1. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Administrative Compliance Check and the Eligibility Check of the Application and of the Applicant is ensured by the technical means of the **EGRANT system**.

The system will **allow** an **Application to be submitted**, if:

- the Application is submitted via EGRANT system within the time specified in the Call for Proposals,
- all mandatory fields of the Application in the system are completed,
- the completed Applicant details meet the definition of an eligible applicant,
- the completed Partner/-s details meet the definition of eligible partners,
- the amount of the grant applied for meets the minimum (EUR 200,000) and maximum (EUR 500,000) limits for the grant to be applied for.

The submitted Application cannot be supplemented. The Application will be evaluated as submitted.

NOTICE:

For the purposes of this Call, **protected areas** are considered to be the **territories of National parks** and their protective zone and the **territories of Protected Landscape Areas**, excluding Protected Landscape Areas in the territory of the Bratislava Self-Governing Region.

Eliminating criterion:

In case the application scores 0 points in any of the eliminating criteria, the application cannot be supported even though the overall number of points is more than the minimum required.

2. CONTENT RELATED CRITERIA

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
1.	**Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation Focus** The Programme Component must prioritize biodiversity conservation and/or the protection and resilience of ecosystems through direct, field-based conservation measures implemented within protected areas in Slovakia. **Key Points:** • **Primary Objective:** The main goal should be the effective protection and restoration of species and their habitats through targeted actions. Initiatives should aim to protect and improve ecosystem functions while increasing their resilience to biodiversity loss and other environmental threats. • **Direct Action:** Activities must be conducted directly in protected areas and should demonstrate measurable benefits for biodiversity and/or ecosystem stability. Programme Components that effectively combine biodiversity conservation with ecosystem protection and resilience and clearly meet this focus will receive the maximum number of points. <mark>Eliminating criterion</mark>	0 – 12		
2.	**Local Community Involvement** The Programme Component must actively involve local people in environmental education and/or biodiversity conservation activities. **Key Points:**	0 - 8		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
	Community Engagement: Local communities participate directly in education or biodiversity conservation efforts. **Active Involvement:** Their involvement must be integral to the Programme Component's activities. Programme Components that effectively engage local people will receive the maximum number of points. <mark>Eliminating criterion</mark>				
3.	**Partnership and Cooperation in Environmental Protection** The Programme Component involves cooperation between non-profit organizations actively engaged in environmental protection and public and private entities related to the Programme Component objectives. Programme Components implemented on the territories of the national parks and/or protected landscape areas should demonstrate whether they have been consulted with the relevant National Park Administration, Protected Landscape Area Administration or other relevant Administration. **Key Points:** **Collaboration:** Partnerships between relevant organizations help achieve results. **Focus:** Mutual efforts should aim at habitat protection and raising awareness on biodiversity conservation. Programme Components that demonstrate strong cooperation and shared goals in environmental protection between non-profit organizations actively engaged in environmental protection and public and private entities related to the Programme Component objectives and consultations with relevant Administration will receive the maximum number of points.	0 - 3		
4.	**Inclusion of Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups**	0 - 6		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
		The Programme Component actively and sustainably includes vulnerable groups, minorities, and socially marginalized communities, such as Roma, people with disabilities, the elderly, etc., in its activities. **Key Points:** **Inclusion:** Efforts must be made to integrate these groups into mainstream activities. **Special Programs:** Targeted initiatives are provided when necessary. Programme Components that demonstrate strong inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups into the main activities will receive the maximum number of points.			
5.	**Slovak-Swiss Bilateral Cooperation**	The Programme Component promotes Slovak-Swiss cooperation to enhance biodiversity conservation by sharing experience, know-how, and best practices. **Key Points:** **Bilateral Collaboration:** Initiatives involve active partnerships with Swiss entities. **Knowledge Exchange:** Focus on mutual sharing of expertise and practices in biodiversity conservation. Programme Components that foster strong Slovak-Swiss cooperation in biodiversity conservation will receive the maximum number of points.	0 - 5		
6.	**Improved Habitat Management in Protected Areas**	The Programme Component contributes to enhancing management practices in protected areas, resulting in the improved condition and health of natural habitats. **Key Points:**	0 - 8		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
	Management Improvement: Focus on areas where management efforts will lead to better habitat conditions. **Impact:** Positive results for ecosystems and species should be evident. Programme Components that effectively improve habitat management in protected areas will receive the maximum number of points.				
7.	**Relevance of Participating Organizations** The Programme Component should be implemented by organizations whose expertise and focus are highly relevant to the goals of biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. The Applicant must be an organization active in the field of environment protection which is proven by submitted documentation. The Applicant must demonstrate its activities in the field for the last year preceding the announcement of the Call. **Key Points:** **Organizational Relevance:** Priority will be given to Programme Components led by organizations with significant experience and active involvement in environmental protection. **Alignment with Goals:** Participating organizations must clearly demonstrate that their mission and activities align closely with the objectives of the Programme. Evaluation: The Applicant´s organization must be actively engaged in environment protection, which is proven by submitted documentation, as a mandatory condition. If the Applicant does not meet this requirement, the Application will receive 0 points under this criterion, regardless of the involvement of other participating organizations. Programme Components involving highly relevant and experienced organizations to activities implemented will receive the maximum number of points. <mark>Eliminating criterion</mark>		0 - 5		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
