

Project leader guide IACP



The Interreg Amazon Cooperation Programme 2014-2020



SUMMARY



Project leader guide



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Lutte anti-fraude et gestion des risques

01 The Interreg Amazon Cooperation Programme (IACP)

The Interreg Amazon Cooperation Programme (IACP) is involved in the integrated development of French Guiana within the Guiana Shield environment. It is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund for European Territorial Cooperation (ERDF-ETC).

Partner States are **Guyana, Suriname, and the Brazilian states of Pará, Amapá, and Amazonas**. The territories concerned by **IACP** cooperation fall under two categories:

The cross-border component comprising:

— **Amapá, French Guiana, and Suriname.**

The transnational component meaning:

— **Amapá, French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, Pará, and Amazonas.**

Following the merger of the former Region and **Département, the Collectivité Territoriale de Guyane (CTG – Regional Authority of French Guiana)** is now the managing authority. The expenditure certification Authority is the Direction Régionale des Finances Publiques (DRFIP – Regional Directorate of Public Finances). The Auditing Authority of the Member State is the Commission Interministérielle de Coordination des Contrôles (CICC – Interministerial Commission for Check Coordination).

IACP partnership governance is ensured within a monitoring and programming committee for European territorial cooperation (the Comité de Suivi et de Programmation de la Coopération Territoriale Européenne CSP-CTE). The latter is assisted by a Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS).



4 major objectives within the area of cooperation



**REINFORCING
TRANSPORT PROVISION**



**PROTECTING
AND CAPITALIZING ON THE EXCEPTIONAL
BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL
AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**



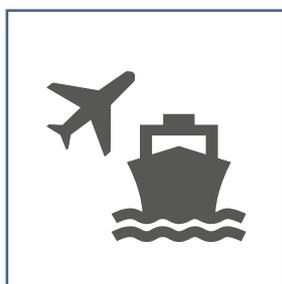
**INCREASE
BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS**

**DEVELOP
A TAILORED JOINT RESPONSE TO THE HEALTH
AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED,
IN PARTICULAR BY THE VULNERABLE**

02 Is my project eligible for ERDF funding from the IACP?

a - Beneficiaries

Leader or single beneficiaries with an address in French Guiana, and belong to the following categories according to programme objectives are concerned:



Reinforcing transport provision

- ▶ Chambers of commerce,
- ▶ Transport operators, territorial planning operators,
- ▶ Associations, foundations, research organizations, companies (transport companies, etc.).



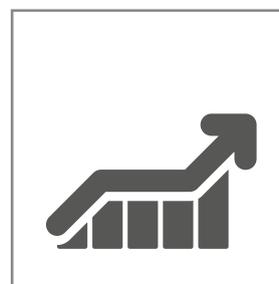
Protecting and capitalizing on the exceptional biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage

- ▶ Associations, especially those of a cultural, social or touristic vocation,
- ▶ Museums,
- ▶ Universities and research centres,
- ▶ Public institutions
- ▶ Businesses and associations of businesses,
- ▶ Training institutions.



Develop a tailored joint response to the health and social problems experienced, in particular by the vulnerable

- ▶ Care centres (hospitals, public or private health facilities)
- ▶ Health, social, and/or scientific associations, NGOs, foundations,
- ▶ Research centres and universities



Increase business competitiveness

- ▶ Public inter-municipality cooperation establishments,
- ▶ Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and groups or associations of businesses, interprofessional,
- ▶ Consular chambers, development agencies, technopoles, etc.
- ▶ Community organizations and associations.

Note that all public, national, regional, and territorial administrations and institutions are eligible under the four objectives.



b - The lead beneficiary and their partners' responsibility

Who is the Leader?

The Leader is the beneficiary of the IACP, who must be French and located in French Guiana.

They supervise and oversee the other partner beneficiaries within the cooperation area (Suriname, Guyana, the states of Amapá, Pará, and Amazonas) who may also, via the Leader, benefit from European cooperation funds.

In addition, for the cross-border component: it is mandatory that there be at least one partner from Suriname and/or Amapá,

For the transnational component: at least one partner from Guyana, Pará, Amazonas and/or Suriname and Amapá.

A partnership agreement stating the commitment, duties, responsibilities, and obligations of the Leader and of each partner must be made official for the entire duration of the project*. **However, the lead beneficiary shall act as the sole contact point of the managing authority and assumes responsibility for realizing the financed operation.**

What is their role?

