

**Interreg V b**  
**Adriatic- Ionian Programme – ADRION 2014 -2020**  
**Call announcement**

**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 - is launching its first call for proposals and invites all interested eligible public and private applicants to submit project proposals.

The detailed conditions for the 1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals can be found in the following documents, altogether referred to as “Application package first call”, which constitute an integral part of this call announcement and are available for download (as separate documents or as a single zipped file) from the Programme website [www.interregadrion.eu](http://www.interregadrion.eu):

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

**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. Each project has to involve at least three financing partners from three different countries of the programme area. Out of these financing partners, at least one, the Lead Partner, has to be located on the territory of an EU Member State of the Programme area.

Project partnership can be composed of up to 10 financing partners as recommendation; however, a larger partnership can also be possible if duly justified.

### **3. Eligible applicants**

All bodies/organisations interested in being part of a project proposal must fulfil all the following criteria to be eligible:

- Established under the national law of one of the Partner country participating to the Programme;
- Have their official seat and their seat of operations in the country/part of the country included in the Programme area;
- Be endowed with legal personality.

As an exception, and in order to overcome the geographical constraints applying to Italy, those Italian public authorities or bodies governed by public law 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 partners, equal in rights and obligations to applicants located within the Programme area.

In addition to what above, the following legal entities are considered as eligible:

- National, regional and local public bodies and associations constituted by one or several of such public bodies;
- Body governed by public law, and associations constituted by one or several bodies governed by public law;
- Private bodies, including private companies, having legal personality and operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature
- International organisations acting under the national law of any Partner State participating in the Programme and operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

### **4. Lead applicant**

Only the following bodies located in the EU Partner States shall be considered as eligible lead applicants:

- Public bodies (national, regional or local level), including associations constituted by one or several regional or local authorities governed by public law;
- Bodies governed by public law, including associations constituted by one or several bodies governed by public law;
- EGTCs in accordance with art. 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013;
- Assimilated partners;
- International organizations acting under national law.

## 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 Programme will pursue its overall objective through the financial support granted to transnational projects contributing to its specific objectives.

The first call for proposals is open to the following programme priority axes and specific objectives, summarised below:

### Priority Axis 1: Innovative and Smart Region

- Specific Objective 1.1: Support the development of a regional innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area.

### Priority Axis 2: Sustainable region

- Specific Objective 2.1: Promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area;
- Specific Objective 2.2: Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the Adriatic-Ionian area.

### Priority Axis 3: Connected region

- Specific Objective 3.1: Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic Ionian area.

The ADRION Programme Priority axes encompass a wide range of themes to be tackled through a wide array of instruments and possible actions, reflecting the heterogeneity of the programme area and its diverse needs. Specific information on the expected results, indicative actions to be supported, indicative types of beneficiaries and targets groups is available in SECTION 2 of the Cooperation Programme.

Under the terms of this call, a project proposal must focus on one Priority Axis and one programme Specific Objective only.

As the ADRION programme area coincides with the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region - EUSAIR, the design of the ADRION Programme strategy has been closely aligned to the pillars of the EUSAIR.

## 6. Time schedule and submission

The first call for proposal will be open from **01 February 2016 until to 25 March 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.

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

Lead Applicants 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 all the partners.

The application package for the first call for proposals contains also 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 operations”* of the Programme Manual - Priority Axes 1-3.

## 7. Budget available

The ADRION programme will allocate MEUR **33.149.023,20** to the first call for proposals, broken down in ERDF and IPA II funds as follows:

	ERDF	IPA II	Total EU contribution
<b>Priority Axis 1</b>	6.677.418,80	1.199.244,40	<b>7.876.663,20</b>
<b>Priority Axis 2</b>	15.358.062,00	2.830.888,40	<b>18.188.950,40</b>
<b>Priority Axis 3</b>	6.009.676,40	1.073.733,20	<b>7.083.409,60</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28.045.157,20</b>	<b>5.103.866,00</b>	<b>33.149.023,20</b>

The above mentioned amounts are indicative, i.e. 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 separately by priority axis, and will be co-financed according to the EU resources available for each priority axis.

Furthermore, 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. Project size**

The financial size of the projects submitted within the framework of the ADRIION Programme first call for proposals must be between a minimum and a maximum EU contribution (ERDF + IPA):

- Min EU contribution (ERDF + IPA) = EUR 800.000;
- Max EU contribution (ERDF + IPA) = EUR 1.500.000.

In exceptional cases an increase or decrease of the amounts above of  $\pm 5\%$  can be accepted.

## **9. Co-financing rate**

ADRIION 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 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.

## **10. Project duration**

The project implementation shall not be longer than 24 months, starting from the signature of the subsidy contract.

## **11. 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 for the assessment of eligibility of partners, and 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 check: 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 subject to the assessment of their quality.

Qualitative evaluation is performed according to 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);
- Cooperation character;
- Partnership relevance;
- Project's contribution to programme's objectives.

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

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

An additional score is awarded to those operations which contribute to the implementation of the EUSAIR strategy.

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 in relation to the 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 to 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, operational assessments and awarding score.

## **12. Additional information and support**

More information regarding the Interreg 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](http://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.