

Interreg V-B Adriatic- Ionian Programme – ADRION 2014 -2020
Announcement of the Third call for proposals for Priority Axis 3 “*Connected Region*”

1. Introduction

The Interreg V-B Adriatic-Ionian 2014-2020 (hereinafter ADRION), set up in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) - one of the objectives of the cohesion policy - is launching its third call for proposals for Priority Axis 3 and invites all interested eligible public applicants to submit project proposals.

The overall objective of the ADRION Programme is to act as a policy driver and governance innovator fostering European integration among Partner States, taking advantage from the rich natural, cultural and human resources surrounding the Adriatic and Ionian seas and enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Programme area.

The ADRION Programme comprises 4 EU Partner States and 4 non-EU Partner States, namely:

EU Partner States:

- **Croatia** (NUTS regions: Jadranska Hrvatska; Kontinentalna Hrvatska);
- **Greece** (NUTS regions: Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki; Kentriki Makedonia; Dytiki Makedonia; Thessalia; Ipeiros; Ionia Nisia; Dytiki Ellada; Sterea Ellada; Peloponnisos; Attiki; Voreio Aigaio; Notio Aigaio; Kriti);
- **Italy** (NUTS regions: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lombardia, Marche, Molise, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Puglia, Sicilia, Umbria, Veneto);
- **Slovenia:** (NUTS regions: Vzhodna Slovenija; Zahodna Slovenija).

Non-EU Partner States:

- **Albania;**
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina;**
- **Montenegro;**
- **Serbia.**

The detailed conditions for the third call for proposals for Priority Axis 3 can be found in the following documents, altogether referred to as “*Application package third call for Priority Axis 3*”, which constitutes an integral part of this call announcement and are available for download (as separated documents or as a single zipped file) from the Programme website www.interregadrion.eu:

- ADRION Cooperation Programme adopted by the European Commission with Decision C (2015) 7147;
- Programme Manual Third calls for proposals – Priority Axes 1 and 3;
- Off-line application form and annexes;
- Applicants' Guidelines on the use of electronic monitoring system (e-MS).

2. Thematic Focus

The third call for proposals on Priority Axis 3 is focused on 2 targeted topics, which have been selected on the basis of their strategic relevance for both the ADRION Programme and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region - EUSAIR.

The third call for proposals on Priority Axis 3 is open only to the following two topics indicated below:

1. Topic 1: Maritime Transport;
2. Topic 2: City Transport.

A project proposal must refer to one topic only. The missing indication of the topic to which the project proposal refers to will bring to the exclusion of the project proposal (eligibility criterion).

Interested applicants are required to follow the main technical elements characterising the selected topic as indicated below when drafting their project proposal:

Topic 1: Maritime Transport - Development of joint approaches and instruments in the field of maritime transport, such as a modern ship reporting system in the Adriatic Sea (Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System ADRIREP), motorways of the sea and related ITS (Intelligent Transport System).

Overall goal

The overall goal of the third call for proposal – Priority Axis 3 – Maritime Transport - is aimed at optimizing the efficiency of transport infrastructures of the Adriatic Ionian, in particular with regard to the Mandatory Ship Reporting System in force, adopted by IMO resolution MSC 139 (76) in 2002 (ADRIREP amendments), the Vessel Traffic Information Management (VTMIS) procedures harmonization, the inclusion of IPA countries in SafeSeaNet and National Single Windows (NSW) procedures and data exchange harmonization.

Objectives

The project proposal shall focus on:

- The update, integration and simplification of the existing ADRIREP - Adriatic Traffic Reporting system - for the Adriatic Ionian seas;

- The improvement and harmonization of the safety and efficiency of the navigation and of the procedures to exchange vessel traffic monitoring information among national VTMISS¹ - Vessel Traffic Management Information system;
- The definition of joint training programmes for VTM - Vessel Traffic Monitoring - operators;
- The implementation of the SafeSeaNet² and National Single Window (NSW) standards and procedures in the IPA countries.

Structure of the project proposal

Project proposals are required to pursue the implementation of the following activities considered to be as compulsory, in addition to the compulsory Work Packages –WP - (Management and Communication):

WP T1 Networking

- Setting up of a permanent governance structure (the Strategic Network), encompassing the maritime transport authorities and stakeholders, for the identification of existing obstacles/bottlenecks and potential for further improvement in the fields of VTMISS and data exchange platforms (National Single Window - NSW). The network is devoted to the standardisation of legal requirements and technical specifications in the field of intermodal transport investments and communication activities.

