FAQs
1st Call IPA ADRION 2021- 2027

General programme information

1.	**What is the Interreg IPA ADRION Programme and its main objective?**
	The IPA ADRION programme intends to contribute to establish the framework conditions to strengthen cooperation and good relations among partner countries, thus injecting dynamism in the enlargement process, reducing disparities and improving social cohesion, as well as supporting the implementation of the EUSAIR Strategy.
	The programme aims addressing the shared Adriatic-Ionian region challenges like biodiversity safeguard, climatic changes, sustainable transport, through the implementation of innovative models and tools, acting as a pivotal instrument for the identification of common solutions. This will contribute towards a smarter and greener Adriatic-Ionian region able to withstand future economic shocks.
2.	**What is the programme area?**
	The IPA ADRION programme covers the perimeter of the EU strategy of the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and embraces a unique mix of EU and non -EU partner States, along with one third country.
	The Programme eligible area involves 10 countries, out of which 4 EU Member States - Croatia; Greece; Italy and Slovenia (ERDF participating countries), 5 non-EU Partner States - Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Montenegro; North Macedonia and Serbia (IPA participating countries); and one third country (San Marino).
	ERDF participating countries:
	• Croatia (NUTS regions: Panonska Hrvatska; Jadranska Hrvatska; Grad Zagreb; Sjeverna 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).
	IPA participating countries:

	• Albania;
	• Bosnia and Herzegovina;
	• North Macedonia;
	• Montenegro;
	• Serbia.
	Third Country:
	• San Marino
3.	**What is the programme management structure?**
	Several programme bodies are in charge for the programme overall functioning. They perform functions related to the coordination, management, monitoring and control of the implementation of the programme.
	The Managing Authority (MA) is represented by the Italian Regional Government of Emilia-Romagna Region and has the overall responsibility of managing and implementing the programme, including the implementation of the programme's strategy and the planning of the calls for proposals. It ensures that the different programme bodies interact efficiently. It is assisted by the Joint Secretariat.
	The Monitoring Committee (MC) consists of national representatives of the countries involved in the IPA ADRION programme. It is responsible, inter alia, for the approval of the calls for proposals as well as for the selection and approval of project proposals.
	The Joint Secretariat (JS) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the programme, i.e., assessment of project applications, monitoring of funded projects and internal and external communications. It provides expertise and assistance to the MA and the MC and represents the main contact point for the potential applicants together with the network of National Contact Points.
	National Contact Points (NCPs) provide a link between the transnational and national level. Each participating country designates a Contact Point; they act as contact persons for project applicants and partners in their countries, promote the programme on the national territory, and support the programme management in specific tasks linked to their mission.
	National Controllers ensure the compliance of expenditure incurred by the PPs with national rules as well as programme rules and requirements. Each country participating in the IPA ADRION programme is responsible for verifications carried out on its territory.
	The Audit Authority (AA) ensures that audits on the management and control systems are carried out, involving an appropriate sample of operations and annual accounts. The Audit Authority is assisted by a Group of Auditors (GoA) consisting of representatives from each IPA ADRION participating country.
	Contact details of all programme bodies are available on the programme web site.
4.	**What is the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region?**

The IPA ADRION programme strategy is strictly linked with the EU strategy of the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR). The EUSAIR is one of the four macro-regional strategies present in the Europe; it was adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 20141.

The EUSAIR objectives are:

- Supporting the integration of the Western Balkans;

- Providing political and financial support to foster good neighbourly relations in the region;

- Supporting regional cooperation, to boost economic development, improve connectivity, and enhance security;

- Promoting shared values and the unity in diversity of the rich cultural heritage of the macro-region;

- Supporting the development of sustainable tourism and its ecosystems in one of Europe's most popular destinations.

5.

Is there any alignment between IPA ADRION programme and EUSAIR?

IPA ADRION primarily supports the implementation of the EUSAIR; its alignment is ensured by the embedding of EUSAIR "flagships" in the identified indicative actions of the selected Specific Objectives. Additionally, through the Interreg Specific Objective ISO1, IPA ADRION shall support the EUSAIR governance and implementation.

