

Interreg V B
Adriatic- Ionian Programme – ADRION 2014 -2020
Terms of Reference for the submission of the strategic project
in the framework of the Priority Axis No 4

1. Introduction

The Interreg V-b Adriatic-Ionian Programme 2014-2020 (hereinafter ADRION), set up in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) - one of the objectives of the cohesion policy - invites the partnership identified by the Working Group on the Thematic Objective 11 (TO11) appointed by the Programme Task Force (in charge of the drafting the ADRION Programme and composed of representatives of all Partner States participating to the Programme) to submit its application for the implementation of the strategic project supporting the key governance structure of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

The requirements for the submission of the project proposal can be found in the following documents, altogether referred to as “Application package - strategic project”:

- ADRION Cooperation Programme adopted by the European Commission with Decision C (2015) 7147;
- Programme Manual - Priority Axis 4;
- Off-line application form and annexes.

The Application Package – strategic project will be sent by the ADRION Managing Authority to the lead applicant – located in one of the ERDF Partner State – previously identified by the aforementioned Working Group.

The lead applicant shall be in charge of forwarding it to the entire partnership.

2. Partnership requirements

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**.

EU financing is only provided to project partners located in the Programme Area.

The strategic project has to involve at least eight financing partners from the eight Partner States involved in the Programme.

3. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants shall be national, regional and local public authorities previously identified by the Working Group TO11. They must have their official seat and the seat of operations in the country/part of the country included in the Programme area.

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

4. Lead applicant

The Working Group TO11 has identified the Slovenian Government office for Development and Cohesion Policy as lead applicant.

5. Objectives and priorities

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 specific objective of the Priority Axis No 4 is to *“Facilitate the coordination and implementation of the EUSAIR by enhancing the institutional capacity of public administrations and key stakeholders and by assisting the progress of implementation of joint priorities”*.

The expected result is the improvement of the status of management capacities of EUSAIR governance structures to effectively implement the EUSAIR and its Action plan, achieving their objectives and targets.

6. Time schedule and submission

The application of the strategic project shall be submitted not later than **29 April 2016 at 17:00 (CET)** and will follow a single step procedure, i.e. full information on the scope, objectives, activities, budget, partnership and supporting documents will have to be submitted by the indicated deadline.

The application 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 needs to be registered on the e-MS system to be able to create and submit a valid application form.

The lead applicant shall be in charge for the submission of the Application on behalf of all the partners.

The Application Package – strategic project - also contains the off-line template of 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 the strategic project*” of the Programme Manual - Priority Axis 4.

7. Budget available

The ADRION programme will allocate EUR 9.775.995, out of which EUR 8.346.773 of ERDF funds and EUR 1.429.222 of IPA II funds:

	ERDF	IPA II	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority Axis 4	8.346.773	1.429.222	1.725.176,00	11.501.171,00

IPA resources will be made available to the Programme under condition that specific Financing Agreements are concluded between the Managing Authority, the European Commission and each non EU Partner State.

8. Co-financing rate

ADRION contribution will be limited to a co-financing rate up to 85% of eligible costs for all 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 the partnership intends 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.

9. Project duration

The project implementation shall be finalized within 31 December 2022.

10. Assessment of the strategic project

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 for the assessment of eligibility of partners.

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

- Project's context (coherence and approach)
- Cooperation character;
- Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs;
- Partnership contribution to EUSAIR;
- Management;
- Communication;
- Work Plan;
- Budget.

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

The project proposal shall be subject to further checks, aimed at determining the respect of the State Aid discipline and of no fraudulent behaviours.

11. Additional information and support

More information regarding the Interreg ADRION Programme is available at www.interregadrion.eu.