

Selection of operations:

Findings of the stock taking study and handbook of good practices

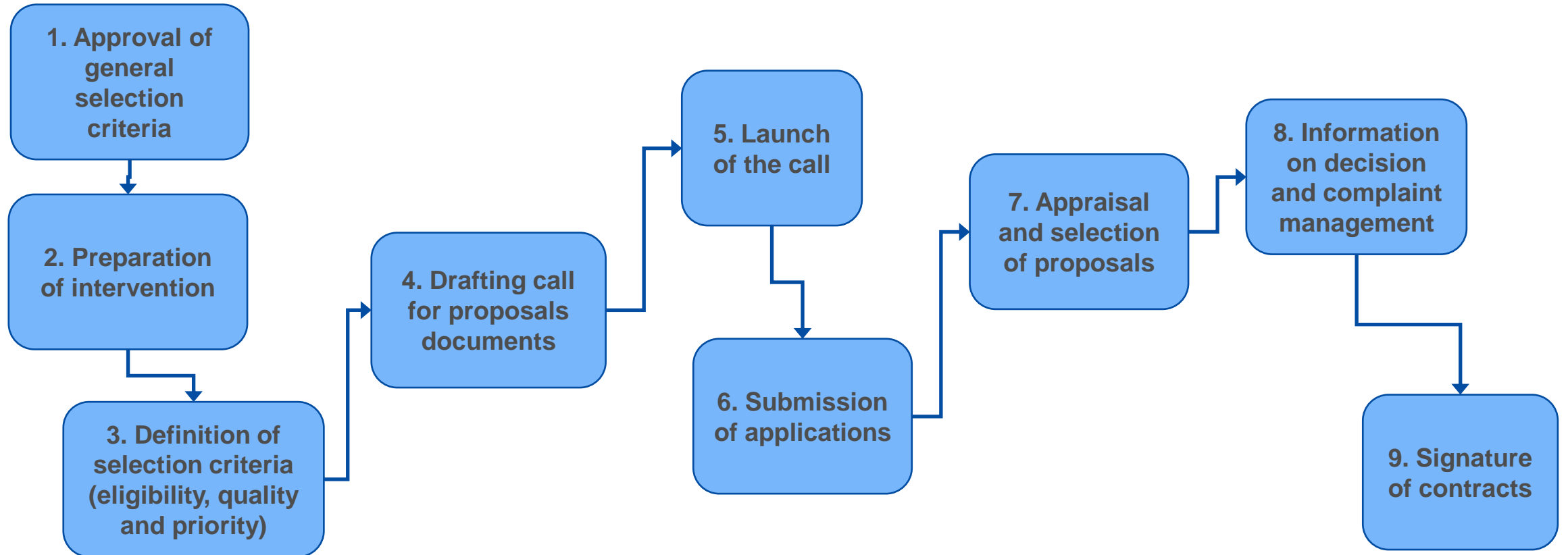


Study on selection of operations

- **Aim: taking stock and disseminating** information on the practices and procedures that authorities managing the ERDF, ESF and CF apply in selection of operations, in 2014–2020.
- **Main deliverables:**
 - ✓ **analytical report** covering the **analysis of practices and procedures** used for the selection of operation in selected programmes
 - ✓ **a handbook** of **good practices** for selection of operations