6.

What is the overall programme budget of the Priority Axes open to call for proposals along the programme life time?

The overall programme budget amounts to EUR 160.810.020,00, out of which EUR 136.688.515 from EU public resources (Interreg Funds).

The programme financial resources are allocated to the four programme priorities according to the following table:

	Interreg Funds	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority Axis 1	39.639.670,00	6.995.236,00	46.634.906,00
Priority Axis 2	73.811.797,00	13.025.612,00	86.837.409,00
Priority Axis 3	12.301.967,00	2.170.936,00	14.472.903,00
Priority Axis 4	10.935.081,00	1.929.721,00	12.864.802,00
GRAND TOTAL	**136.688.515,00**	**24.121.505,00**	**160.810.020,00**

The programme co-financing rate is up to 85% of the total eligible costs.

7.	**How much funding is available for the 1st Call for Proposals?**

The overall amount of Interreg funds allocated to the first call for proposals will be of ca MEUR 65,68, disentangled per Priority Axes and Specific Objectives according to the following:

Priority Axis	Specific Objective	EU allocation - Interreg funds
PO1	SO1.1 - Strengthening innovation capacities in the Adriatic - Ionian region (ref. to SO 1.1 ERDF Regulation)	16,72
PO2	Specific Objective 2.1 - Enhancing resilience to climate change, natural and man-made disasters in the Adriatic- Ionian region (ref. to SO 2.4 ERDF Regulation)	14,01
	Specific Objective 2.2 - Supporting circular economy development in the Adriatic- Ionian region (ref. to SO 2.6 ERDF Regulation)	5,03
	Specific Objective 2.3 - Supporting environment preservation and protection in the Adriatic Ionian region (ref. to SO 2.7 ERDF Regulation)	14,49
	Specific Objective 2.4 - Supporting sustainable multimodal urban mobility in the Adriatic -Ionian region (ref. to SO 2.8 ERDF Regulation)	8,72
PO3	Specific Objective 3.1 - Strengthening a carbon neutral smart mobility in the Adriatic- Ionian region (ref. to SO 3.2 ERDF Regulation)	6,71
	TOTAL	**65,68**

The Monitoring Committee of the IPA 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 per each Specific Objective and will be co-financed according to the EU resources available based on the decision of the Monitoring Committee.

8.	**Will there be a webinar or information session on 1st Call for Proposals?**

The programme on site event devoted to the launch of the 1st Call for Proposals will be held in Sarajevo (BiH) on 19 April 2023.
Recordings and presentations will be made available on programme website after the event.

Info days will be organized at national level by National contact points. Details to be provided on the programme website.

9.	**How can project applications be submitted?**

Project proposals must be submitted in English language and only through the Joint Electronic Monitoring System (JEMS) available at the following link: https://jems.regione.emilia-romagna.it/no-auth/login?ref=%2Fapp%2Fdashboard

Lead Applicants need to register on the JEMS and provide a set of credentials (username and password) to create and submit their application form on behalf of the entire partnership. The Lead Applicant shall be in charge for the submission of the Application on behalf of its partnership.

Applications must be drawn up using the on-line form specifically designed for this purpose. No other method of submission of an application will be accepted. The submission process is paperless.

Full information on the application and selection procedure is detailed in the chapter "Procedure for submission and selection of project proposals" of the Application Manual.

10.	**In what language shall the proposal be submitted?**

The official language of IPA ADRION programme is English. All deliveries, documents, tools, and communication activities of the programme management bodies will be in English; this language will also be used in all communication with the applicants and beneficiaries and among the project beneficiaries themselves.

Potential beneficiaries can receive information in their national language by the corresponding National Contact Points (NCPs), who, if they deem it relevant, can also translate the programme documentation in their own language.

English version of documentation and correspondence is however the only binding one.

