

4th EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES WEEK 2023 – Partners Guideline

This partner guideline explains how potential partners can apply to hold their own on-line sessions in the programme of the 4th EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2023 and sets out their roles and tasks.

1. What is the EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week?

The EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week (EU MRS Week) is the biggest annual event dedicated to the four EU macro-regional strategies (MRS):

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR);
- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR);
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR);
- EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP).

Since the launch of the EU MRS Week in 2020, it has become an important communication and networking platform. It aims at enhancing coordination among participating MRS countries, interaction among MRS key implementers (National Coordinators, Priority Area Coordinators, Steering Group Members, Supporting structure), stakeholders and representatives of EU institutions while promoting horizontal issues such as the embedding process, policy learning and the exchange of good practice.

2. Who organises the EU MRS Week?

The EU MRS Week is organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). The European Commission is responsible for the design and format of the conference, its programme, and for general coordination and communication of it.

3. What is the purpose of the EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week?

- To discuss common challenges across the four EU MRS and to examine possible solutions by bringing together stakeholders from all macro-regions;
- To provide a platform for capacity-building, learning, exchange of experience and good practice for MRS key implementers;
- To facilitate cooperation and networking within and across the four MRS;
- To connect MRS stakeholders with representatives of EU institutions.

4. Slogan, themes and context of the EU MRS Week 2023

Under the slogan *transform to thrive*, the EU MRS Week 2023 will concentrate on three themes: *Energy, Skills and Funding*.

The illegal and unjustified Russian military aggression against Ukraine has caused an *energy* crisis in Europe. The surge in energy prices and fear of shortages put energy security and efficiency on top of the political agenda. However, this transformation cannot happen at the expense of the European Green Deal (EGD), nor can its cost be borne entirely by private citizens. [REPowerEU](#) has been launched with the aim to save energy, produce clean energy and diversify energy supplies in order to rapidly reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the green transition, while increasing the resilience of the EU-wide energy system.. Cooperation at macro-regional level could facilitate these strategic objectives.

2023 is the European year of *skills*. The green and digital transition has to go hand in hand with the possibility for Europeans from every age group to acquire necessary skills to successfully navigate the labour market needs. New skills will create more opportunities for employment across Europe, which will also help preventing brain drain. The European year of skills will be also instrumental for the European economy to match market needs and to harness the full potential of its workforce.

The capacity of MRS to coordinate EU *funds* together with national and regional means was highlighted by the [4th EU report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies](#). The embedding process was a joint effort of the four MRS to embed priorities in relevant Cohesion funded programmes and the IPA III to move away from a purely Interreg focussed way of working. With most national and regional programmes under **Cohesion Funds** already adopted and also the **IPA III Programming Framework** and **NDICI strategic documents**, important work will follow in 2023 by the setting up of networks among programme authorities for coordinated calls in the four macro-regions and by submitting flagship projects. The EU MRS Week will take stock of the lessons learned under the above mentioned funding instruments and will offer a forum for discussion on the way forward.

5. When and where is the event taking place?

The 4th EU MRS Week will take place from 24 to 28 April 2023 in the [Event Lounge](#) in Brussels. The event will be organised in hybrid format with the possibility of onsite participation for EU MRS key implementers. More detailed information is provided under section 6.

6. How is the structure of the 2023 EU MRS Week programme?

The programme will have the following structure in the week of 24-28 April 2023:

24-26 April

Nine stakeholder sessions will take place from the morning of 24 April until the morning of 26 April 2023. These sessions will be organised in a purely on-line format with a duration of 90 minutes.

26 April – 28 April

All sessions taking place from the afternoon of 26 to 28 April will be organised in hybrid mode with the following exception:

On 26-28 April, the European Commission will organise the hybrid official opening and three thematic sessions. EU MRS key implementers will have the opportunity to participate onsite at the Event Lounge in Brussels. EU MRS stakeholders will be able to join the debates online.

On 28 April 2023, the hybrid 15th high-level group will meet in the Charlemagne building of the European Commission. This event will take place upon invitation only with the possibility for stakeholders to follow via web stream. The 4 EU MRS Trio Presidency meeting will take place in the afternoon of 28 April, organised by the Slovene EUSDR Presidency and upon invitation only.

7. Target audience

The EU MRS Week aims to connect EU MRS key implementers, stakeholders from local, regional and national level, civil society, research and academia, youth organisations, private business, financial sector, EU institutions and many more.

8. Who can apply to become an EU MRS Week partner?

Applications are open to all stakeholders from the four macro-regions.

9. How to apply?

Potential session organisers are invited to submit their complete proposal using the online application form no later than 10 March 2023. The complete proposal should include all necessary information and has to deal with the themes of the EU MRS Week 2023 *energy, skills, funding as explained under point 4.*

Necessary information to submit your application are:

- Lead contact point
- potential partner organisations,
- thematic link
- cross-MRS focus
- title of the session
- concept of the session
- agenda
- chosen time slot(s);
- confirmed speakers (no more than 5 speakers incl. moderator)
- diverse panel
- submission within call deadline

The event organiser would like to encourage a wide range of stakeholders while also welcoming new ones who have not previously been involved in these type of events to take the floor. The subject matter of the session must be horizontally relevant, i.e. transferable within and across the 4 EU macro-regional strategies mentioned under point 1.