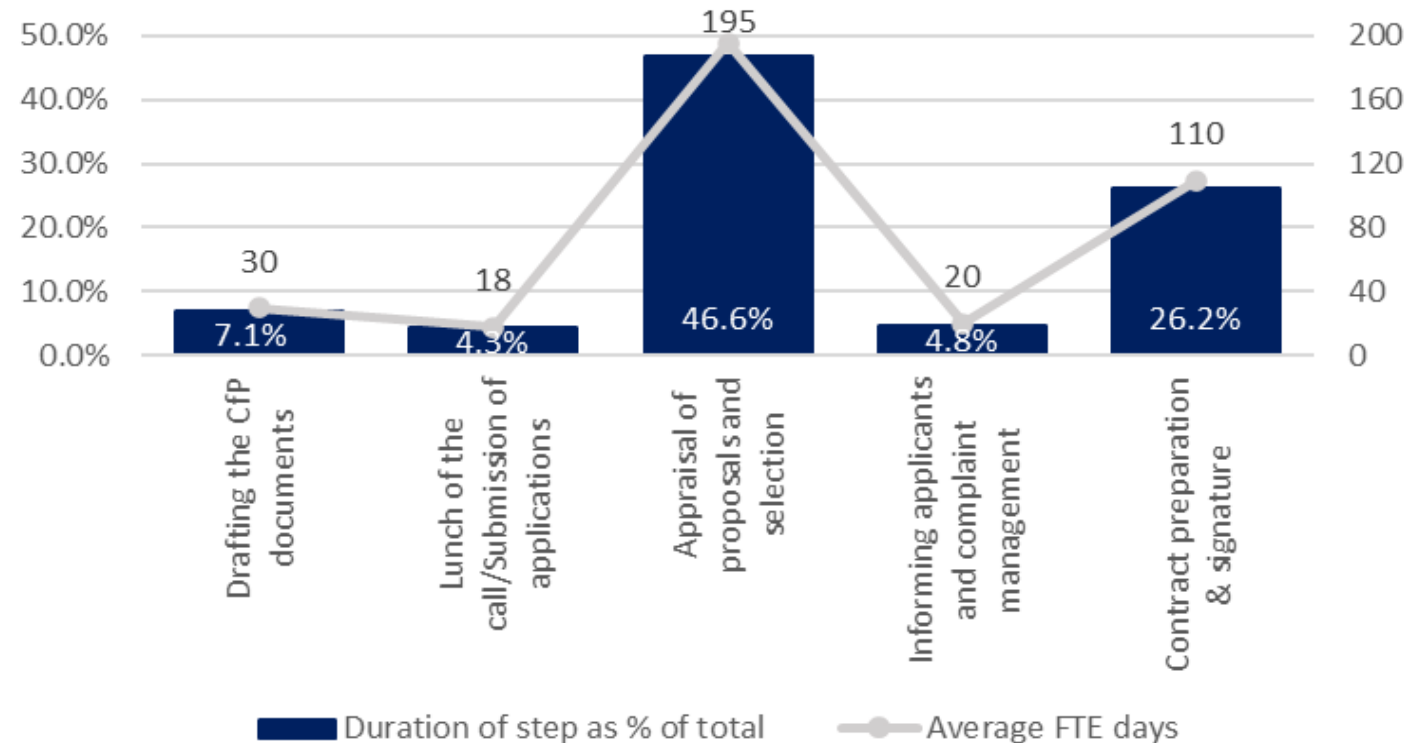


9 steps in selection of operations



Selection of operations: average duration of steps

- **373 FTE** days is an overall average **duration** of steps 4 to 9
- **Appraisal and selection** of proposals is the most burdensome step (46.6% of the effort) followed by **contract preparation & signature** (26.2%)
- However, duration in calendar days range from less than **200** to more than **1600 calendar days**



Selection of operations: problems faced

- **Governance** and legal framework: issues related to the national legal framework and general factors such as *administrative culture*
- Lack of clearly defined strategic **focus and intervention logic**. Lack of knowledge on the **project pipeline** and **needs** of the **target groups**.
- Selection criteria is one of the **most relevant** aspects generating some issues:
 - *too many, too complex, too broad, and not operational criteria*
 - the lack of *supporting guidelines* on how to assess/quantify those criteria
 - It is evident that there is a need for intensive **consultations** with the relevant stakeholders **during** the process of the **criteria and call design**
- Challenges concerning **human resources** (mobilising **evaluators**)
- Unexplored potential of **digitalisation and standardisation**

Selection of operations: **recommendations**

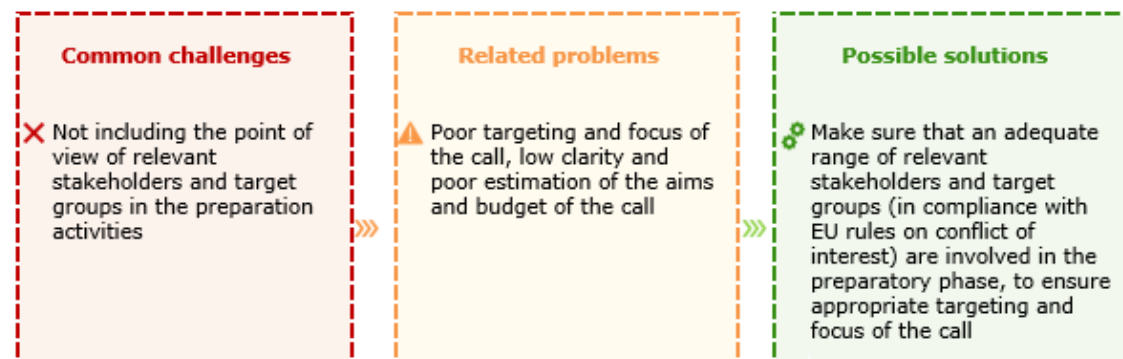
1. Exploit peer learning and **knowledge sharing potential**
2. Define clear **intervention logic** of the call
 - *Promote a participatory approach*
 - *Build up the call for proposals based on lessons learned*
 - *Define a limited number of well-targeted selection criteria*
3. Reduce the **administrative burden** and streamline processes
 - *Digitalise the entire selection process and improve interoperability*
 - *Standardise processes and documents*
 - *Ensure effective complaint management*
4. Ensure sufficient **human resources** and their effective management
 - *Mobilise external personnel and the evaluators in advance*
 - *Train evaluators and ensure consistency*
5. Ensure effective **communication and support to applicants**

Structure of the handbook: follows 7 selection steps

3.1.1. Overview of the step

When does this step take place?	Who is involved?	Aims	Main activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the beginning of the programming period Prior to the launch of the call for proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA/IBs Stakeholders Potential applicants External experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify or fine-tune the needs of the territory and of potential beneficiaries-target groups Define the objectives of the intervention Define the timing of the intervention Choose the most suitable selection procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs analysis, market research, feasibility studies Consultations, dialogues with partners/academia etc. Mapping of potential beneficiaries-target groups & features of the actions to be supported