11.	**What is the thematic focus of the 1st call for proposals?**

The 1st call for proposals will be addressed to the following Priorities, Specific Objectives and indicative actions:

PO1 — SO 1.1 Strengthening innovation capacities in the Adriatic - Ionian region

PO2 — S.O 2.1 Enhancing resilience to climate change, natural and man-made disasters in the Adriatic- Ionian

S.O 2.2 Supporting circular economy development in the Adriatic -Ionian region

S.O 2.3 Supporting environment preservation and protection in the Adriatic- Ionian region

SO 2.4 Supporting sustainable multimodal urban mobility in the Adriatic - Ionian region

PO3 — SO 3.1 Strengthening a carbon neutral smart mobility in the Adriatic -Ionian region

Additional details and information (e.g., territorial needs and challenges of the IPA ADRION area; thematic focus; indicative actions; output indicators; results indicators; expected results; target groups) are provided per each specific objective in Annex 1 of the Application Manual 1st call for proposals.

General programme information

12.	**When does the 1st call for proposals open and close?**
	The 1st call for proposals will be open from 4 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 at 13:00 (CEST / Rome time) and will follow a "one-step application procedure", i.e., submission of the project proposal in its entirety and requested supporting documents within the indicated deadline.
13	**Which indicative actions are eligible under the 1st call for proposals?** A **selection of indicative actions** out of those reported in the programming document shall be granted under the 1st call for proposals. **Only the selected indicative actions reported in the call announcement and in the 1st call Application Manual shall be considered as eligible.** Each project proposal is required to address one indicative action or more if strictly interconnected and properly justified to be chosen among the selected ones. The identified indicative action/s must be indicated in the Summary section of the application form. The indicative actions not included in the 1st call announcement shall be part of the 2nd call for proposals expected to be launched mid 2024.

Eligible partners and partnership

1.	**What are the overall requirements potential beneficiaries must comply with?**
	In general, all bodies/institutions interested in being part of a project proposal must fulfil all the following criteria:
	• Established under the national law of one of the participating countries to 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 participating country 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 participating country to the programme;
	• Have their legal seat and their seat of operations in a participating country/part of a participating country included in the programme area (with the exceptions reported under the sub-paragraph "Assimilated partners");
	• Be endowed with legal personality.
2.	**Which institution can act as a lead partner?**
	The following bodies located in ERDF and IPA participating countries shall be considered as eligible LPs:
	• Public bodies, including their association;
	• Bodies governed by public law and their associations, including EGTCs, governed by public law;
	• International organizations ruled by national law;

	• Assimilated partners (see the definition below).
3.	**What is a body governed by public law?**
	A body governed by public law is a body that have all of the following characteristics:
	• it is established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
	• It has legal personality; and
	• It is financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or is subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or has 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.
4.	**What is an EGTC?**
	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) allows public entities of different participating countries to come together under a new entity with full legal personality. Through an EGTC participating countries public authorities can set up a single joint structure to implement projects, investments or policies in the territory covered by the EGTC, whether co-financed by the EU budget or not.
	EGTC members can be:
	• participating countries
	• Regional or local authorities
	• Associations
	• Any other public body
5.	**What is an associated partner?**
	Associated Partners are those bodies willing to be involved in a project with an observer or associated status without financially contributing to the project. The associated bodies do not account for the partnership minimum requirements; all expenditure incurred by these bodies shall be finally borne by any of the institutions acting as financing partners in order to be considered as eligible. The associated institutions must not act as service providers in order not to enter in conflict with public procurement rules.
	Associated Partners must be located in the European Union or in the IPA countries of the IPA ADRION programme area; their participation must be strategic to the project, and described both in the relevant sections of the Application Form and in its expression of interest.
6.	**Which institution can act as a project partner?**
	Project partners can be:
	• Public bodies;
	• Bodies governed by public law and their associations, including EGTC, governed by public law;