In accordance with **Article 13 of Regulation 1299/2013**, they ensure the implementation of the entire operation, ensure that expenditures presented by all partners were incurred whilst completing the operation and correspond to actions set forward in the partnership agreement between them and their partners, as well as the agreement between them and the Managing Authority.



* Partnership agreement and letter of undertaking models will be made available to project leaders.

The Leader's responsibility in relation to their partners

- ✔ They set the implementation rules and implementation reporting rules with other beneficiaries in an agreement specifying arrangements guaranteeing proper financial management of the funds allocated to the operation,
- ✔ They ensure that expenditures in territories are certified by a certified or internationally recognized accountant
- ✔ They make sure that the other beneficiaries receive the total fund contribution amount corresponding to their participation in full and as quickly as possible.
- ✔ They conduct all technical, administrative, and accounting checks with the partners, gather all documentation deemed necessary and pass them on to the Managing Authority during implementation reporting
- ✔ They ensure that the operation has been effectively and consistently carried out with on-site checks, and they inform the Managing Authority of the results.
- ✔ They verify that their partners (**French or foreign**) follow competitive pitching rules and requests the transfer of the necessary supporting documents.
- ✔ They recover overpayments from partners to perform cost recovery with the Managing Authority.
- ✔ They submit to any technical, administrative, and financial checks carried out by the Managing Authority or the Auditing Authority.



Partner responsibility

- ✓ They are signatories of the agreement concluded with the Leader and commit to meeting its terms
- ✓ They commit to returning overpayments to the Leader, if necessary
- ✓ They submit to any technical, administrative, and financial checks carried out by the Leader, the Managing Authority or the Auditing Authority
- ✓ They forward any necessary documents and information required during checks, as well as information regarding any conflict of interest concerning them.
- ✓ They submit themselves to on-site checks (Vérifications Sur Place – VSP) carried out by the Leader and/or the Managing Authority to ensure the effective and compliant realisation of the operation,
- ✓ They submit themselves to any consequences resulting from the conclusions of the on-site check,
- ✓ They agree to comply with competitive pitching principles, and, if necessary, provide necessary supporting documents.



c - Examples of eligible expenditures

Eligibility of expenditure is regulated by Articles 65 to 71 of EU Regulation 1303/2013, the EU delegated regulation 481/2014, Decree N°2016-279 and the order of 8th March 2016 taken by the Member State as well as the specific rules set, if applicable, by the IACP Monitoring Committee.

Generally, in order to be eligible, expenditures must be provided for in the project, necessary for its launch or realisation, and have actually been initiated, approved, and justified by the Leader and the Managing Authority.



The following expenditure categories are eligible*:



Staff costs



Travel and accommodation expenses



Administrative Costs



Expenses related to the use of external expertise and services



Equipment costs

* As detailed in the EU delegated regulation 481/2014



Ineligible costs* :

The following expenses are ineligible: fines, financial penalties, interest on arrears, bank charges and similar, legal and litigation costs, allowances, routine and exceptional management expenses, dividends, donations – except those not exceeding 50 per donation and providing they are connected to promotional, communication, advertising or informative actions, costs associated with fluctuating exchange rates, etc.

* Refer to aforementioned regulations

03 What is the process surrounding my grant request?

Download the specific IACP 2014-2016 funding application at
www.ctguyane.fr
and complete it.

01

Send a hard and electronic copy of the application to the
 **Pôle Affaires Européennes (PAE)** 
(PAE – European Affairs Division).

02

ERDF-CTE Preparation Service
Preparation of the request by the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS).

03

The programming committee
issues an opinion on all the files.

04

The Managing Authority
formalizes decisions via notices and attributive orders.

05

06

In the event of a positive decision,
an agreement governing the arrangements for funding allocation must be signed between the Regional Authority of French Guiana, the managing authority, and the Leader. Concurrently a partnership agreement must be signed between the Leader and its non-EU partners.

In the event of a negative decision,
notice is sent to the project leader and the grant request is closed.

06
bis

07

The lead beneficiary and the partners implement the project.

08

The Lead beneficiary transmits implementation reports and presents payment requests for payment (advance payments and balance) to the Managing Authority according to standard templates.

03 How is my project selected?

a - The terms

Project selection will occur as and when they are treated, meaning upon examination of filed applications in a spontaneous manner by the project leaders. However, the IACP monitoring and selection committees will only take place once (or even twice) per year. Also, project leaders who want their application to be reviewed at this time are encouraged to submit their project at least three months before the programming committee.

