

Call for project proposals Standard Projects

This document is issued by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat of the Interreg IPA South Adriatic on behalf of the participating countries, represented at the Monitoring Committee. The legally binding version of the call for project proposals shall be published in the Official Bulletin of Puglia Region as Managing Authority (BURP).

The call is open for 90 calendar days from the day of publication (until 11:59 AM of the 90th day). The official publication at <http://beta.regione.puglia.it/bollettino-ufficiale> will be also announced at <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/programme/south-adriatic-2021-27> pages, as well as in relevant institutional pages of the organisations concerned.

In order to support interested partners to look for potential partners, partner searches are published on the programme website, if they include at least a selection of one specific objective, a 500 characters description of the project idea, the type of partners searched, the countries, the contact person email and a consensus on the publication of the data. Only those ideas completely filled in, may be published on the website. For convenience, this form may be used: <https://forms.gle/vwv7sv2GdjGNm2Ht6>

INTRODUCTION

The Interreg IPA South Adriatic is a trilateral cross border cooperation Programme co-financed by the European Union under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) in the 2021–2027 programming period. It widely builds on the results of the previous programme Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro 2014-2020.

The programme adopted by the EU Commission is published on the website <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/programme/south-adriatic-2021-27/south-adriatic-docs>.

1. STANDARD PROJECTS

Actions financed

For each Specific Objective, applicants shall plan actions contributing to the achievement of the global project output and result, as specified in fact sheet no. 1.1 of the Programme Manual.

In this call, innovative aspects will be positively assessed, such as those described in the thematic fact sheets published at <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/index.php/news/publications>.

If the project includes capitalisation aspects, these should be however accurately explained, especially in order to exploit synergies and complementarities with other projects, programmes and funds and/or to be aligned with the South Adriatic roadmap.

Specifically, synergies with National and Regional Operational Programmes and with other Interreg programmes, such as ADRION, are encouraged and will be positively assessed.

Any actions related to Information Technology must meet the minimum cybersecurity standards provided by the EU and/or National legislations.

In particular for each Specific Objective:

- S.O. 1.1 SMEs, the actions shall aim at improving the framework conditions for growth and competitiveness of SMEs, incl. micro SMEs.

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

green / sustainable touristic SMEs; cultural & creative SMEs; SMEs in the health-care and long-term care sectors (incl. e-health); SMEs in the circular economy; cyber-security; agri-food SMEs and SMEs in blue economy; border-crossing procedures for SMEs; S3 & S4 strategies; blue innovation / SMEs and marine biotechnology & research; Adriatic - Ionian blue financing; innovation R&D, incl. start-ups; protecting SME's trademarks, patents, fight against counterfeiting; COSME Enterprise Europe Network; EU green transition; digital agenda for SMEs; adopting EU rules for SMEs; aquaculture / fisheries SMEs; aero spatial SMEs; SMEs in other specialised industrial sectors.

* EUSAIR contribution especially for blue technologies in SMEs and R&D activities for SMEs, but also in Pillar 4, new services for touristic SMEs through the promotion of cultural assets.

Further guidance at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1>

https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth_en

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/cultural-creative-industries_en

- S.O. 2.1 Risks, the actions shall aim at promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience.

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

Man-made risks (oil spills, maritime disasters, etc.); natural risks (floods, landslide, earthquakes, wildfires, coastal erosion, human/animal/vegetal pandemics, droughts, etc.); mitigation of risks at border-crossings; risk management measures targeting specific groups such as touristic, cultural industries etc; adoption of EU rules on risk management; enhancing digitalisation in risk management, e.g. for monitoring and planning coastal / maritime environment; EU climate targets.

* EUSAIR contribution in Pillar 3, especially in relation to the increased preparedness for artificial risks, such as e.g. oil-spills

Further guidance at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/index_en

- S.O. 2.2. Biodiversity, the actions shall aim at enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution, including water, soil and air pollution (such as PM emissions).

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

adopting ICZM & MSP; Management of the natural / cultural heritage for green tourism or water resources and landscapes; reduce pressure on the marine environment; spatial planning & control of human activities, making the socio-economic use of maritime resources compatible with the protection of areas of high environmental relevance; protect natural habitats; reduce pollution; promoting circular economy to protect biodiversity; effective water management & monitoring; Measures on waste and sewage contributing to the

preservation of biodiversity; digitalisation measures; Green Public Procurement; nature-based solutions; lifecycle costing criteria; EU climate targets; adoption of EU environmental rules (e.g. incl. green transition, Western Balkans' Green agenda, etc.).