Box 1. Preparation of the intervention: common challenges and possible solutions



 <p>Practice 3: Practical training and a network of practitioners to reinforce capacity to design interventions</p>
 <p>Context</p> <p>"Cohesion Policy Funding OP" (Estonia). The Estonian OP is a national programme covering a large number of very diverse interventions.</p>
<p>Description</p> <p>In Estonia, to facilitate the design of the interventions for the 2021-2027 programming period, the MA organised a "Practical Training and Development Programme for Aid Measure Design" in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. The programme was targeted at the officials responsible for the design of the interventions. These had the opportunity to participate in the programme as part of teams of 6-7 people (consisting of colleagues, partners and final beneficiaries) and to benefit from the support of thematic experts from the MA and/or the Ministry of Finance. Several activities were carried out: practical training sessions; teamwork activities; home works; online seminars during which the participants presented the designed interventions and had the chance to discuss them with peers. The practical training sessions focused on different techniques to properly identify the needs of the territory and stakeholders, and how to design effective measures to respond to those needs. The presented techniques included: theory of co-creation methods; stakeholders and problems mapping tools; user-journey mapping; solution metrics; grant procedures flowchart.</p> 
<p>Expected benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thanks to the training programme, one-fifth of the measures covering the new funding period have been designed at the very beginning of the programme implementation; a portfolio of tips and tools for the design and content of the measures has been developed, and a network of practitioners created ✓ The acquired skills contributed to the definition of better-targeted interventions, improved understanding of the territorial needs and encouraged the design of more "applicant-friendly" CFPs, with potentially positive effects on European funds' attractiveness. All of this will improve efficiency and the effectiveness of the selection process ✓ The network of practitioners for aid measures design is a key initiative for facilitating the transfer of knowledge across different stakeholders and MA officials, and fosters a participatory approach to intervention design, which can promote systematic improvements in the design of the CFPs 

Handbook: examples of good practices

Preparation of the intervention

- Learning from past calls and ensuring **market relevance** (*Interreg Alpine OP*)
- The use of **participatory** approaches to **improve** the selection process (*CZ*)
- **Practical training** and a **network of practitioners** to reinforce authorities' capacity to **design** interventions (*EE*)

Definition of selection criteria

- Involving **experts in design** and assessment of selection **criteria** (*PL, SI*)
- **Thematic committees** supporting the design of the call and the identification of appropriate selection criteria (*EE*)

Drafting call for proposals documents

- Use of **standardized templates** and sharing of examples of successful applications (*IE*)
- **Participatory approach** in designing the **call for proposal** documents (*LT, AT*)

Call launch and submission of applications

- Provision of **individual support** to applicants (*EE, DE, AT*)
- **Dissemination** of call opportunities through a **variety of methods** (*BG, DK, Alpine OP*)
- User **friendly IT tools**, interoperable with external register/databases and that allow some **automation** in the submission of applications (*EL, PT*)

Appraisal and selection of proposals

- External evaluators, recruited on the basis of a **contract** (*NL*)
- IT tools that allow **automatic appraisal** of projects (*CY*)
- **External experts training** ensuring efficiency and transparency (*HR*)
- **Exchange** of experts **between institutions** (*LT*)

Informing applicants and management of complaints

- Providing detailed **feedback** and suggestions to unsuccessful applications (*DK*)
- Efficiently managing the complaints **prevents later blocking** of the contracting phase (*HR*)

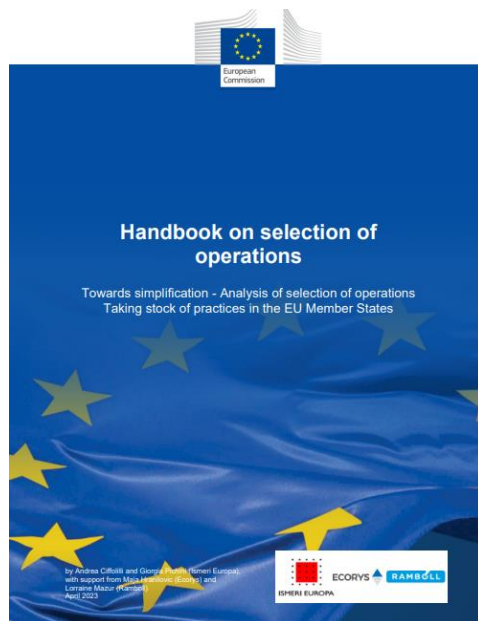
Contract signature

- Use of **IT tools for contract preparation and signature** (*HR*)
- **Training successful applicants** on the contract management aspects (*PL, HR*)

Available on InfoRegio

✓ The Report

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/reports/KN-04-23-199-EN-N.pdf



✓ The Handbook

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/reports/selection-operations/handbook-selection-operations.pdf

