

Call for project proposals Capitalisation Small-Scale Projects

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

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

In order to support interested partners to look for potential partners, partner searches are published on the programme website, if they include at least a selection of one specific objective, a 500 characters description of the project idea, the type of partners searched, the countries, the contact person email and a consensus on the publication of the data. Only those ideas completely filled in, may be published on the website. For convenience, this form may be used: <https://forms.gle/4e7RP9xcxvvaBgrM9>

INTRODUCTION

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

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

1. CAPITALISATION SMALL-SCALE CALL

Definition of capitalisation

Capitalisation is a process put in place to make sure that valuable results, previously achieved, are used or transferred to other organisations, geographical locations, sectors, time or other contexts.

For further reference on capitalisation please check also the Programme Manual Factsheet 1.1, the Interact guide and the work by the Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion at <https://www.interact-eu.net/download/file/fid/21102> - <https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/lacoesione/le-politiche-di-coesione-in-italia-2014-2020/la-cooperazione-territoriale-europea/la-capitalizzazione/>

For Interreg projects data, please also check <https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/cte/smart-cte/> - <https://keep.eu/> .

For this call, project partners may capitalise on project results:

- a) achieved in projects of the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro in the 2014-20 period¹;
- b) achieved with other funds, programmes, initiatives, projects, geographical contexts;
- c) achieved by a project partner's organisation and widely recognised as a good practice, of which evidence of external/independent assessments shall be provided.

Actions financed

For each Specific Objective, applicants shall plan capitalisation actions such as e.g. implementation of thematic masterclasses, peer reviews, demonstration activities, solution-testing activities, live exercise activities, development of "Papers", describing e.g. the update of the plans/ solutions of the project, the thematic contribution that the project could give to the EUSAIR Flagships, updates of platforms data and operability produced within the project, implementation of study visits to showcase best practices identified and to raise awareness on the topics addressed, implementation of dedicated actions to engage stakeholders and cluster demonstration activities, etc., which are going to be covered by the set of outputs of the programme-specific simplified cost options.

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

In particular for each Specific Objective:

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

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

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

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

Further guidance at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1>
https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth_en
https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/cultural-creative-industries_en

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

¹ All 2014-2020 project partners are admissible in the current capitalisation call. For those 2014-2020 project partners, who already participated in the 2014-2020 capitalisation procedure with a validation of their results and identification of interested users, it is necessary to take an additional step, e.g. clustering or transferring these results, while adapting them to the context, as a necessary step to make sure that these are used.

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

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

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

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

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

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

adopting ICZM & MSP; Management of the natural / cultural heritage for green tourism or water resources and landscapes; reduce pressure on the marine environment; spatial planning & control of human activities, making the socio-economic use of maritime resources compatible with the protection of areas of high environmental relevance; protect natural habitats; reduce pollution; promoting circular economy to protect biodiversity; effective water management & monitoring; Measures on waste and sewage contributing to the preservation of biodiversity; digitalisation measures; Green Public Procurement; nature-based solutions; lifecycle costing criteria; EU climate targets; adoption of EU environmental rules (e.g. incl. green transition, Western Balkans' Green agenda, etc.).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- S.O. 3.1. Transport: the actions shall aim at developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local² mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility, through soft measures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

professional / vocational trainings or capacity building in touristic, cultural and creative sectors; improving efficiency of the cross-border labour markets aimed at a greater social inclusion of vulnerable social groups (incl. unemployed, vulnerable groups, NEETs, etc.); capacity building for increased effectiveness of border-crossing & customs; improvement of professional & entrepreneurial & digital skills; recognition of professional qualification; supporting the adoption of EU rules on welfare, labour, qualification; network of Blue Career Centres; Applying the charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, to gender, age, ethnicity, health conditions equality and non-discrimination, as well as accessibility.

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

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

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

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

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

² WARNING: In the context of an Interreg CBC programme, mobility actions must have a cross-border relevance, at least indirect.