WP T2 Common developments in vessel traffic monitoring and management

- Definition of the amendment (simplification/ harmonisation) of ADRIREP in the Adriatic Ionian seas procedures in order to reduce administrative burden and unnecessary duplication of data collected by VTMISS's in full compliance with the 2002/59/EC Directive, also considering the South East Mediterranean Motorway of the Sea of South-east Europe and submission of the proposal to IMO - International Maritime Organization - for approval;
- Definition of harmonised procedures to enhance safety and efficiency of navigation as well as exchange of vessel traffic information among national VTMISS's, with a view to implement a common VTMISS in the Adriatic-Ionian basin and include IPA Adriatic countries in SafeSeaNet³. The work shall be based on the existing transnational data sharing platform MAREΣ - Mediterranean Automatic Identification System Regional Exchange Server hosted by Italy on behalf of EMSA – European Maritime Safety Agency.

¹ VTMISS - Vessel Traffic Management Information system: a European vessel traffic monitoring and information system established in order to enhance maritime safety, port and maritime security, marine environment protection and efficiency of maritime traffic and maritime transport in EU waters

² A European vessel traffic monitoring and information system established in order to enhance maritime safety, port and maritime security, marine environment protection and efficiency of maritime traffic and maritime transport in EU waters.

³ SafeSeaNet is a vessel traffic monitoring and information system, established in order to enhance:

- Maritime safety
- Port and maritime security
- Marine environment protection
- Efficiency of maritime traffic and maritime transport

It has been set up as a network for maritime data exchange, linking together maritime authorities from across Europe. It enables European Union Member States, Norway, and Iceland, to provide and receive information on ships, ship movements, and hazardous cargoes.

WP T3 Training tools and methods for vessel traffic monitoring (VTM) operators

- Joint development of new training tools and methods for vessel traffic monitoring (VTM), including:
 - the analysis on VTM-related Vocational Education and Training (VET);
 - the identification of skills needs;
 - the design of specific new VET and life-long learning courses for VTM operators based on Learning outcomes in a European Qualification Framework (EQF) perspective;
 - the validation and certification of skills, based on learning outcomes and reference to EQF.

WP T4 Adriatic-Ionian common maritime single window platform concept

- The undertaking of joint harmonization policy measures and simplification actions aiming at the identification of operational procedures and technical options/standards for enabling interoperability and data exchange among existing National Single Windows (NSWs);
- Assessment of the maritime single window measures and procedures to-be-established in IPA Partner States.

Partnership requirements

EU financing is only provided to financing Project Partners located in the ADRION Programme area. Each project proposal must involve at least 6 financing Project Partners from 6 different Partner States of the Programme area, out of them:

- At least 4 financing Project Partners – including the Lead Applicant - from 4 different ERDF Partner States;
- At least 2 financing Project Partners from 2 different IPA Partner States.

The partnership can include a maximum of 2 financing Project Partners from the same Partner State.

The eligible partnership can consist of a maximum of 16 financing Project Partners.

Potential beneficiaries – regardless whether they apply for the role of Lead Applicant or Project Partners – cannot be involved in more than one project proposal per call/Priority Axis.

The potential beneficiaries will be identified on the basis of VAT or other national identified number, indicated in the B section of the Application Form. Lack of provision of the aforementioned information (VAT or other national identifying number) will bring to the rejection of the project proposal.

MA/JS reserve the right to verify the correctness of the provided information.

If, for whatever reason, two or more financing Project Partners are declared ineligible, the entire project proposal will be rejected.

Eligible financing Project Partners

The eligible financing Project Partners are the following:

- Public authorities at national or regional level competent for the addressed topics;

- Bodies governed by public law and public bodies competent for the addressed topic on condition that the relevant competent public authority (i.e.: ministry, regional administration) is involved as associated partner within the same project proposal.

The eligible financing partners listed above, competent for the addressed topic and interested in being part of a project proposal, must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Established under the national law of one of the Partner States participating in the Programme. Nationality will be determined on the basis of the organisation's statute/articles of incorporation which shall demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the internal law of a Partner State participating to the Programme. In this respect, any legal entity whose statute has been established under the national law of a country not participating to the Programme cannot be considered as an eligible partner, even if it has established branches/offices legally registered under the national law of a Partner State participating to the Programme;
- Have their legal seat and their seat of operations in a Partner State/part of a Partner State included in the Programme area (with the exception of "*Assimilated partners*");
- Be endowed with legal personality.

In addition to what above, eligible financing Project Partners shall be, according to their legal status:

- National, regional public bodies;
- Bodies governed by public law, as defined in Article 2(4) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement, i.e. bodies that have all of the following characteristics:
 - (a) They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
 - (b) They have legal personality;
 - (c) They are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

As an exception, and in order to overcome the geographical constraints applying to Italy, those Italian public authorities at national level which are competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area but which are located outside of it (i.e.: Ministries), are considered as assimilated partners, equal in rights and obligations to applicants located within the Programme area.