	• International organization ruled by national law; • Assimilated partners (see the definition below); • Private bodies.
7.	**Which are the minimum requirements regarding the project partnership?** To ensure fair involvement of IPA ADRION territory, and to further spread projects outcomes, the minimum eligible project partnership shall have the following characteristics: • At least 6 Project Partners, out of which 3 IPA and 3 ERDF different participating countries • The partnership can include up to a maximum of 2 financing Project Partners from the same participating country; • The same organization cannot be lead partner in more than 2 project proposals in two different Priority Axis. • The same organization cannot be involved in more than 3 project proposals per call. As an exception, the following public institutions/private non-commercial entities can be considered as "per department": • Ministries; • Regional bodies (regions/counties/autonomous provinces); • Universities/research institutions; • Chambers of Commerce and Industry (with its sectoral associations/chambers/regional networks). "Department" is understood as an organizational unit with financial and administrative autonomy and having technical and administrative staff to ensure its functioning. Thus, each single department, within the above institutions, can be considered as a separate potential applicant. It is recommended that eligible partnership does not involve more than 12 financing Project Partners. Please note that, in Greece, the below mentioned administrative entities which belong in the organizational structure of their respective institutions are considered as Departments and, therefore, as a separate potential applicant: • at the level of Ministries, Departments are meant to be the Secretariats, • at the level of Regions, Departments are meant to be the General or the Independent Directorates, • at the level of Universities, Departments are meant to be the Departments per se, and • at the level of Research Centers, Departments are meant to be the Institutes.
8.	**May organizations located in countries outside the IPA ADRION programme area participate in the project as financing project partners?** Bodies located in countries outside the IPA ADRION programme area cannot participate in the project as financing project partners. They can participate as associated partners (see question No 5 under the session "eligible partners and partnership").
9.	**Which are the characteristics of an Assimilated Partner?**

Eligible partners and partnership

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 located outside of it (e.g.: Ministries), are considered as *Assimilated partners*, with equal in rights and obligations of applicants located within the Programme geographical 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 Italian NCP.

10.	**What further requirements apply to private project partners?** There are no additional requirements for private project partners.
11.	**Are there any exclusion criteria?** Potential beneficiaries must state in the Declaration that they do not find themselves in any of the situations listed in art. 136 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046: • Bankrupt, insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under Union or national law; • Breach of obligations related to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law and confirmed by a final judgement or a final administrative decision; • Grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards to which the entity belongs; wrongful conduct denoting negligence or intent; • Fraud and corruption confirmed by a final judgement or a final administrative decision; • Criminal conduct; • Significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the implementation of a legal commitment financed by the budget which has: i) led to the early termination of a legal commitment; ii) led to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties; or iii) been discovered by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors following checks, audits or investigations; • Irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 confirmed by a final judgement or a final administrative decision; • Creation of an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision. Finally, in case the potential beneficiary, in addition to the cases reported above: • has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; • was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise;

Eligible partners and partnership

	shall be rejected from an award procedure.
	Similarly, beneficiaries considered as undertaking in difficulty, as defined in point (18) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 651/20142, unless authorised under de minimis aid or temporary State aid rules established to address exceptional circumstances shall not be granted in accordance with art. 7 of ERDF Regulation.
12.	**Is there a maximum number of partners to be involved in a proposal?** It is recommended that eligible partnership does not involve more than 12 financing Project Partners.

Registration and use of JEMS

1.	**How can an application be submitted?** Project proposals must be submitted in English language and only through the Joint Electronic Monitoring System (JEMS) available at the following link: https://jems.regione.emilia-romagna.it/no-auth/login?ref=%2Fapp%2Fdashboard Lead applicants need to register on JEMS and provide a set of credentials (username and password) to create and submit their application form on behalf of the entire partnership. The Lead Applicant shall be in charge for the submission of the Application on behalf of its partnership.
2.	**Who shall register with the online submission system and how?** Registration on JEMS is allowed to everyone who has an email address. However, it is strongly suggested that the registration refers to the legal representative or a person actively involved in the project implementation. JEMS can directly be accessed through the following link: https://jems.regione.emilia-romagna.it/no-auth/login?ref=%2Fapp%2Fdashboard **Do not get confused**: be sure to register in IPA ADRION JEMS, since many other Interreg programmes are using the same system! Lead Applicants must first register by clicking on "Create a new account" on the homepage and providing a set of credentials in order to get their personal account. In the registration form, the following information of the Lead Applicant is to be provided: - First/last name - E-mail - Password