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

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

- S.O. 5.1. Governance: Actions shall aim at enhancing efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular, with a view to solving legal and other obstacles in border regions. Unlike for all other S.O., as S.O. 5.1 is a new programme priority in 2021-2027, partners may also develop and test joint and innovative solutions, while taking stock from administrative, operational or management know-how or good practices.

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

Actions increasing mutual trust; institutional capacity to manage and promote cultural, natural heritage, creative industries; adoption of EU administrative rules; improved institutional management of border-crossing points; enhancing e-government; statistic data collection/accessibility; make financial flows more efficient; identification & mitigation of administrative / legal obstacles; improve the legal and financial framework for cross-border cooperation; Capitalisation & mainstreaming interventions (linking to National, Regional, transnational Programmes & macro-regions); setting up specific national schemes; actions aimed at deepening cooperation, exchanges and at enabling cross-border administration; stable cooperation structures; structured cross-border joint administrative procedures.

*EUSAIR: The EUSAIR includes the issue of an increased capacity of public administration as a horizontal issue in all pillars.

Guidance: <https://www.interact-eu.net/download/file/20025>

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

EUSAIR

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

2. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall financial allocation for the 5 priority axes is as follows:

Priority	IPA financing	National Co-financing	Total
1 Smart	824.852,32	175.147,68	1.000.000,00
2 Green	824.852,32	175.147,68	1.000.000,00
3 Conn.	494.940,00	105.060,00	600.000,00
4 Social	824.852,32	175.147,68	1.000.000,00
5 Gover	1.154.860,00	245.140,00	1.400.000,00
TOTAL	4.124.261,58	875.738,42	5.000.000,00

Co-financing

Even though, at programme level the IPA co-financing rate is 82,49%, following rates are applicable³:

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

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

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

Pre-financing

Project partners are entitled to a pre-financing of 30% of the IPA contribution, upon signature of subsidy contract. Offset of the pre-financing occurs in the last joint report. The pre-financing amounts may be transferred to private lead partners only upon a submission of a valid financial guarantee to the Managing Authority. Please note that if the lead partner fails or delays in providing the financial guarantee to the MA, the failure or the delay in receiving the pre-financing will affect the whole partnership.

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

Ranking list

The outcome of the project selection shall be an open ranking list, which is going to be published. The projects at the top of the ranking list shall be financed until the resources allocated per priority axis are absorbed. The Monitoring Committee reserves the right to allocate additional resources in the future, as to finance further projects at the top of the ranking list.

Eligibility rules

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

In particular, this call applies only to Small-Scale Projects, which are exclusively financed through following simplified cost options (SCOs):

1. Lump sum for Preparation cost;
2. Lump sum for Workshop, seminars and conferences;

³ Consequently, to make sure that sufficient IPA funds are available in the MA account, projects with an unbalanced share of funds between IPA countries and the Member State may only be approved under the condition that the financial balance (approximately 50% IPA countries and 50% Member State) is restored.

3. Lump sum for Incoming missions & B2B meetings;
4. Lump sum for Accompanying actions;
5. SSUCs for Targeted Training;
6. SSUCs for Travel&Accommodation;
7. 2% FR for FLC's cost;
8. Lump Sum for Joint Action plan/Model/Methods.

See SCO guidance published at <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/programme/south-adriatic-2021-27/south-adriatic-manual> .

In compliance with article 94 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, as the calculation methodology of the SCOs has not been subject to a formal audit yet and it was not included in the Programme annexes, in case any SCO has to be revised because of a subsequent qualified opinion by the Audit, the SSP partners shall replace or adapt those activities accordingly, as far as compatible with the revised SCOs, assisted by the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat.

3. PROJECT PARTNERS

Eligibility of partners according to location

In compliance with article 22 of the ETC Regulation, lead partners and project partners must be established in Italy, Albania and Montenegro, whereas the Programme area covers the two Italian regions Puglia and Molise and the whole territory of Albania and Montenegro. Partners having the headquarter outside the Programme area, but a branch office established in these countries, will be eligible for funding, provided that the branch office has full legal and administrative capacity⁴. Evidence shall be provided by the partners with the application form.