The attribution of the characteristic of Assimilated Partner to an Italian institution located outside the Programme area shall be duly justified in the project application and further assessed with the support of the National Contact Point.

Participation of EGTC within the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, international organizations and private bodies/institutions is not allowed.

Lead Applicant

The Lead Applicant must be located in an ERDF Partner State.

Only the following bodies located in the ERDF Partner States shall be considered as eligible Lead Applicant:

- National, regional public authorities;
- National, regional public bodies;

- Bodies governed by public law;
- Assimilated partners.

Topic 2: City transport - Capitalization of technology innovation applied to integrated environmental-friendly and multimodal mobility services/structures addressed to cities and functional urban areas.

Overall goal

The overall goal of the third call for proposals – Priority Axis 3 – City Transport is aimed at contributing the reviewing of individual and public transport in accordance with the current changes on demography. According to the European Commission, the European Union is facing unprecedented demographic changes (ageing population, low birth rates, changing family structures and migration); such challenges affect the IPA countries as well. Taking advantage from the opportunity offered by the electro-mobility and the shared mobility revolution, the present call for proposals intends to contribute to the creation and testing of an integrated innovative planning tools for a sustainable city mobility solution in the Adriatic-Ionian region, forecasting future demand for public city transport due to demographic change.

The topic of the present call focuses on:

- Car ownership and individual transport

Car ownership rates increased significantly during the 70s along with low fuel process and contributing to urban sprawl but flattened and declined in some cases during the 90s, coinciding with almost reached saturation point. Nowadays, the advent of electro-mobility and the diffusion of (affordable and access-to -all) sharing mobility systems do create the conditions for changes in lifestyle and may lead to a possible reduction of car ownership and a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, in the next decades.

- Collective transport

The observed trends of re-urbanization and consumers' increased preference for walkable neighbourhoods will probably slow down the urban sprawl trends and reduce car dependency. People living in urbanized areas are provided with several public transport and car sharing options to satisfy their mobility needs, and slow mobility (walking and cycling) is gaining increasing attention. In the long-term mobility patters will inevitably change and people will be relying more and more on public transport, particularly aged population and other segment with reduced driving capability.

Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the electro-mobility and the share mobility revolution, bearing in mind the socio-demographic changes we have been facing, the overall goal aims at the creation and testing of an integrated innovative planning tools for a sustainable city mobility solution in the Adriatic-Ionian region, forecasting future demand for public city transport due to demographic change.

Objectives

The project proposals shall focus on:

- The development of innovative approaches to improve sustainable clean city mobility systems;
- The identification of city transport policies better suiting changing mobility needs;
- The promotion of citizens' active involvement in the development of sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) in ADRION cities;

- The transnational cooperation between public authorities and their transport entities to improve multimodal and low carbon mobility and environmental quality.

Structure of the project proposal

Project proposals are required to pursue the implementation of the following activities considered to be as compulsory, in addition to the compulsory Work Packages – WP - (Management and Communication):

WP T1 Methodological framework and assessment

- Creation and implementation of living labs involving as forms of participatory governance institutions, stakeholders and citizens according to the quadruple helix approach (e.g.: research institutions, trade and business operators, citizens/civil society and commuters, local authorities) for the identification of measures of low-carbon city transport dialoguing via exchanging knowledge platform.

WP T2 Identification of innovative business tool supporting innovation and implementation of different Pilot action (at least one Pilot action per each involved metropolitan area)

- Improvement of pedestrian traffic;
- Implementation of clean public transport;
- Creation of green safe bicycle routes;
- Setting up of share biking public (private / public) services;
- Setting up of car sharing public (private / public) services;
- Governance and management of high congested roads;
- Integrated ticketing and tariff schemes;
- Transnational social media-based competition for identification of fresh ideas for sustainable city transport services.

WP T3 Creation of a transnational strategy devoted to policymakers and planners for revision of transport policies for a more sustainable, integrated, accessible and harmonized mobility system.

- Identification of a shared strategy and its application at policy level.

Partnership requirements

EU financing is only provided to financing Project Partners located in the ADRION Programme area. Each project must involve at least 6 financing partners from 6 different Partner states of the Programme area, out of them:

- At least 4 financing Project Partners – including the Lead Applicant - from 4 different ERDF Partner States;
- At least 2 financing Project Partners from 2 different IPA Partner States.

The partnership can include a maximum of 2 financing Project Partners from the same Partner State.