	- Security code (captcha) - Agreement on terms of service, cookies and privacy policies Signing up with the official e-mail address of the legal representative who will submit the Application form is highly recommended. Avoid generic e-mail address of your institution as well (e.g.: info@yourinstitution.com or admin@yourinstitution.com). Following the registration, a green alert appears and a confirmation e-mail is automatically sent to the e-mail address indicated in the registration. Only after confirmation (click just once on the link), you will be able to login to JEMS and create your Application Form. For more information refer to "Jems guidelines", available on IPA ADRION programme website (https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/).
3.	**Can more users work contemporaneously on one application form and with the same credentials?** In principle, JEMS allows several users (already registered in the system) to work in the same Application Form at the same time; working at the same time on the same application could create situations according to which user 1 overwrites what done by user 2. It is, therefore, warmly recommended that the Lead Applicant is very careful when granting access rights to more than one user and coordinate who is working and when in the Application Form. The responsibility of proper use of account credentials and their eventual sharing, in line with GDPR, lays within the Lead Applicant/Lead Partner organization. IPA ADRION Programme does not ensure any rescue of the lost work.
4.	**Where do I find instructions on the use of JEMS?** Instructions are provided in the document "JEMS guidelines on how to submit a project proposal" – "JEMS guidelines" – Guidelines, specific per call, are available on the programme website (https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/) within the application package.

Project Development

1.	**What type of actions does IPA ADRION fund?** IPA ADRION programme primarily supports the implementation of the EUSAIR, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and additionally, the EUSAIR governance and implementation. The programme is structured around **four funding priorities (POs)** that are further disentangled **into eight programme specific objectives (SOs).** - Priority 1: Supporting a **Smarter Adriatic-Ionian Region** -SO *1.1 - Strengthening innovation capacities in the Adriatic - Ionian region*

-*SO 1.2:* supporting skills development in the *Adriatic - Ionian region*

- Priority 2: Supporting a **Greener and climate-resilient Adriatic-Ionian Region**

  -SO 2.1 - Enhancing resilience to climate change, natural and man-made disasters in the Adriatic- Ionian region

  -SO 2.2 - Supporting circular economy development in the Adriatic-Ionian region

  -SO 2.3 - Supporting environment preservation and protection in the Adriatic Ionian region

  -SO 2.4 - Supporting sustainable multimodal urban mobility in the Adriatic-Ionian region

- Priority 3: Supporting **a Carbon-neutral and better-connected AI Region**

  -SO 3.1 - Strengthening a carbon neutral smart mobility in the Adriatic-Ionian region

- Priority 4: Supporting the **Governance of the AI Region**.

Furthermore, the programme foresees **synergies with other EU Initiatives** – e.g., Horizon 2020, Life, European New Bauhaus Initiative, the European Green Deal – which shall be considered during project development.

For detailed information, please consult pages 8-9 and 11-13 of the Application Manual.

2.	**How many specific objectives can a project address in the framework of the first call for proposals?** Each project proposal can address only specific objective only. *For details about each Specific objective, please consult Annex 1) of the Application Manual.*
3.	**How many topics can a project address?** A project may address several topics which might be interlinked or complementary with each other; however, please consider that the project can select only one SO. Consistency between proposed topics and selected Specific Objective must be ensured.
4.	**What is the project intervention logic?** The **project intervention logic** must be linked to the programme intervention logic and contain the following elements: • The project **overall objective** • The project **specific objective** • Project **activities** • Project **deliverables** • Project **outputs** • **P**roject **results**. *For the detailed description, please consult page 41 of the Application Manual.*
5.	**What are selected projects expected to achieve?** Through the envisaged programme outputs indicators, it will be possible to reach the following **results** and bring the expected **change** in the area:

Project Development

	• **Improved policy framework that is tailor-made** to the territorial challenges and needs of the area;
	• **Enhanced policy learning** framework through inclusion and cohesion for the delivery of services targeting skills development, and the reduction of territorial and economic gaps;
	• **Reduction** of legal and administrative **barriers**;
	• Introduction of **innovative service solutions** for citizens and organizations;
	• **Reduction of innovation gaps**, improved **technology transfer and uptake of new technologies;**
	• **Increased knowledge and capacity** of the stakeholders of the area;
	• **Enhanced awareness and transnational cooperation** among the actors of the key topics of interest;
	• **Change of mindset** (new way of thinking, consuming and doing business);
	• **Leverage effects** at cross-border and national/regional/local level.