If necessary, approval by written consultation of local and non-EU partners remains possible throughout the year.

Call for projects or expression of interest procedures may occasionally be set up to meet the Programme's specific needs (insufficient allocated budget use, or one-time partnership application).

b - Project selection criteria

Projects must be formative for the cooperation area. They must enhance the visibility of French Guiana, its partners, and of the European Union within the Guiana Shield.

The benefits and effects of the funded operations must be sustainable and measurable within all the partners' territories of origin.

Additionally they must demonstrate the added value of a cross-border or transnational operation as compared to a strictly local operation.

Consequently submitted projects must correspond to issues and recommendations stated in existing development strategies (OP ERDF/ESF French Guiana, regional socio-economic development and land use development plans, etc.). They must also contribute to sustainable development, accessibility for all and equal opportunities.

If the Leader is a company or business, or their activity takes place in a competitive field, the grant request will only be eligible if filed prior to the start of operations



The following criteria will also be taken into consideration :

- ✓ Systematic consideration of sustainability and reducing potential environmental impact, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, regional integration, via employment in particular,
- ✓ Optimization of information and communication technology use,
- ✓ Leader skills (management of European co-funding in bilateral cooperation with a non-EU partner)
- ✓ Financing plan proportionality, eligibility of estimated cost, and operation coherence,
- ✓ Appropriateness of issues addressed in relation to the IACP and other programmes and strategies in force,
- ✓ The opening of a bank account exclusively dedicated to the project,
- ✓ Translation of the project summary and financing plan in all languages of the cooperation area.

In case of a call for projects or expression of interest, a benefit-weighting table for all of these criteria will be made in order to rank the offers.

05 Once my case is accepted, what are my obligations?

a - I sign an agreement

As a Leader, I sign an agreement governing the funding allocation arrangements with the Regional Authority of French Guiana, the management authority for EU funds. What is more, I also sign a partnership agreement with my non-EU partners.

b - I pledge to respect the beneficiary's 12 regulatory obligations

1 - Inform the instructor service of the beginning of the operation's implementation, from which expenditures may be eligible,

2 - Keep documents until the date set in the agreement,

3 - Undergo any technical, administrative or financial checks,

4 - Inform the instructor service if your situation, registered name or operation commitment structure (funding plan) change.

5 - Do not make any substantial changes affecting the nature, times, location, implementation terms or operation results without the agreement of the Managing Authority

6 - Properly justify expenses incurred for EU aid payment.

7 - Keep separate accounts.

8 - Carrying out advertising actions and respecting community and national regulations.

9 - Respecting the inclusion of horizontal principles: gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and sustainable development.

10 - Providing achievement, result, and performance indicators

11 - Respecting anti-fraud rules and certifying the sincerity and authenticity of performance records, expenditure statements, and supporting documents.

12 - Avoid conflicts of interest concerning me or my partners

06 How to carry out and account for my expenses?



A

I am a French Leader or partner and my expenses occur abroad

(Dans la zone couverte par le programme)

B

I am a foreign partner and my expenses occur abroad in local currency

FOR CASES A & B

My expenses must be related to the agreed upon operation, carried out within the area covered by the programme, and must respect the expenditure eligibility period (issuance and invoice payment). My expenses in non-EU territories must be certified.

I do not need to translate my invoices into French.

However, conversion of the total amount and amount for each article on the invoice into Euros must be done at the exchange rate that is current at the time of invoice payment.

IN BOTH CASES, THE SUBMITTED INVOICES MUST BE LEGIBLE AND ABSOLUTELY MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Issue date — Reference (numbering) of the invoice — Date of the sale, purchase or service provision
Identity of the purchaser — Identity of the vendor or service provider — Units, quantities, unit prices and total prices — Tax(es), if applicable — Any price increase or reduction

How do I convert my expenses?

In accordance with Article 28 of EU Regulation 1299/2013, the conversion rate used is the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission in force in the month during which the expenditure was incurred. It is for the Leader to check the conversion before transmission to the MA.