The eligible partnership can consist of a maximum of 16 financing Project Partners.

Potential beneficiaries – regardless whether they apply for the role of Lead Applicant or Project Partners – cannot be involved in more than one project proposal per call/Priority Axis.

The potential beneficiaries will be identified on the basis of VAT or other national identified number, indicated in the B section of the Application Form. Lack of provision of the aforementioned information (VAT or other national identifying number) will bring to the rejection of the project proposal.

MA/JS reserve the right to verify the correctness of the provided information.

If, for whatever reason, two or more financing Project Partners are declared ineligible, the entire project proposal will be rejected.

Eligible Financing Project Partners

In consideration of the pattern of activities of the present topic 2 (reference to Work Package T2 - Pilot actions) and in order to guarantee a sound feasibility and a prompt readiness of their implementation, each eligible metropolitan area (ref. to list of eligible metropolitan areas below), interested in being part of the project proposal, must take part with:

at least 1 public authority, identified at national, regional, local level and their associations, representative of the eligible metropolitan areas and competent in the matter of urban transport and able to guarantee the availability of the necessary permissions, if necessary, for the implementation of the pilot actions.

Participation is also open to:

bodies governed by public law and public bodies competent for the addressed topic (city transport) on condition that the relevant competent public authority identified at national, regional, local level, and their associations, representative of the eligible metropolitan areas is involved as Lead Applicant/Project Partner within the same project proposal.

The eligible applicants listed above, competent for the addressed topic and interested in being part of a project proposal, must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Established under the national law of one of the Partner States participating in the Programme. Nationality will be determined on the basis of the organisation's statute/articles of incorporation which shall demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the internal law of a Partner State participating to the Programme. In this respect, any legal entity whose statute has been established under the national law of a country not participating to the Programme cannot be considered as an eligible partner, even if it has established branches/offices legally registered under the national law of a Partner State participating to the Programme;
- In case of national and regional bodies: have their legal seat and their seat of operations in a Partner State/part of a Partner State included in the Programme area (with the exceptions of “*Assimilated partners*”);
- In case of local bodies: have their legal seat and their seat of operations in the eligible metropolitan areas (ref. to list of eligible metropolitan areas);
- Be endowed with legal personality.

In addition to what above, eligible financing partners shall be, according to their legal status:

- National, regional, local public bodies and associations formed by several of such public bodies;

- Bodies governed by public law, and associations constituted by several bodies governed by public law, as defined in Article 2(4) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement, i.e. bodies that have all of the following characteristics:
 - (a) They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
 - (b) They have legal personality;
 - (c) They are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

As an exception, and in order to overcome the geographical constraints applying to Italy, those Italian public authorities at national level which are competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area but which are located outside of it (i.e.: Ministries), are considered as assimilated partners, equal in rights and obligations to applicants located within the Programme area.

The attribution of the characteristic of Assimilated Partner to an Italian institution located outside the Programme area shall be duly justified in the project application and further assessed with the support of the National Contact Point.

Participation of EGTC within the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, international organizations and private bodies/institutions is not allowed.

Lead Applicant

The Lead Applicant must be located in an ERDF Partner State.

The following bodies located in the ERDF Partner States shall be considered as eligible Lead Applicant:

- National, regional public authorities, including associations formed by several national, regional, local public authorities;
- Public national, regional, local public bodies, including associations formed by several regional or local bodies;
- Bodies governed by public law, including associations formed by several bodies governed by public law;
- Assimilated partners.

Eligible metropolitan areas

Please find below the list of metropolitan areas, identified for each ADRION Partner State, where the project must be implemented.

Each eligible metropolitan area must be involved in one project proposal only.

ADRION Partner State	Eligible metropolitan areas
ITALY	Milan, Palermo, Bologna, Bari, Catania, Venezia, Verona, Bergamo, Taranto, Brescia, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Messina, Padova, Trieste, Ancona, Campobasso, Reggio Calabria, Catanzaro

SLOVENIA	Ljubljana, Maribor
CROATIA	Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Osijek
GREECE	Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Heraklion, Piraeus, Larissa, Volos, Alexandroupoli, Corfu, Ioannina, Rhodes, Mytilene
ALBANIA	Tirana, Durres
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica
MONTENEGRO	Podgorica, Ulcinj, Bar, Budva, Tivat, Kotor, Herceg Novi
SERBIA	Belgrade, Novi Sad

3. Common Provisions

3.1 Time schedule and submission

The third call for proposal for Priority Axis 3 will be open from **22 May 2019 - h: 15:00 (CEST time)** to **31 July 2019 - h: 15:00 (CEST time)** and will follow a single step procedure, i.e. full Application Form and requested supporting documents will have to be submitted by the indicated deadline.