As specified in the Programme, participation of project partners (not lead partners) located in Italian regions outside the programme area is admitted, provided that the actions of these partners demonstrate a real and verifiable benefit for the regions of the programme area.

Eligibility of partners according to legal status

The following types of partners, according to their legal status, are eligible for funding:

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

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

Non-profit organizations must be operational for at least 12 months before the launch of the call for proposals.

Partnerships

In compliance with article 23 (1) of the ETC Regulation and considering the limited project size, the projects shall involve partners from at least two participating countries, at least one of which shall be from Italy. Nonetheless, to apply the partnership principle to all territories involved, projects involving partners from

⁴ Evidence may include e.g. it is registered, it has sufficient staff, it has a person having full legal responsibility, etc.

⁵ For International Organisations see eligibility rules in the related factsheet of the programme manual.

all 3 countries shall receive additional points, as well as projects involving partners from both Puglia and Molise Regions in Italy.

The total number of partners must not exceed five (5) including the Lead Partner.

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

The partnership has to appoint a Lead Partner, who is responsible for the preparation and submission of the application form. In case of approval of the project, the Lead Partner takes over the responsibility for management, communication, implementation, and coordination of activities among the involved partners. In compliance with art. 23 of the ETC Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, partners shall cooperate in the development and implementation of projects, as well as in the staffing or financing, or both, thereof.

Limitations for partners

Building on the 2014-2020 experience and in order to encourage organisations to strategically plan their participation, a limitation per organisation is set. Partners are allowed to apply as lead partners (LP) in maximum one project per specific objective and as partner (PP) in maximum one project per specific objective, i.e. max. 2 projects per S.O. in total, i.e. max. 8 as LP and 16 as PP in total, which will be accepted according to a chronological order of their submission⁶.

NGOs

Small-scale projects have demonstrated to be highly suitable for the involvement of organisations such as NGOs, therefore projects involving these types of partners may receive additional points.

4. PROJECT SIZE

Building on the successful experience of the Small-Scale projects financed in the 2014-2020 period, as well as to make it possible to achieve the performance framework targets in 2024, the first call will finance only small scale projects i.e.:

- Total budget of the projects **must not exceed € 200.000** (IPA + National co-financing);
- Projects financed **only through specified simplified cost options**, no real cost.

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

5. PROJECT DURATION AND PREPARATION LUMP SUM

The project implementation shall **not be longer than 12 months**, starting from the project start date, set during the contracting procedure. An extension of additional 6 months may be approved by the Managing Authority, if duly justified.

Expenditures incurred to develop the project (project preparation) before the project start date will not be reimbursed, but are covered by a lump sum of 5.500,00 EUR (IPA and national co-financing) to the lead partner.

⁶ For organisations, having several separate departments, it is therefore advisable to have a coordination system (e.g. centralised coordination), in order to avoid that their strategic proposals are rejected in favour of proposals submitted prior to these, even though of limited strategic value.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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

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

The Application Package includes the following documents:

a) Application Form

b) LP/PP Statements duly stamped (if stamp is applicable) and signed by the legal representative of all participating partners (standard form provided); a declaration duly stamped (if stamp is applicable) and signed by the legal representative of all associated partners (standard form provided); e-signatures, made according to specific national law, are admitted;

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

or

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

d) For private partners, the balance sheets of the last two accounting years, or equivalent document, or of the last accounting year in case of organization established only in the last 12 months, issued according to national legislation.

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

It means that the Lead Partner has to collect the required documents from all involved partners, uploading one single pdf per each partner, and submit the project proposal according to the application procedures. Before the submission of the Application Form, the Lead Partner needs to register in the JeMS. The Lead Partner must fill in and submit the Project Application Form ONLY online at the electronic Monitoring system (JeMS).

7. APPLICATION FORM

The Application Form is structured according to the following chapters:

- Project identification and summary;
- Project partners;
- Project description;
- Work plan, structured according to work packages;
- Project budget overview;
- Partners' budget;
- Attachments.