07 How do I obtain payment for expenses incurred during the operation?

Remuneration and payment terms are detailed in the agreement signed between the beneficiary and the managing authority

a - The advance

An advance payment is not necessarily automatic and depends on available funds. In no case can it be issued to a beneficiary who remains liable for amounts wrongly collected under previously bestowed subsidies. However, if the recipient has fulfilled their obligations and if an advance is necessary for them to more quickly and efficiently begin the operation, they may request an advance of 20% of the total aid amount by checking the option for this in the agreement. The advance is collected by settlement against the interim payments requested as down payments.

b - Advance payments and balance

The beneficiary seeks instalment and balance payments based on:

- ✔ An execution report to verify the progress or completion of the transaction in accordance with the approved project and in compliance with the contractual arrangements of the agreement.
- ✔ A summary statement of actual expenses incurred and paid, with supporting documentation as evidence.

For the balance, expenditure declarations must be certified by a chartered accountant, an external auditor or a public accountant, and financing partners' payment certifications must be provided. In addition, the balance will only be paid to the beneficiary by the Managing Authority after expenditure certification by the Certification Authority (DRFIP).

08 How am I inspected?



a - Operation inspections

Operation inspection covers:

- ✓ The effectiveness and compliance of the physical implementation of the operation.
- ✓ The legality of the beneficiary or beneficiaries' situation
- ✓ The administrative and accounting organization of beneficiary or beneficiaries
- ✓ Adherence to contractual obligations
- ✓ The eligibility and justification of expenses

It takes place on items via **Services Provided Checks (Vérifications de Service Fait - VSF)** and on operation implementation sites via **on-site checks (Visites sur Place - VSP)** carried out by the Leader and/or officers of the Managing Authority. These checks result in:

- ✓ Services Provided Check reports* and “certified correct” certifications set by the Managing Authority
- ✓ On-site checks** set by the Leader and/or the Managing Authority
- ✓ And, where applicable, in monitoring the implementation of irregularity corrections, and of identified observations and recommendations following a contradictory period with the concerned beneficiaries

On-site checks can be decided upon spontaneously at any time by the Regional Authority of French Guiana or the Leader in case of difficulties in an operation's functioning, suspicion about its compliance, doubts regarding supporting documentation or complaints. However, an annual visit plan on a test basis is established.

* The managing authority has adopted the term “Services Provided Check” rather than “Certification of Services Provided”, which is prone to being confused with the expenditure certification made by the certification authority.

**These are both recorded in standard forms.

b - The different inspection bodies

In addition to the operation inspections carried out under the Managing Authority, checks may also be made by:

- ✔ The Certification Authority (DRFIP).
- ✔ The Auditing Authority (CICC – Interministerial Commission for Check Coordination).
- ✔ The EU regulatory body: European Commission, European Court of Auditors, the Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

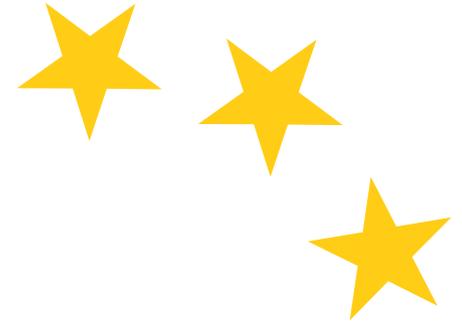
The Certification Authority certifies the expenses and sends payment requests to the European Commission. In case of any doubt regarding the eligibility and/or regularity of the declared expenses, the payment request is suspended and the Managing Authority is contacted in order to expedite checks that the beneficiary is required to undergo.

The Auditing Authority carries out and supervises second-level operation inspections, systems audits and annual accounts audits so as to deliver annual inspection reports to the Commission and to issue an opinion on programme management and accounting.

European regulatory bodies can assign commissioners at any time to carry out operation inspections on the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority, and beneficiaries.

Whatever the inspection body, the beneficiary or beneficiaries are required to submit to them and to provide any requested information or documents.

09 Anti-fraud and risk management



The protection of the Union's financial interests by Member States is a regulatory requirement and therefore requires a proactive policy for promoting the prevention of fraud, its detection, reporting, and its treatment.

Consequently, all stakeholders in the management and use of EU funds must adhere to risk management systems so as to provide reasonable assurance of the absence of:

- ✓ Conflicts of interest
- ✓ The use of fake documents
- ✓ The improper or abusive use of EU funds

To this end, any detected risk must immediately be reported to the Managing Authority.

