the AF, however it is not excluded that some implement this exercise only after the project is approved (this would require a minor project modification in case sufficient financial resources have been allocated). **The important aspect is that the evaluation planning is flexible enough in order to adapt to the changing environment**

Media and Publication

All media and publication produced within the project should follow Media and Publication Guidelines of CTI-CFF <mark>(note to Regional Secretariat Communication Department: Do we have this? If not, have to be made. If available, should be attach to this Manual)</mark> and shared to CTI-CFF Communication Manager for acknowledgement. Upon using CTI-CFF logo or Coral Triangle Countries (CT6) logos, the designs must follow <mark>Standardize Design, Colors, Size and Placement Guidelines ((note to Regional Secretariat Communication Department: Need to make and attach the Guidelines)</mark> For social media related activities, all related posts on field activities update should also include / mention CTI-CFF official social media channels (Facebook, Instagram or Twitter – whichever applicable). Any resource media such as books, reports and or formal publication developed by IP under the scope of the approved project will automatically include authority of use for CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat in its reporting, publication and awareness raising activities.

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This section will be elaborate by MONEV WG, assisted by Regional Secretariat's Governance Working Group & Cross-Cutting Themes Senior Manager

PROJECT REPORTING

Once the project ends, several obligations arising from the Programme, the Community and or the national legislation still apply; such as financial record of the project must be kept for at least <mark>XXX</mark> years after project ends.

Final Report

After finalisation of the project, IP must submit a Final Report to the Regional Secretariat ***not later than*** <mark>XXX</mark> ***months from the project expiration term (end date)***, giving a qualitative summary of the project as a whole.

This report, which replaces the last Project Progress Report, shall provide an overview of the project's activities and achievements. It should also highlight how cross-border cooperation has contributed to attaining the expected results and should include a detailed description of the measures foreseen in order to ensure their durability. In addition it should contain financial information about all certified expenditures.

As the Project Progress Report, the Final Report shall contain the followings:

A. Report detailing all project activities as a whole, achievement of outputs and results; deliverables produced and
B. Financial reporting regarding all project certified expenditures and application for reimbursement;
C. Relevant enclosures as communication and publicity documents.

Implementing Partner must aware that disbursement of the last Programme contribution installment is subject to the submission of the Final Report.

The Final Report must be filled in English on compulsory, pre-filled templates provided by the Regional Secretariat and it has to be submitted electronically in a Word Format to enable editing and reviewing.

The figure below shows the different steps of the cash flow during reimbursement procedure:

<mark>(Will need to be completed by RS Finance Team – re: following current reimbursement process)</mark>

Durability and ownership of the project outputs

According to the Agreement Contract, Implementing Agencies (IA) is the owners of the intellectual and industrial property rights on the Project's results, reports and other documents relating to it. Where several members of the partnership (Lead Partner and/or Other Collaborators) have jointly carried out work generating outputs and where their respective share of the work cannot be ascertained, they shall have joint ownership of

it/them. Within the Partnership Agreement, Implementing Partners may establish provisions regarding the allocation and terms for exercising that joint ownership. The rights or access of Intellectual / Industrial Property Ownership to other parties shall be anyway annexed to the Final Report.

The produced outputs of the project cannot be transferred or be substantially modified within XXX years after the project end date. More in detail, the project must not undergo any substantial change:

1. Affecting its nature or its implementation conditions or giving to a firm or a public body an undue advantage; and
2. Resulting from a change in the nature of ownership of infrastructure or the cessation of a productive activity.

Should any of the above conditions not be met by any of the Implementing Partners, it must be informed without delay for further considerations.

Storage of project documents and accounting records

All accounting and supporting documents (e.g. Project Application Form, IPA Subsidy Contract, reports, service contracts, public procurement documentation, rental contracts, important communication between the project partners and with the Programme bodies as well as documents required to ensure an adequate audit trail, documents related to expenditures as e.g. original invoices and controls and audits) must be available and accessible until XXX years after the Programme closure, unless stricter national rules/state aid regulation do not state a later date.

Official documents related directly to the communication with the Programme authorities shall be archived by the Implementing Partners' partners at the equal times. The documents can be kept either in the form of original copies or in a version in conformity with the original, as commonly accepted data carriers. The procedure for the certification of the conformity of these documents held on data carriers with the original documents must be in line with the provisions set by the national authorities and shall ensure that the versions held comply with the national legal requirements and can be relied on for audit and control purposes.

In case of retaining the documents electronically, internationally accepted security standards must be met.

Representatives of the Funding Partners, CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat or direct funding stakeholders are entitled to examine the project, all relevant documentation and accounts of the project also after its closure.

Other considerations

Costs for project closure

In order to be eligible, all implementation-related costs must be paid out *before the end date of project implementation* as well as all costs related to the elaboration and submission of the Final Progress Report and to the project closure activities.

Revenues after project closure

If, no later than the closure of the Programme, should the project identified a revenue generating activities (income) such as Bank Interest or profit from the sale of goods (if any), this need to be disclosed to CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat and included in the Final Report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 01_Project Concept Proposal Form
Attachment 02_Project Budget Proposal Form