The submitted project proposal needs to demonstrate:

- What it wants to change and why;
- What it needs to deliver to obtain the change;
- How it will do it and what resources it needs for it.

Unlike the project specific result and output indicators used in 2014-2020 period, in 2021-2027 project result and output indicators MUST be those selected by the programme as they will be aggregated directly from project reports and reported directly to the EU Commission. Project actions and activities shall all together contribute to the achievement of only one output indicator per project.

The submitted project proposal must set out a direct link to the Programme specific objectives. The project shall specify a project overall objective, which should have a clear causal link with the global result expected for the project. Project partners shall select only one programme priority specific objective, to which the project contributes and describe how it will contribute to it. It is important to secure consistency between the project objective(s) and the programme priority objectives, as these shall guide the partners to focus the project activities and partners shall clearly set out the impacts the project will make.

The project shall select which programme result indicator it intends to contribute to, matching with the selected programme priority objective. The measurement unit cannot be selected by the project partners, as it is the same as that of the programme result indicator selected.

The project can define a number of project-specific objectives. Each project-specific objective will be supported by a work package. The project-specific objectives shall have a direct contribution to the project overall objective. Each work package, created to support the delivery of the project specific objectives, outlines and describes, which activities and outputs support the achievement of this objective. It should be possible, at least to some extent, to measure the achievement of project-specific objectives by monitoring the delivery of the project outputs, while building a consistent intervention logic (incl. the causal relationships).

Project outputs are aligned with a selected programme output indicator. Project output and programme output indicators need to have the same measurement unit as to be aggregate and monitored, to measure the progress at programme level. An aggregation of project outputs based on programme output indicators is essential for the achievement of output targets set on the programme level. Project-specific output indicators are not allowed. It is mandatory for the project to contribute to at least one programme output indicator. Several project outputs contribute to the achievement of one programme output indicator target.

Project objectives, results and outputs have to be logically linked to project work plan (work packages, actions/activities, time plan). The project work plan must explain what needs to be done to deliver project outputs and results, in order to achieve the project specific objectives. The work plan is divided into a number of work packages, which are further broken down into activities/actions. A side-product of the project that contributes to the development of a project output can be listed as a deliverable of an activity in the work package. However, not every activity has to have deliverables. Deliverables are not a part of the intervention logic, as there a causal link between them and project outputs is not required.

The partnership can structure its project proposal according to work packages, i.e.:

- Compulsory project implementation work packages: Consisting preferably of only one work package, which describes what the partnership intends to implement to reach the foreseen goals, in particular how they intend to use or transfer specific achieved results to identified partners (capitalisation objective).
- Non-compulsory work packages: Preparation WP for the Lead Partner only (covering all costs before the project duration on a lump sum basis). Additional implementation work packages are also non-compulsory.

8. SELECTION PROCEDURE

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

- Relevance filter;
- Full assessment eligibility and quality.

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

RELEVANCE FILTER

Building on the experience of other Interreg programmes in the 2021-2027 period and in order to increase efficiency of the procedure, the eligibility and quality assessment of the first call for proposals is carried out in two phases, with a first phase aimed at selecting the project proposals being most relevant for the programme (relevance filter) and a second phase assessing all details of the proposals (full assessment).

Prior to the application of the relevance filter, the JS checks that the project proposal includes the **statement signed by the legal representative of the Lead Applicant**, or a duly delegated person, who confirms the willingness of the organisation to be lead partner, to assume all legal rights and obligations and that confirms the compliance with the eligibility and admissibility rules for all other partners. Project proposals lacking the statement file or missing the signature by the Lead Applicant⁷ **must be rejected**, without possibility to correct it.

In addition, checks through the JeMS are performed, i.e. project proposals may not be submitted if deviating from the eligibility rules:

- Submission in time;
- Submission through the JeMS;
- Geographical location of partners;
- Maximum amounts per project respected;
- Maximum co-financing rate respected.