*EUSAIR contribution in protection of natural habitats, ecosystems and maritime protected areas, or implementing ICZM & MSP

Further guidance at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

- S.O. 2. 3 Energy, actions shall contribute to promoting energy efficiency.

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

awareness-raising on CO2 emissions; decarbonize maritime mobility (e.g. fishing fleets); innovative /sustainable electricity supply for vessels; energy efficiency measures targeting specific sectors (e.g. culture/tourism, construction, public facilities, etc.), digital tools / processes for energy efficiency; efficiency & security of cross-border energy networks & pipelines; adoption of EU rules on energy; integrated energy efficiency plans within RES strategies / actions; EU climate targets; climate proofing and 'energy efficiency first principle'.

EUSAIR*: especially in relation to a more efficient and green energy network.

Guidance at: <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-efficiency>

- S.O. 3.1. Transport: the actions shall aim at developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local¹ mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility, through soft measures.

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

maritime, air, rail and road transports targeted to tourism, such as with improved public transport links to cultural / natural heritage sites; Joint actions for soft mobility; multimodal transport links; ports security; green ports (such as while testing new technology, digital tools, ICT solutions in ports e.g. to enhance interoperability among ports, to support the supply chain, or to enhance connectivity to islands, incl. green solutions for short sea shipping, etc.); security procedures at border-crossing & customs; adopting EU rules on transports; digitalisation management / monitoring of transport; focusing accessibility of peripheral, hinterland, remote areas and urban-coastal areas.

EUSAIR*: in Pillar 2, especially contributing to the multi-modal corridors in the programme area

Guidance at: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/home_en

- S.O. 4.1. Skills: The actions shall aim at improving access to and the quality of training and lifelong learning across borders with a view to increasing the skills levels thereof as to be recognised across borders.

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

professional / vocational trainings or capacity building in touristic, cultural and creative sectors; improving efficiency of the cross-border labour markets aimed at a greater social inclusion of vulnerable social groups (incl. unemployed, vulnerable groups, NEETs, etc.); capacity building for increased effectiveness of border-

¹ WARNING: In the context of an Interreg CBC programme, mobility actions must have a cross-border relevance, at least indirect.

crossing & customs; improvement of professional & entrepreneurial & digital skills; recognition of professional qualification; supporting the adoption of EU rules on welfare, labour, qualification; network of Blue Career Centres; Applying the charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, to gender, age, ethnicity, health conditions equality and non-discrimination, as well as accessibility.

*EUSAIR contributing to Pillar 1 on skills and capacities in the blue economy, and in Pillar 4 for increased skills through vocational training in the touristic sector.

Further guidance at: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/>

● S.O. 4.2. Inclusive tourism: shall aim at enhancing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.

This includes, among others, themes such as e.g.:

target vulnerable social groups and local communities; making tourism and culture more social and more economically resilient; mapping/ promoting/ diversifying cultural & thematic routes; cultural and natural assets shall become more sustainable, more diversified, and strategically valorised; adopting EU standards for sustainable tourism on enhancing digitalisation, skills, capacity building, services & new opportunities for vulnerable groups; complementarity with other interventions such as the ESF; Promoting non-discrimination and equal rights.

*EUSAIR contributing to Pillar 4 actions focuses on increased capacities in the touristic sector, especially with the flagship projects dedicated to skills and the thematic routes.

Guidance at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer_en

● S.O. 5.1. Governance: Even though no financial allocation was set out for this S.O. and no project may have this as main and only objective, we expect many actions related to enhancing efficient public administration, legal and administrative cooperation, removing legal and other obstacles at the national borders, within all other specific objectives. This means actions having the selected S.O. as main objective and among these, specific actions addressed to the governance (e.g. improvement of the conditions for SMEs competitiveness, by removing legal obstacles or making public administration procedures for SMEs more efficient, etc.).

Projects in P.A. 1 and 4 are expected to actively promote the rights of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, equality between men and women, and prevention of any discrimination based on gender, race, age, health, nationality, ethnicity, and including accessibility.