8.	**Local Community Environmental Education** The Programme Component provides environmental education to local people in municipalities within or around protected areas, including programs at schools and community centres. **Key Points:** 1. **Community Engagement and Participation:** Priority will be given to Programme Components that actively involve local communities, including diverse group such as children, youth, and adults, through educational activities at schools, community centres, and local events. Educational programs should promote active participation in biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. 2. **Educational Value and Impact:** The focus should be on creating and/or implementing meaningful and impactful educational programs that raise environmental awareness, foster sustainable practises, and encourage community participation. The Programme Components that effectively engage local communities in environmental education within protected areas will receive the maximum number of points.	0 - 6		
9.	**Diversity of Target Groups** The Programme Component addresses a variety of distinct target groups with its environmental education and awareness-raising activities on biodiversity protection. **Key Points:** **Target Groups:** The Programme Component includes diverse groups such as students, local residents, volunteers, tourists, children, minorities, the elderly, people with disabilities, other special populations etc.	0 – 6		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
		Inclusivity: The Programme Component demonstrates efforts to engage multiple segments of the population effectively. Programme Components that reach a broad range of target groups with tailored educational and awareness efforts will receive the maximum number of points.			
	10. **Local Community Consultations** The Programme Component must include consultations with the local community to gather input, feedback and opinion on the proposed activities. These consultations ensure that community perspectives are meaningful integrated into the planning and, where relevant, implementation of the supported activities. **Key Points:** **Consultation Quality:** The consultations should be inclusive and meaningful, engaging diverse community members to ensure their input is actively considered in shaping the Programme Component. **Sustainability of Engagement:** Programme Components that include plans for ongoing consultations during implementation demonstrate a commitment to continuous community involvement and long-term impact. Programme Components that effectively involve local communities through consultations and which plans for continued engagement during the implementation are outlined will receive the maximum number of points. <mark>Eliminating criterion</mark>		0 – 6		
	11. **Implementation of Green-Based Management Measures and Pilot Initiatives** The Programme Component includes the implementation of green-based management measures and/or pilot initiatives for the conservation and/or restoration of biodiversity in protected areas. **Key Points:**		0 - 10		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
	Green-Based Management Measures: Implementation of strategies such as habitat restoration, invasive species control, and sustainable land-use practices etc. **Pilot Initiatives:** Testing and evaluation of new methods or strategies for biodiversity conservation and restoration, with results published online. Programme Components that effectively implement green-based management measures and pilot initiatives, including comprehensive evaluation and public dissemination of results, will receive the maximum number of points.				
12.	**Support for Green Infrastructure Measures** The Programme Component includes measures that enhance green infrastructure at the local level within protected areas. **Key Points:** **Green Infrastructure Actions and Environmental Impact:** Implementation of actions such as tree planting, wetland restoration, and creation of wildlife corridors etc., with focus on improving natural features to support wildlife, water management, and environmental health enhancement. **Sustainability and Maintenance:** The Programme Component needs to include plans for the long-term maintenance and monitoring of green infrastructure measures, such as trees etc., to ensure their survival and effectiveness over time. Programme Components that effectively support and improve green infrastructure through specific, actionable measures and include plans for their long-term sustainability will receive the maximum number of points.		0 – 7		
13.	**Feasibility and Effectiveness of Implementation:** Evaluate if the proposed timeframe for the Programme Component is realistic and if the planned activities are likely to effectively achieve the stated objectives.		0 – 6		

No.	Criterion	Description	Range	Score	Evaluation - Comments
	Programme Components with a well-structured and achievable timeline and clearly defined activities that demonstrate a high likelihood of success will receive the maximum number of points.				
	14. Adequacy of the Team and Budget: Assess whether the expertise of the team and the allocated budget are sufficient to carry out the proposed initiatives successfully and ensure their long-term sustainability. Programme Components with a competent and appropriately resourced team and a well-justified budget will receive the maximum number of points.		0 - 6		
	15. Alignment with Plans and Requirements: Determine if the Programme Component aligns with conservation and biodiversity protection plans and requirements and contributes effectively to the target values of relevant indicators. The Programme Components that aligns with nature protection management plans, meet the call requirements, and significantly contribute to achieving the target values of relevant indicators will receive the maximum number of points.		0 – 6		
	Total score *(of maximum 100 points)*				
	Recommendation		Recommended / Not recommended		
	Substantive comments				
The minimum number of points for support is 60.					