Project Duration

1.	**What is the maximum project duration?**
	The maximum project duration is 36 months.
	Applicants shall indicate the start and end date in the Application Form, taking into account the necessary time for the assessment, selection and contracting procedures. This date in the Application Form might be adjusted upon signature of the Subsidy Contract.
2.	**When will the approved projects be able to start?**
	The approved projects will be able to start after the finalization of the assessment process, which is foreseen within the end of 2023. This estimate may be slightly adjusted upon need.
	For details of the assessment process, please see pages 55-61 of the Application Manual.

Project financial size and Co- financing rate

1.	**What is the project financial size?**
	The maximum project budget may be up to EUR 1.500.000,00 EU Interreg funds.
	There is not a ceiling regarding the minimum project budget.
2.	**Which co-financing rate does it apply?**

Project financial size and Co- financing rate

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<td>IPA ADRION EU contribution will be limited to a co-financing rate up to 85% of eligible costs for all financing PPs. The share of expenditure (at least 15%) not covered by Interreg funds shall be ensured by:

a) Public funding: public co-financing provided by central, regional or local public bodies, obtained either through specific-co-financing schemes established at participating countries level or on an ad hoc basis; public co-financing can also be the contribution directly provided by public or bodies governed by public law involved in the projects;

b) Own resources of International Organizations: they may be considered as public co-financing, depending on the decision by the National Authorities of the participating countries where such organizations are located;

c) Private funding: refers to the amount of own funds provided by private institutions through their involvement, or to the provision of funds from private sources external to the partnerships.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>**For Italian partners only: The share of expenditure not covered by ERDF funds is ensured by national co-financing sources. The Italian national co-financing is ensured by the State with the "Fondo di Rotazione". Is the national co-financing ensured also for Italian private (for profit or no-profit) organisations?**

The Italian national co-financing is ensured by the State with the "Fondo di Rotazione" with no distinction between public or private organisations.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>**For Greek partners only: The National Co-financing for Greek project beneficiaries (public bodies, bodies governed by public law and non profit organizations) is provided by the Hellenic Public Investments Program. Beneficiaries engaged in commercial or industrial activity have to cover the relative amount with their own resources.**

Further details are included in the Ministerial Decision 'Rules on eligibility of expenditures, public procurement control procedure and procedure for submitting and evaluating complaints of beneficiaries of the INTERREG 2021-2027 Programs' (Article 35 (5, 6, 7 & 8). Learn more here.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>**For Albanian partners only: Information regarding the use of the fund, for covering the pre-financing, co-financing, and the payment of VAT for projects with foreign aid (including EU funds) for Albanian Institutions, is provided by LAW No. 84/2022 on Budget of 2023, specifically Annex B. Ministry of Finance and Economy's guidelines of 2019 for the reimbursement of VAT for all Albanian Beneficiaries. Learn more here and in English here.**

In new IPA II Framework Agreement for Albania ratified by law no.65/2022 is stated that all projects funded by EU funds are exempted from VAT.</td>
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Financial Rules

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<td>1.</td>
<td>**Which financial eligibility rules have to be observed?**

Rules on eligibility of expenditure must obey the following hierarchy:

- EU Regulations;
- IPA ADRION programme rules.</td>
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	Only in case there are no EU or programme provisions, or they do not offer enough details, national, regional or local legislation and institutional rules can apply.	
	National rules cannot prejudice the rules established by EU regulations.	
	If national rules are stricter than EU or Programme ones, they must be applied.	
2.	**Which are eligible budget lines?** • Staff costs; • Office and administrative costs; • Travel and accommodation costs; • External expertise and services costs; • Equipment costs.	
3.	**What is the start and end date of project eligibility of expenditure?** To be eligible, the expenditure must be incurred and paid within the eligible period related to the duration of the project as defined in the last version of the Application Form; exceptions refer to *preparation costs* and *project closure costs.*	
4.	**Are preparation costs reimbursed?** The preparatory phase can start as from 1st January 2021 and ends the day before the submission of the project proposal; it can be financially supported by the Programme only in case of project approval. Preparation costs have the form of a lump sum and refer to any costs incurred by the partnership (Lead Partner and/or Project Partners) of approved projects for the preparation of the Application Form for an amount of EUR 14.200 (EU and national contribution), on condition they have been included in the Application Form. Any preparation costs must be reported under the specific budget line(s) concerned and included under the budget of the affected partners.	
5.	**Are shared costs allowed?** The practice of shared costs shall not be allowed, i.e.: the costs incurred for activities carried out by one partner - or under its responsibility by a sub-contractor – and covered by more than one project partner (the practice of splitting cost items paid by one partner among project partners), even in cases where such activity is for the benefit of the whole project partnership. The budget allocated to a project partner shall fully reflect the activities actually implemented by that partner.	
6.	**How can staff costs be calculated?** Staff costs can be calculated according to the following options: A) Real cost, calculated as explained below; B) Flat rate of 20% of the direct costs other than staff. Each beneficiary must choose one of the above reimbursement options **already when drafting the project proposal**. The same reimbursement option will then apply to all staff members of the beneficiary working in this project and it will be set for the entire project duration. The chosen option cannot be changed during project implementation.	

7.	**Which costs are included under the budget line "Office and administrative costs?**
	The following costs are included under the budget line Office and administrative costs:
	a) Office rent;
	b) Insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g., fire, theft insurances);
	c) Utilities (e.g., electricity, heating, water);
	d) Office supplies;
	e) General accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation;
	f) Archives;
	g) Maintenance, cleaning and repairs;
	h) Security;
	i) IT systems;
	j) Communication (e.g., telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);
	k) Bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened;
	l) Charges for transnational financial transactions.
8.	**Which expenditure is covered under the budget line "travel and accommodation costs"?**
	Following costs are covered under the budget line "travel and accommodation costs":
	a) Travel costs (such as tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees);
	b) The cost of meals;
	c) Accommodation costs;
	d) Visa costs;
	e) Daily allowances.
9.	**Is in kind contribution eligible?**
	In kind contribution is not eligible in IPA ADRION programme.
10.	**Under which budget line shall catering and meeting costs be allocated?**
	Catering or meeting costs incurred by an external service provider shall be reported under budget line External expertise and services costs.
11.	**What is the difference between a service provider and a partner?**
	The nature of the service provider's and the partner's activities is different. While the service provider does a specific work, defined in a contract, the partner participates to the project and co-finances it.
	As a general principle, as far as the role covered by the partners within the project is concerned, public and private entities whose ordinary main scope of activities and whose role in the project consists mainly in project coordination, management, communication or knowledge management,

	cannot be considered as eligible partner/beneficiary. The involvement of such bodies in the project should be, instead, as external service providers to be contracted following the applicable public procurement procedures.
12.	**Can a project partner be a service provider for another project partner?**
	No, sub-contracting between beneficiaries inside the same project partnership is not allowed.
13.	**Under which budget lines are costs of in-house bodies to be charged?**
	Costs referring to project-related tasks sub-contracted by the beneficiary to in-house bodies are to be charged under external expertise and service budget line and are eligible on condition that the following condition is met:
	• Costs incurred by the in-house body are charged on a real costs basis without any profit margin;
	• The sub-contracting to the in-house body of project related tasks complies with national and institutional public procurement provisions in force.
14.	**What can be funded under the budget line Equipment?**
	Eligible cost items under this budget line are:
	a) Office equipment;
	b) IT hardware and software;
	c) Furniture and fittings;
	d) Laboratory equipment;
	e) Machines and instruments,
	f) Tools or devices;
	g) Vehicles;
	h) Other specific equipment needed for the project.