EUSAIR

Additional points are foreseen also for project proposals having objectives and activities, which are explicitly foreseen in the EUSAIR action plan (see <https://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/library/>) and EUSAIR flagships (see <https://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/2020/06/12/eusair-flagships-all-summed-up/> and <https://etceusair-network.eu/data>). The project partners shall clearly outline how these activities are going to be followed up on within the EUSAIR and with the EUSAIR stakeholders, as well as explain what actions may contribute to the implementation of the EUSAIR flagship projects and how they intend to promote these actions to the EUSAIR actors.

2. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall financial allocation for the 4 priority axes is as follows:

| Priority axis | IPA Funds | National Cofinancing | Total allocation (IPA+cofin) |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Smart | 7.753.235,10 € | 1.645.764,90 € | 9.399.000,00 € |
| 2 Green | 13.071.365,40 € | 2.774.634,60 € | 15.846.000,00 € |
| 3 Connected | 4.273.806,90 € | 907.193,10 € | 5.181.000,00 € |
| 4 Social | 6.525.783,90 € | 1.385.216,10 € | 7.911.000,00 € |
| 5 Governance | 0,00 € | 0,00 € | 0,00 € |
| TOTAL | 31.624.191,30 € | 6.712.808,70 € | 38.337.000,00 € |

The Monitoring Committee reserves the right to allocate additional resources, as to finance further projects at the top of the ranking list.

Co-financing

Even though, at programme level the IPA co-financing rate is 82,49%, following rates are applicable²:

- **For Italian partners 80%;**
- **For Albanian & Montenegrin partners 85%.00**

The Italian national co-financing is guaranteed to all public and private partners, in compliance with the decision Delibera CIPESS n. 78/2021.

Albanian and Montenegrin partners shall provide the 15% national co-financing at partner level.

Pre-financing

Project partners are entitled to a pre-financing of 20% of the IPA contribution, upon request and signature of subsidy contract. Offset of the pre-financing occurs through the retention of 40% of the IPA amount requested in each joint progress report, until the total amount of pre-financing is progressively offset, not later than the second-last joint project reports, in which the total remaining pre-financing shall be completely offset, or in the subsequent reports if necessary. The pre-financing amounts may be transferred to private lead partners only upon a submission of a valid financial guarantee to the Managing Authority. Please note that if the lead partner fails or delays in providing the financial guarantee to the MA, the failure or the delay in receiving the pre-financing will affect the whole partnership. The lead partners may request a financial guarantee to their private partners as well.

According to the reimbursement principle, the partners shall have financial capacity to advance all costs, which shall be reimbursed upon the foreseen verifications.

Ranking list

The outcome of the project selection shall be an open ranking list, which is going to be published. The projects at the top of the ranking list shall be financed until the resources allocated per priority axis are absorbed.

Eligibility rules

² Consequently, to make sure that sufficient IPA funds are available in the MA account, projects with an unbalanced share of funds between IPA countries and the Member State may only be approved under the condition that the financial balance (approximately 50% IPA countries and 50% Member State) is restored.

Following cost categories are eligible for this standard call:

Real cost:

- Staff
- External expertise and services costs
- Equipment expenditure
- Infrastructure and works expenditure

Simplified cost options:

- Off-the-shelf Flat rate 15% Office and administration (compulsory)
- Off-the-shelf Flat rate 15% Travel and accommodation (compulsory)
- Off-the-shelf Flat rate 40% external c. of direct staff cost
- Off-the-shelf Flat rate 20% staff of other direct cost
- Programme-specific Standard Scale of Unit Cost for staff
- Programme-specific Lump sum for Preparation cost
- Programme-specific Lump sum for Closure cost
- Programme-specific Flat rate 2% for Italian FLC cost

For the State Aid rules, both for direct and indirect State Aid, the respective fact sheets of the Programme Manual shall be consulted.

Detailed eligibility rules for the expenditures are specified in the programme manual fact sheet, published at <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/programme/south-adriatic-2021-27/south-adriatic-manual>

Project de- commitment targets

If a project partner does not reach at least 85% of the spending target for a specific period³, which was fixed in the approved application form, the Managing Authority may de-commit the difference between target and the certified amount, which will become available for the specific Priority Axis, unless this is not due to partner's failures, of which the partner shall provide evidence.