Each applicant must indicate the responsible partner of the session (session organiser) for the preparation and follow-up of each session. The session organiser will be the only contact person for the supporting event agency (WMH Project on behalf of the European Commission).

For a thorough assessment of applications, session organisers must provide a detailed description, including an agenda, a concept of the session and a list of confirmed speakers/moderators. Session organisers should be able to explain how they will ensure an interesting interaction in the digital format, an innovative angle to the themes, why it should be selected and how it resonates with one of the three chosen topics: energy, skills and funding.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to ensure inclusiveness, for example by involving young people, civil society and minorities. Gender balance is a must. Applicants are also invited to submit no more than one proposal and to focus on the quality of the session to increase their chances of being selected.

The European Commission will inform all applicants about the results by 17 March 2023.

Any missing or incomplete information will result in dismissal of the application.

10. What conditions and requirements do applicants have to meet?

All stakeholder sessions are to be held digitally. The duration of the allocated **timeslots will be 90 minutes. Time overrun** is to be avoided at any cost. The sessions will be supported by digital platforms e.g. Zoom through the event agency with preparatory tutorials if needed. Please note that interpreting will not be provided and that the default **language for all participants is English**. The focus should be on sharing political strategies, experience and good practices concerning the 4 current EU MRS, and facilitating cooperation and networking, including contributions from the audience.

For the digital sessions, it might be necessary to appoint a technical (back-end) moderator to support the panel, the smooth running of the session and to manage the digital tools. Details on requirements will be made available at a later stage.

Panel

Speakers and moderators must have both expertise on the specific topic and experience in public speaking. The session organiser is responsible for briefing the speakers and the moderator(s) and for providing them with the necessary support. The moderator should ensure that each speaker keeps the allotted time and that the floor is passed amongst the speakers smoothly. Selected applicants commit themselves to ensuring a gender balance on the panels. **Male-only panels will be refused and no more than five speakers including the moderator** are allowed per session. Before submitting the application, both speakers and moderator(s) have to have confirmed their participation.

Communication

Successful applicants will receive **promotional material** for social media by the event agency to be used to boost registration and participation to the EU MRS Week as a whole and to their session. Session organisers should commit to high communication standards before, during and after their session on their social media channels to increase participation. Special focus should be given during the registration process of the EU MRS Week with at least three posts prior to the event. They are invited to promote the EU MRS Week and their sessions by using the hashtag #EUMRSWeek on social media and by tagging relevant Commission DG's (relevant per theme) as well as DG REGIO through the accounts below:

- Facebook: @EURegioInterreg, @EUinmyregion
- Twitter: @RegioInterreg, @EUinmyRegion
- Instagram: @euinmyregion

The event agency will be providing successful session organisers with a corporate PowerPoint template to be used by all speakers.

Please be aware that privacy policies for the use of images or pictures of people should be respected and only used if the copyright owner of the material has granted its prior consent and authorization

Video material

Partners can include up to four three-minute videos as "**video testimonials**" to balance out the speakers and avoid monotony. The short videos should present specific examples of projects or good practices, sharing experiences from the ground and presenting key messages (no speeches or statements).

Partners are responsible for producing, editing and sharing the videos, following the technical specifications provided by the organisers. Videos should be delivered with a URL (can be hosted on Youtube, Vimeo, etc.). They can be recorded in any European language if partners provide English subtitles. Language: English or other European language with ENG subtitles;

Participants of a session are not allowed to conduct any other commercial activities during the EU MRS Week and fees cannot be charged either.

11. Timeslots for stakeholder sessions

Applicants have to indicate their preferred timeslots for the stakeholder session between 24-26 April 2023 when applying. While the event organisers will try to allot the preferred timeslot, this cannot be guaranteed. If the applicant is unable to participate in any other timeslot or only in a custom timeslot this needs to be clearly indicated in the application form and will be considered by the organisers during the evaluation.

12. Registrations

Registrations for the EU MRS Week will be open from 27 March to 14 April on the [event website](#). The event is managed in accordance with the European Commission privacy statement and disclaimer, published on the event website. In compliance with current legislation on the use of personal data, none of the participants' data may under any circumstances be stored after the event or used for purposes other than identifying event participants. Lists of participants may not be given to third parties.

13. Key dates

20 January – 10 March	Call for stakeholder session
10 March – 17 March	Evaluation by the selection committee
27 March – 14 April	Registration
24 April – 28 April	4 th EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week

14. Contacts and Info

- For questions about the call for stakeholder session, please contact: eumrsweek@wmhproject.fr