==Eliminating criteria== - a criterion that is of special importance with respect to the successful implementation and timely completion of the Programme Component. These are in particular those criteria that are linked to a specific indicator that the Programme Operator is obliged to guarantee. For example, if the International Support Measure Agreement foresees that each Programme Component Operator must be active in a given area, but all Evaluators score the Programme Component Operator's activity in that area as 0, this Application will or may be excluded from further evaluation. The Steering Committee

must be made aware of such evaluation criteria and may recommend special measures to be taken to mitigate the risk, including a recommendation not to support the Application.

Applications receiving less than 60 points (in average) shall not be supported.

Achieving the minimum required points does not guarantee receiving support.

The method of awarding points is as follows:

The evaluators will award points under each criterion based on the quality and completeness of the information provided in the Application. The allocation of points will be determined by assessing the quality of performance according to the percentage scale below. The overall score for each criterion will be expressed in points, with 100% being the maximum number of points that can be awarded for that criterion.

Classification of performance according to a percentage scale:

Excellent performance (76 - 100%):

- The Application provides a clear and detailed description of activities or measures and the like addressing all key aspects of the criterion comprehensively and containing all relevant information.
- Relevant data and evidence (e.g. documents, analyses, and plans) are available and sufficiently support the claims made in the application.
- The description is logically structured, well-justified, and clearly linked to the objectives and requirements of the Programme Component.

Good performance (51 - 75%):
- The Application covers most of the relevant aspects of the criterion, but some important details or evidence are missing or less comprehensive.
- Information is generally well described, but some sections could be elaborated further to provide greater clarity or depth.

Partial description (26 - 50%):
- The description in the Application is limited, with several key aspects missing or superficially addressed.
- Relevant data or evidence is insufficient or entirely lacking, making it difficult to assess the quality and relevance of the proposal.

None or very general description (0 - 25%):
- The Application does not provide any relevant information, or the description is so general that it fails to address the criterion meaningfully.
- Relevant data and evidence are either completely absent or unclear, preventing the evaluator from awarding a higher score.

Evaluation procedure

The evaluators first review the Application and analyse the information provided for each criterion. Based on the quality, completeness, and supporting data, they will assign scores within the given range. Once the points for each criterion have been allocated, they will be totalled to provide an overall rating for the application. Finally, the evaluator will summarize the assessment and describe the overall Programme Component rating.

The evaluators shall assess the awarded Applications according to the Selection Criteria annexed to the Call. The whole process of the technical evaluation of the Application is recorded by the Evaluators in the Evaluation Sheet in the EGRANT system.

The Evaluators shall follow the Programme Operator's interpretative and procedural instructions, if received in writing, when evaluating individual criteria, unless these compromise the professionalism, independence or impartiality of the evaluation.

In addition to the scores, the Evaluators are obliged to provide a narrative evaluation in the Evaluation Sheet with a justification for the evaluation of the criterion.

The verbal evaluation shall be indicated by the Evaluator in the Comments column. For each evaluation criterion, the Evaluator shall provide a verbal comment, which must contain a clear and as precise as possible justification for the evaluation of the criterion. In giving a narrative evaluation, the Evaluator will specifically focus on the justification for cases where:

(a) in a given criterion, the Evaluator wishes to point out a negative finding or risk or, on the contrary, to highlight a positive aspect of the Programme Component,

b) it is an Elimination Criterion and the Evaluator has awarded zero or the minimum number of points,

The verbal assessment is always also given by the Evaluator in the final part of the Evaluation Sheet in the Recommendation section, where they briefly state whether or not they recommend to support the Application. The Evaluator may also not recommend an Application if it has achieved more than the minimum score, but in such a case they will give their reasons in the Substantive Comments section.

The verbal assessment is also given by the Evaluator in the Substantive comments section, where they give a summary of the most important findings or risks identified in the evaluation of the Application.

For further information, please refer to the Evaluator's Guide, which is an annex to the [Projects Implementation Manual](#).