3. PROJECT PARTNERS

Eligibility of partners according to location

In compliance with article 23 of the ETC Regulation, lead partners and project partners must be established in Italy, Albania and Montenegro, whereas the Programme area covers the two Italian regions Puglia and Molise and the whole territory of Albania and Montenegro. Lead Partners' headquarters or branch offices with full legal and administrative capacity⁴ shall be located exclusively in the Italian regions of Puglia or Molise, and in Albania or in Montenegro. Project partners' (and Associated partners') headquarters or branch offices with full legal and administrative capacity shall be located in Albania, in Montenegro or, as specified in the Programme and in compliance with article 22, in any Italian regions other than Puglia and Molise,

³ Reporting periods last six months, max. 5 periods for standard projects. It is therefore advisable to carefully plan spending, considering all delays in the first semesters.

⁴ Full legal capacity to be centre of rights and obligations related to the operating headquarters in the eligible area is referred to the full power of the office to operate with complete autonomy from the legal office of the same organisation (for instance the local office must have the power to sign all necessary contracts and agreements for project implementation). Additionally, the programme controllers and auditors have to be in the position to check the expenditures of the operating headquarters, which shall be bound to national rules of the country, where it is located and audit trail shall be kept in this location.

provided that the actions of these partners demonstrate a real and verifiable benefit for the regions of the programme area. Evidence shall be provided by the partners with the application form.

Eligibility of partners according to legal status

The following types of partners, according to their legal status, are eligible for funding as lead partner, project partner or associate partner, who must have one of these legal statuses:

- Public bodies⁵;
- Bodies governed by public law;
- Private non-profit organisations, established according to the applicable legal framework/law in the respective country.

Partners shall not fulfil exclusion criteria set in the ETC and CPR Regulations (EU) 2021/1059 and 2021/1060.

Non-profit organizations must be operational, established and registered for at least **24 months** before the publication of the call for proposals.

Partnerships

In compliance with article 23 (1) of the ETC Regulation, the projects shall involve partners from at least two participating countries, at least one of which shall be from Italy. Nonetheless, to apply the partnership principle to all territories involved, projects involving partners from all 3 countries shall receive additional points, as well as projects involving partners from both Puglia and Molise Regions in Italy.

The total number of partners must not exceed six (6) including the Lead Partner.

Projects can also have associated partners, taking part to the activities without receiving financing, for a maximum of one per partner.

The partnership has to appoint a Lead Partner, who is responsible for the preparation and submission of the application form. In case of approval of the project, the Lead Partner takes over the responsibility for management, communication, implementation, and coordination of activities among the involved partners.

In compliance with art. 23 of the ETC Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, partners shall cooperate in the development and implementation of projects, as well as in the staffing or financing, or both, thereof.

Limitations for partners

Building on the 2014-2020 experience and in order to encourage organisations to strategically plan their participation, a limitation per organisation is set. Organisations⁶ may apply as lead partners or project

⁵ For International Organisations see eligibility rules in the related factsheet of the programme manual, i.e. International organisations acting under the national law of an EU Member State only when the following two conditions are met: (a) Participation in the project through an operative seat located in one of the Programme regions; and (b) Explicit acceptance of all requirements deriving from the EU Treaty and the regulations applicable in the framework of the regions of the Programme; and (c) In the funding decision, the Monitoring Committee delegation of the Country of the organisation does not decline the subsidiary liability set out in article 52 (3) of the ETC Reg. (EU) 2021/1059.

⁶ The limitation refers to an organisation or a legal body, not to its units, unless the single units are legally identified as independent bodies with separate legal personality (to verify it, check e.g. fiscal position, VAT-number, statute, etc.). For organisations, having several separate departments, it is therefore advisable to have a coordination system (e.g. centralised coordination), in order to avoid that their strategic proposals are rejected in favour of proposals submitted prior to these, even though of limited strategic value.

partners in maximum 1 project proposal per specific objective (i.e. in total max. 7 project proposals per partner), except for universities⁷.

WARNING:

Project proposals including partners exceeding these limits, according to a chronological order of their submission, are going to be automatically excluded in the phase of the eligibility and admissibility assessment.

4. PROJECT SIZE

Building on the successful experience of the Standard projects financed in the 2014-2020 period, this call finances standard projects i.e.:

- Total budget of the projects must not exceed **€ 1.500.000** (IPA + National co-financing)
- Total budget of the projects must not be lower than **€ 600.000** (IPA + National co-financing).