Project Communication

1.	**How to ensure good communication in a project?**
	The importance of communication in the success of a project cannot be underestimated, as it strongly supports the achievements of results. Good communication helps establish strong relationships with stakeholders and target groups, increasing the chances to reach project goals; it helps the project's objectives to be clearly understood by the target audiences and ensures dissemination of results to interested parties. To this end, the approach to communication should be clearly reflected in the project proposal.
	IPA ADRION has developed a common brand identity to ensure consistency across all approved projects. This includes a project logo and a poster, which are provided by the Programme to contracted projects together with guidelines. In addition to that, IPA ADRION aims to ensure that

	information about approved projects is easily accessible, durable, and consistent. To achieve this, each project will be provided with its own dedicated page on the Programme website.
2.	**What kind of communication activities and channels a project must have?**
	Communication activities shall be integrated into the project work plan and support the achievements of the specific objectives laid down in the WPs. You are asked to provide with information on your communication approach in specific section of the application form, even though you are free to implement the activities and specific communication channel that suit best with your project proposal. The Programme will provide you with a project logo, a poster and a website. The activation of social media accounts is recommended in order to widen the visibility of your project results.
3.	**What costs related to communication products are not eligible for reimbursement?**
	- Project website - Project logo
4.	**Is there a work package for communication?**
	As a novelty compared to the previous programming period (2014-2020), communication is not a standalone work package (WP) anymore, but it is embedded into the single thematic work packages. Communication activities shall be integrated into the project work plan and support the achievements of the specific objectives laid down in the work package. Communication objectives with the relevant activities will be listed under the thematic WPs. Besides the communication activities listed in the application form as a beneficiary of EU funds, you must ensure that formal requirements stated in the Interreg Regulation are followed. Being co-financed by public funds, projects must make their funding source public for transparency reasons. To this end, the project must ensure that in the implementation phase compulsory activities are covered: - Regular update of the project website - Display of the project poster - Provision of project logo on all types of documentation - Display of project information on websites' beneficiaries Display of billboards informing about EU funding, if applicable

Assessment procedure

1.	**How are the received applications assessed?**

Assessment procedure

The applications submitted within the 1st call for proposals are assessed according to the admissibility and eligibility criteria, to ensure the fulfilment of the minimum requirements foreseen by the call.

Only the applications which successfully pass the admissibility and eligibility checks will be assessed from the quality point of view. The list of admissibility and eligibility checks to be fulfilled by the applications is provided in Annex 3 of the Application Manual.

The quality assessment of the applications is performed according to a list of quality criteria and sub-criteria, that are divided into two main groups:

1. *Strategic assessment criteria* - 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.

2. *Operational assessment criteria* - 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 vs. results delivered.

Only the project proposals having reached an overall score of at least 36/60 (60% of the overall score related to strategic criteria) will pass to the next step and be assessed according to the Operational assessment criteria.

As far as the Operational Assessment is concerned, the proposals not reaching at least 30/50 (60% of the overall score related to operational assessment) will be rejected.

The list of the quality assessment criteria and related sub-criteria (strategic and operational) are provided in Annex 4 of the Application Manual.

The project proposals having passed the quality assessment (Strategic and Operational) with a score of at least 66/110 (60% of the overall maximum score) shall undergo the "Anti-fraud"; "State Aid" and "Double funding" checks.

The anti-fraud check consists in the verification of previous fraudulent behaviours or other fraudulent practices by the partners involved in the project proposal.

Double funding checks consist in the exclusion of the possibility that the activities to be funded have been already granted to the same potential beneficiaries by Interreg Danube and EURO MED programmes.

State aid checks consist in assessing the State aid relevance of a project proposal.

Following all the above-mentioned checks and assessment, the project proposals shall be included in a ranking list according to the awarded overall final score.

2.	**Who will take the funding decisions?**
	The Monitoring Committee of the IPA ADRION Programme is in charge of the final decision with regard to the proposals to be funded.