Project proposals must be submitted in English language and only through the web-based electronic monitoring system (e-MS) available at www.interregadrion.eu.

The Lead Applicant need to be registered on the e-MS system to be able to create and submit valid application forms.

The Lead Applicant shall be in charge for the submission of the Application on behalf of its partnership.

The application package for the third call for proposals for Priority Axis 3 also contains the off-line template of the application form for information purposes only. The only valid application form will be the one created and submitted via the e-MS.

Full information on the application and selection procedure is detailed in the chapter “*Procedure for submission and selection of project proposals*” of the Programme Manual.

3.2 Budget available

The ADRION programme will allocate up to **EUR 6.294.437,05** of EU contribution to the third call for proposals for Priority Axis 3, broken down in ERDF and IPA as follows:

	ERDF	IPA	Total EU contribution	National contribution	Total funding (EU contribution. + national contribution)
Topic 1 – Maritime transport	2.644.112,40	503.106,13	3.147.218,53	555.391,50	3.702.610,03

Topic 2 – City transport	2.644.112,40	503.106,13	3.147.218,53	555.391,50	3.702.610,03
TOTAL	5.288.224,80	1.006.212,26	6.294.437,06	1.110.783,00	7.405.220,06

The above mentioned amounts are indicative; the Monitoring Committee of the ADRION programme reserves the right not to commit all available resources, depending on the quality of submitted applications.

Upon completion of the assessment, the submitted applications will be ranked and will be co-financed according to the EU resources available.

3.3 Project size

Recommended maximum EU contribution for project proposals submitted within the present topic is EUR 3.147.218,53, out of which EUR 2.644.112,40 (ERDF) and EUR 503.106,13 (IPA).

Projects are warmly recommended to define their respective budget following the ratio between ERDF and IPA funds 85:15 as available in this Priority Axis of the Programme.

3.4 Co-financing rate

ADRION contribution will be limited to a co-financing rate up to 85% of eligible costs for all financing Project Partners (i.e.: both benefitting from ERDF and IPA contribution). The share of expenditure (at least 15%) not covered by ERDF or IPA funds shall be ensured by national co-financing sources.

In case applicants intend to implement activities being considered as State Aid relevant, the maximum grant will be calculated applying the *de minimis rule* while respecting the co-financing percentage above.

3.5 Project duration

As far as the third call for proposals is concerned, the project duration shall be up to a maximum of 30 months, starting from the date indicated in the approved application form.

3.6 Selection of projects

The assessment of the application is coordinated by the Managing Authority and performed by the Joint Secretariat, with the support of the National Contact Points and eventually of external experts.

In order to ensure equal, fair and transparent approach, the project proposals are assessed according to a set of criteria previously elaborated by the Programme, approved by the Monitoring Committee and detailed below:

Admissibility and Eligibility checks (ref. Programme Manual Third call for proposals – Annexes 2 and 3): are aimed at verifying the respect of all formal and substantial minimum conditions of eligibility.

Only those proposals having positively passed the admissibility and eligibility checks will be progressed to the assessment of their quality.

Qualitative evaluation (ref. Programme Manual Third call for proposals – Annex 4): is performed according to a list of criteria and is aimed at assessing their degree of fulfilment by each project proposal and is divided into two steps:

1. *Strategic assessment* - whose main aim is to determine the extent of the project's contribution to the achievement of programme objectives (contribution to programme results), by addressing joint or common target group needs.

The appraisal criteria shall be:

- Project's context (relevance and strategy);
- The cooperation character;
- Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs;
- Partnership relevance.

Each criterion is composed of several sub-criteria measured according to scores (1-5).

Only those project proposals having reached a minimum score as for their strategic value will be progressed to the assessment of their operational value.

2. *Operational assessment* - whose main aim is to assess the viability and the feasibility of the proposed project, as well as its value for money in terms of resources used versus results delivered.

The appraisal criteria shall be:

- Management;
- Communication;
- Work plan;
- Budget.

Each criterion is composed of several sub-criteria measured according to scores (1-5).

A minimum quality threshold will be applied also to the operational value of project proposals.

Overall evaluation of proposals will result from summing up the evaluation scores of strategic and operational assessments.

3.7 Additional information and support

More information regarding ADRION Programme, conditions for the submission of project proposals, assessment of proposals, the application package as well as other relevant information is available at www.interregadrion.eu.

Interested applicants are warmly invited to get in contact with the representatives of the National Contact Points located in each ADRION Partner State, as well as with the Joint Secretariat based in Bologna (Italy). Contact information is also available on the programme website.