No minimum budget per partner is required. However, participating project partners shall demonstrate a balanced distribution of tasks and budget among partners.

5. PROJECT DURATION

The project implementation shall not be longer than **30** months (also, shall not be shorter than 18 months), starting from the project start date, set during the contracting procedure. An extension may be approved by the Managing Authority, if duly justified.

Expenditures incurred to develop the project (project preparation) before the project start date will not be reimbursed, but are covered by a lump sum of 11.730,00 EUR (IPA and national co-financing) to the lead partner. Expenditures incurred to close the project after the project end date (project closure, including those costs generated by activities carried out after the project end date, such as final reporting, FLC verifications, audits and evaluation follow-up, etc.) will not be reimbursed, but are covered by a lump sum of 5.865,00 EUR (IPA and national co-financing) to the lead partner.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The project proposals have to be submitted in one step electronic procedure through the Electronic Monitoring System of the Programme (Jems). The address of the Jems is published on the Programme website with the publication of the call.

The project lead partner shall submit it on behalf of the partnership. All the compulsory documents to be filled in for submitting a project proposal are included in the Application Package available at the Programme official website www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu.

The Application Package includes the following documents:

- a) Application Form
- b) LP/PP Statements duly stamped (if stamp is applicable) and signed by the legal representative of all participating partners (standard form provided); a declaration duly stamped (if stamp is applicable) and

⁷ Except for universities, for which 2 project proposals per S.O. are admissible (i.e. 14 in total per university), in order to increase the innovative dimension in project proposals.

signed by the legal representative of all associated partners (standard form provided); e-signatures, made according to specific national law, are admitted;

c1) For partners, who participated already in 2014-2020 calls and who succeeded in the eligibility check, a declaration⁸ that the legal Statute / or legal acts have not substantially changed, compared to the version previously submitted to the programme, as well as consent that the MA may request and assess the entire documentation -and exclude the partner, if ineligible- before the signature of the subsidy contract;

or

c2) For partners participating for the first time, or having substantial changes to the own legal Statute and/or legal Act, which sets up the partner institution/organization, in which its legal representation is specified, a copy thereof. Statute and/or legal act can be submitted also in the national language. A translation into English is preferable.

d) For private partners, the balance sheets of the last two accounting years, or equivalent document, issued according to national legislation.

The Application Form and LP/PP Statement must be filled in English in all their parts and the Lead Partners and partners must not modify the templates provided by the Programme. The Lead Partner is responsible for submitting the project proposal.

It means that the Lead Partner has to collect the required documents from all involved partners, uploading pdf-documents for each partner, and submit the project proposal according to the application procedures.

Warning:

The documentation related to each partner shall be uploaded in the respective partner's section of the Jems and not under the general documentation. In order to avoid errors in the assessment, please use following nomination for the files: PP+no. of partner_+ type of document (e.g. PP1_Statement; PP2_Statute; PP3_Power_of_signature; PP4_ID_doc_representative; PP5_Registration_act; PP6_Balance, etc.).

For the submission of the Application Form, the Lead Partner shall register in the Jems. The Lead Partner must fill in and submit the Project Application Form ONLY online at the electronic Monitoring system (Jems). Only projects submitted through the Jems and within the call expiry date / time are admissible. The Jems stops submissions after the time of expiry of the call, it does not allow total project budgets exceeding the maximum amounts set out for the call or to exceed the maximum IPA co-financing rate.

7. APPLICATION FORM

The Application Form template is enclosed to this call.

8. SELECTION PROCEDURE

Following up on the submission of the project proposals, each of them will be subject to a formal assessment on:

- Eligibility and admissibility assessment;
- Quality assessment;
- Verification of eligibility.

⁸ included in LP/PP Statement template

The project proposals are also subject to a policy check by a Steering Committee (SC), which is appointed by and acts with a mandate of the Monitoring Committee. The outcomes of the quality assessment is submitted to the Monitoring Committee, which makes the final financing decision.

ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSIBILITY ASSESSMENT

In order to increase efficiency of the procedure, the eligibility and admissibility are assessed on the basis of the Lead Partner's statement and declarations. Upon the quality assessment, the statements and partners' documentation is verified.

In the eligibility and admissibility assessment, the JS officers checks that the project proposal includes the **statement signed by the legal representative of the Lead Applicant**, or a duly delegated person, who confirms the willingness of the organisation to be lead partner, to assume all legal rights and obligations and that confirms the compliance with the eligibility and admissibility rules for all other partners.