10 Document list

Private applicants

- ✓ Aid request document that has been fully completed, signed, dated, and stamped,
- ✓ Scientific or technical description of the project, if applicable,
- ✓ Prior authorization required under the codes of the environment, public health, and urban development, if applicable,
- ✓ Articles,
- ✓ Registration attestations (at the prefecture or trade register) / K-bis excerpt/registration certificate with SIRET number,
- ✓ Composition of the Board of Directors, the Committee or the Executive Board,
- ✓ Document attesting to the legal representative's capacity,
- ✓ Bank account details,
- ✓ Attestations of tax and social security regularity,
- ✓ Attestation for the project's operational cash flow capacity,
- ✓ Document attesting to the commitment of each public financing partner (rulings and/or attributive orders) and private financing partner (attestation/certificate),
- ✓ Last complete tax return from the past year (for economic operators for whom drawing it up is obligatory),
- ✓ Profit and loss statement and balance sheet for the last financial year (for companies not providing a tax return),
- ✓ Estimated budget for the current year,
- ✓ Certificate of insurance from the holder covering the responsibilities and risks related to the operation,
- ✓ Authorizations, approvals and/or certifications relating to the nature of the operation,
- ✓ Engagement letters and CVs for personnel involved in the operation as well as the collective agreement and corporate agreement, if applicable.

For companies belonging to a group: an organizational chart detailing levels of participation, employees, turnover, and balance sheet for companies within the group.

For associations: Copy of the publication in the Official Journal and activity report for the last financial year.

Public applicants

- ✓ Aid request document that has been fully completed, signed, dated, and stamped,
- ✓ Scientific or technical description of the project, if applicable,
- ✓ Prior authorization required under the codes of the environment, public health, and urban development, if applicable,
- ✓ Composition of the deliberative assembly for local authorities,
- ✓ Decision of the competent body approving the operation and the provisional financing plan,
- ✓ Document attesting to the legal representative's capacity (if applicable, for public institutions in particular),
- ✓ Bank account details or account reference at the pay office,
- ✓ Document attesting to the commitment of each public financing partner (rulings and/or attributive orders) and private financing partner (attestation/certificate),
- ✓ Operating account and balance sheet for the last financial year (administrative account for local authorities),
- ✓ Initial budget (supplementary estimates and modifying decisions, if applicable) for the current year,
- ✓ Certificate of insurance from the holder covering the responsibilities and risks related to the operation,
- ✓ Authorizations, approvals and/or certifications relating to the nature of the operation,
- ✓ Engagement letters and CVs for personnel involved in the operation.

In case of works or property acquisitions

- ✓ Information document on the client,
- ✓ Sworn statement of whether or not tax exemption is eligible for the project's financing,
- ✓ Evidence of the right to use the land,
- ✓ Deed of ownership for the land or document signed by the owner authorizing the operation to be carried out,
- ✓ Required authorizations and permits.

In case of property acquisition: Notice from the local government property department or independent qualified expert certifying the value of the property at market prices.

In case of acquisitions financed by leasing

- ✓ The draft lease agreement,
- ✓ The schedule of the leasing determining the net cost and incurred costs,
- ✓ bank account details of the lessor,
- ✓ The identity and function of the lessor's representative who will be the beneficiary of the aid and will sign aid allocation agreement.

In the context of a public procurement procedure

- ✓ Evidence of competitive bidding (publication of the notice of competitive bidding in BOAMP, JOUE, etc., or another depending on existing thresholds),
- ✓ Market specifications and procedures for bidding,
- ✓ Offers analysis report and minutes of the committee that validated the selection of offers,
- ✓ Rejection or allotment notifications and binding acts for beneficiaries (and possible amendments).

Publication of the allotment notice in accordance with current regulations.

The translation of the project summary and its financing plan must be made available in all languages of the cooperation area (French, English, Portuguese, and Dutch)., anglais, portugais et néerlandais).

11 Some advice for preparing a good case?



- ✓ Carefully read the fact sheets by priority axis and ensure the physical and time eligibility of operations
- ✓ Meet at least two of the cooperation criteria
- ✓ Carefully read the guide for the funding request form
- ✓ Use the provided partnership agreement and letter of undertaking templates
- ✓ Precisely describe the tasks and commitments of non-EU partners in the partnership agreement
- ✓ Precisely describe the objectives and aim of the project
- ✓ Favour simple and precise wording
- ✓ Ensure the eligibility of provisional expenses
- ✓ Make sure that the project overview (with objectives and financing plan) is translated into the three other languages of the cooperation area (Portuguese, Dutch, and English)
- ✓ Check the file's completeness, respecting the list of required documents and annexes.

Your contacts

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