They also check that all compulsory declarations by the Lead Partner, highlighted in the statement, are confirmed.

Furthermore, the JS officers check the global applications data extracted from the Jems, to verify that the number of applications per partner and per specific objective⁹ **complies with the respective rule on maximum number of applications**.

Project proposals having any of these gaps, i.e. a) lacking the statement file, b) missing the compulsory declarations within the statement of the Lead Applicant, c) exceeding the maximum number of applications per partner or d) missing the signature by the Lead Applicant¹⁰ **must be rejected**, without possibility to correct it.

The outcomes of the eligibility and admissibility assessment are going to be adopted by the Managing Authority with decree and published on the Programme website, in the form of a list of projects rejected and including the error type¹¹ like this:

| S.O/Acronym/No. | Lead Applicant organisation | Error type |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| | | |

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The quality assessment is made respectively by the Joint Secretariat (JS) and the National Delegations (NDs). The Joint Secretariat officers assess the project proposals on the basis of the approved criteria and the information provided in the relevant sections of the application form, according to a four-eyes principle, supported by competent Authorities or by technical experts, who may be asked by the JS to provide an unbiased technical opinion on complex engineering, scientific or technical aspects, if necessary. The National Delegations, assisted by the Albanian and Montenegrin National Info Points (NIPs) and by the Chair of the Italian National Committee (once established) provide for their separate unbiased assessment on the basis

⁹ According to the chronological order of submission.

¹⁰ At this stage, the presence of a duly signed Lead Partner's statement is checked, as well as all included declarations, which are compulsory, not the validity of the partners documentation.

¹¹ See above

of the approved quality criteria below, taking in due account the national specificities and the information provided in the relevant sections of the application form.

The outcomes of the technical quality assessment by the JS and the National Delegations are shared and consolidated at the Steering Committee (SC) meeting, taking place at closure of the quality assessment, in compliance with the MC Rules of Procedure published on the website.

The project proposals are checked against following set of quality criteria¹² approved by the MC.

QUALITY CRITERIA

Strategic relevance criteria

| No | Criteria | Max. |
|-------------|--|------|
| A.1 | The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area - there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained). – AF C.2.1, C.2.2 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| A.2 | The project overall objective clearly contributes to the achievement of the programme priority specific objective. The project outputs/results clearly link to programme output/result indicators and their contribution to programme targets is sufficient. – AF A.4., C.1 (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| A.3 | The project demonstrates to build up adequate links at governance level and it clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (national / regional). – AF C.2.5 (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| A.4 | The importance of cooperation beyond borders for the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated. The results cannot/only to some extent be achieved without cooperation. – AF C.2.3 - C.7.5 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| A.5 | The project clearly and consistently contributes to specified EUSAIR macroregional Strategy objectives and actions. –The project objective and activities are explicitly foreseen in the EUSAIR action plan or in the EUSAIR flagships, the project clearly outlines how these activities are going to be followed up on within the EUSAIR AF C.2.5 (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| A.6 | The project clearly and consistently described how synergies and complementarities with other programmes and funding are ensured, especially transnational, national-regional programmes and EU Commission programmes – AF C.2.6 (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| A.7 | The maritime and local dimensions are clearly addressed through the project strategy AF C.2.1 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| A.8 | The project makes a positive contribution to programme horizontal principle equality between men and women, to equal opportunities and non- discrimination, as set by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. The project demonstrates to apply the horizontal principles set out in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR) – AF C.7.6 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| A.9 | The project makes a positive contribution to programme horizontal principle sustainable development. The project demonstrates to make a positive contribution to sustainable development and to adopt measures, which potentially reduce negative environmental impacts, as well as it excludes measures listed in annex I and II of the directive no. 2011/92/EU or requiring additional environmental assessment AF C7.6 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| A.10 | The project includes relevant capitalization actions and tries to avoid overlaps and replications; there is evolution of ideas, that goes beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions. Finally, | 5 |

¹² The criteria below were selected according to the harmonised implementation tool of the Interact programme, thus validated at European level by a group of Managing Authorities of Interreg programmes.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | The project makes use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices. – AF C.2.2 , C.2.6, C.2.7 (assessed by JS) | |
|--|--|--|

Partnership criteria

| No | Criteria | Max. |
|--------------|---|------|
| B.1 | The project involves the relevant actors (having the topic in their statutory objectives) needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified. – AF C.3 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| B.1.1 | The project involves a suitable partnership, with sufficient financial capacity and experience for implementing the actions in the same sector and of a comparable scale to the one, for which a grant is being requested – AF B.1.6 – C3 (assessed separately by JS/each national Delegation and calculated as average) | 10 |
| B.1.2 | Each partner can count on a team with sufficient competences and/or on a dedicated unit inside the organization (i.e. integration unit for IPA countries) – AF B.1.6 (assessed separately by JS/each national Delegation and calculated as average) | 5 |
| B.2 | Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.) – AF B, C.7. (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| B.3 | All partners play a defined role in the partnership and the territory benefits from this cooperation (ie. The partnership is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory or consists of partners that complement each other). – AF C.3 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| B.4 | The project involves relevant Project Partners from Puglia and Molise regions, Albania and Montenegro. - AF B 1.2 (assessed by JS) | 10 |
| B.5 | For ITALME 2014-2020 Partners: The 2014-2020 Partner/s demonstrated competency in managing EU funded projects, both in the financial and operational management of the project – AF B, C.7 (assessed by JS) | 3 |

Intervention logic

| No | Criteria | Max. |
|------------|---|------|
| C.1 | Project specific objectives are specific, realistic and achievable. See Specific objectives in WPs – AF C.4 (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| C.2 | The project outputs clearly link to programme output indicators and their contribution to programme targets is sufficient. Project outputs and results are realistic (it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget - and they are realistic based on the quantification provided). – AF C.4, C.5, C.6, D.3 (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| C.3 | Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to planned outputs and results. – AF C.4, C.5 (in case of investments, their transnational/cross-border relevance is demonstrated to reach project objectives) (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| C.4 | Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g., sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.). – AF C.4 Activities in WPs (assessed by JS) | 3 |
| C.5 | Project outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted) – if not, it is justified. The project outputs going to be further used and the sustainability ensured once the project has been finalised. The project envisages durability of relevant project outputs and/or its transferability - if not it is justified – AF C.8.2 - C.8.3 (assessed by JS) | 5 |
| C.6 | The communication objectives are relevant and are expected to contribute to project specific objectives. The related activities (and deliverables) are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders. – AF C.4, C7.3 (assessed by JS) | 5 |

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| C.7 | The project is mature, allowing its smooth realization (i.e. stage of completion of the administrative procedures, etc.) AF C.4 (<i>assessed by JS</i>) | 3 |
|------------|---|---|

Financial criteria

| No | Criteria | Max. |
|------------|---|------|
| D.1 | The application of lump sums, flat rate and unit costs is appropriate and in line with the programme rules. – AF D & E (<i>assessed by JS</i>) | 3 |
| D.2 | The available information in the budget is transparent, realistic and sufficient. On that basis, the project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan, project outputs and project's contribution to programme indicators aimed for. – AF D & E (<i>assessed by JS</i>) | 5 |
| D.3 | Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned for investments and/or equipment purchases (if applicable) and their costs are realistic. – AF D & E (<i>assessed by JS</i>) | 3 |

STEERING COMMITTEE CRITERIA

| No | Criteria | Max. |
|-----------|---|------|
| SC | Globally, the project complies with national and regional policies, its actions and outputs precisely address concrete needs of the territories | 10 |

TOTAL SCORES PER TYPES OF CRITERIA

| Criteria type | Max. | Weight |
|------------------------------|------------|--------|
| STRATEGIC RELEVANCE CRITERIA | 40 | 31,01% |
| PARTNERSHIP CRITERIA | 39 | 30,23% |
| INTERVENTION LOGIC CRITERIA | 29 | 22,48% |
| FINANCIAL CRITERIA | 11 | 8,53% |
| SC CRITERIA | 10 | 7,75% |
| TOTAL MAXIMUM SCORE | 129 | |

The points are scored by the assessors with one decimal number, according to following scales:

0 to 3 pts. 0 to 5 or to 10 pts.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2,1 to 3 | 4,1 to 5 8,1 to 10 | The proposal fulfils the given criterion to an excellent level and the provided information is sufficient, clear and coherent for assessing the criterion |
| 1,1 to 2 | 3,1 to 4 6,1 to 8 | The proposal fulfils the given criterion to a sufficient level, however, some aspects of the given criterion have not been met fully or not explained in full clarity or detail |
| 0,1 to 1 | 1,1 to 3 2,1 to 6 | The proposal has serious shortcomings in fulfilling the given criterion and/or the provided information is of low quality |
| 0 to 0,1 | 0 to 1 0 to 2 | The proposal does not fulfil the given criterion or no information is provided to assess the given criterion |

The projects at the top of the ranking list, resulting from the sum of the JS / NIPs and the SC scores, are to be proposed for financing by the MC, up to the resources allocated per priority axis, including additional allocations, which may be proposed.

VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

After the quality assessment, the Joint Secretariat assessors, assisted by the National Info Points for the respective national partners, and supervised by the Managing Authority, verify the documentation submitted

for the project proposals proposed for funding, i.e. according to the budget allocated, at the top of the ranking list.

In particular, it is checked that, as declared in the lead partner’s declaration:

- The eligibility of geographical location of partners headquarters or branch offices¹³ is confirmed in the documentation submitted;
- Obligatory annexes are correct and submitted;
- Project partner’s statements are correctly provided¹⁴;
- Italian and IPA countries co-financing rates are respected, otherwise the project may be approved only with the condition to correct it;
- The documentation confirms the eligibility of Lead Partner¹⁵, including the power of signature of legal representative or his/her delegate;
- The documentation confirms the eligibility of Project and Associated Partners, including the power of signature of legal representative or his/her delegate;
- The documentation confirms that “Non-profit organizations” Partners are operational and registered at least in the last 24 month before the publication of the call.

Partners may be requested to provide integrations or to correct clerical errors in the documents, upon approval by the Managing Authority and within a fixed deadline. If the partners fail to do so, and if any of the partners is ineligible¹⁶, the project proposal shall be rejected through the decision by the MC, which shall be published on the programme website. Consequently, in case of ineligible proposals, the next proposals with the highest score in the respective priority axis shall be considered for financing, according to the budget allocation.

FUNDING DECISION AND NEGOTIATIONS

The result of the full assessment is going to be submitted to the MC, who is responsible for the final decision, on the basis of outcomes of the assessment, for the ranking list to be published like this, one per priority axis:

Priority axis no.

| S.O/Acronym/No. | Amount requested | JS Score | SC Score | Total Score approved by MC | Conditions approved by MC |
|--|------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Project proposals approved for financing: | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Project proposals exceeding financial allocation, eligible for future financing upon decision by the MC: | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

¹³ Partner has legal seat or branch office with full legal and administrative capacity in Italy, Albania or Montenegro, or lead partner has legal seat or branch office with full legal and administrative capacity in Puglia, Molise Regions, Albania or Montenegro.

¹⁴ I.e. in compliance with the official format (i.e. with no severe deviations, e.g. no compulsory/essential parts crossed-out or deleted in the text of the statement), and the power of signature for the partner, and statement is duly filled, signed and stamped (if stamp is applicable), or e-signatures are provided, made according to specific national law, as declared in the Lead Partner’s statement, i.e. sufficient evidence of the willingness of the legal representative of the partner’s organisation, otherwise additional documentation may be required.

¹⁵ Both for lead and project partners, including the legal status of public, governed by public law, non-profit.

¹⁶ During project development the Joint Secretariat for Italian Partners and the National Info Points for the respective partners may provide non-binding advice to the Lead Applicants, in pre-assessing project partner’s eligibility.

| Project proposals rejected for non-fulfilling the eligibility and admissibility criteria, after the verification: | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

Based on the outcomes of the quality assessment and any specific conditions, which the MC may decide to apply to any project, after the funding decision a negotiation phase is open, where the JS/MA and the LP optimize project planning, activities and budgets.

The binding subsidy contract between Managing Authority and project Lead Partner and the respective partnership agreement between Lead Partner and Project Partners are based on the templates included in chapter 3 of the Programme Manual.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information about the content of the CP, the specific conditions for the submission of the project proposals, the assessment and selection procedure, the application package as well as other relevant information are available at www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu.

11. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROCEDURE

According to the Interreg IPA South Adriatic Programme, responsibility for the administrative procedures of this Call for proposals lays on Puglia Region, in the person of the Director of the Managing Authority Office.

12. ENCLOSURES

- Application form offline
- LP/PP declaration templates