The relevance filter focuses on particular aspects of the strategic assessment criteria ‘relevance’ and ‘partnership’, i.e. on following criteria⁸, with these maximum scores:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Strategic - Relevance criteria	
A.1. The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area - there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained). – AF C.2.1 and C.2.2	3

⁷ At this stage, only the presence of a signed Lead Partner’s statement is checked, not the validity of it or part thereof.

⁸ The criteria below were selected according to the harmonised implementation tool of the Interact programme, thus validated at European level by a group of Managing Authorities of Interreg programmes.

A.2. The project overall objective clearly contributes to the achievement of the programme priority specific objective. – AF C.1	5
A.3. The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional). – AF C.2.5	3
A.4. The importance of cooperation beyond borders for the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated. The results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation – AF C.2.3	3

Strategic - Partnership criteria

B.1. The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified. – AF C.3	5
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Strategic - Capitalisation criteria

C.1. The project makes use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices. – AF C.2.7	5
TOTAL RELEVANCE FILTER	24
SC.1 criteria: Globally, the project complies with national and regional policies, its actions and outputs precisely address concrete needs of the territories, and it involves a suitable partnership, capable to reach the expected impacts	5
TOTAL RELEVANCE FILTER incl. SC	29

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

Max. 3 pts. Max. 5 pts.

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

To the purpose of the relevance filter, only the relevant chapters of the application form are going to be considered:
 PART A: A1, A2, A3
 PART C: C1, C2.1., C2.2, C2.3, C2.7, C3, C8.2
 Therefore, it is essential for the applicants to edit these **in the most accurate, exhaustive and effective way.**

The JS officers, according to a four-eyes principle, will apply the relevance filter assessment to the project proposals and it will rely on the assistance of the NAs/NIPS of the participating countries. In addition, under its responsibility, the MC shall set up a Steering Committee (SC) for the selection of operations, having the same Rules of procedure of the MC.

Starting from the assessment made by the JS, the SC shall make a policy assessment, based on following qualitative policy criteria: “Globally, the project complies with national and regional policies, its actions and outputs precisely address concrete needs of the territories, and it involves a suitable partnership, capable to reach the expected impacts”. The SC may decide to award project proposals fulfilling this policy criteria most with an additional score of maximum 5 points during the relevance filter check (from 0 = quality assessment confirmed to 5 = the project proposal fulfils the policy criteria to an excellent level). Additional 5 points for the same criteria may be awarded during the full assessment – see below.

Only the most relevant proposals shall be admitted to the full assessment, i.e. those proposals at the top of the ranking list. To ensure that only the most suitable proposals are subject to a full assessment, only project proposals amounting to 3 times the budget available per priority axes are indicatively admitted to the full assessment, i.e. considering 5.000.000 € total allocation and a maximum of 200.000 € per project, minimum 25 projects may be financed, while minimum 75 projects, for a total value of maximum 15.000.000 shall be admitted to the full assessment, in proportion to the budget per priority axis. However, the SC may suggest to the MC, which reserves this right, to set a lower or higher minimum no. of proposals to be fully assessed.

The sum of the JS/NIPs score and the SC makes the relevance filter ranking lists, one per Priority axis, which are going to be submitted to the MC, which finally decides on the relevance filter score and on the number of project proposals to be subject to the full assessment or to be rejected, in this form:

Priority axis no. / acronym

S.O./Acronym/No.	Amount requested	JS/NIPs Score	SC Score	Total relevance filter score approved by MC
Project proposals to be admitted to full assessment:				
Project proposals rejected (with relevance below the threshold decided by the MC):				
Project proposals rejected for completely missing LP’s statement/signature:				
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The outcome of the Relevance Filter, as approved by the MC, shall be published in the programme website.

FULL ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY AND QUALITY CHECK

Admissibility and eligibility check

Before a full quality assessment, the assessors check the eligibility of project proposals against following technical criteria, performed by the Joint Secretariat and National Authorities/ Info Points:

- Obligatory annexes correct and submitted, as declared in the statement;
- Supporting documents duly filled, signed and stamped (if stamp is applicable), e-signatures, made according to specific national law, are admitted, as declared in the statement;
- Eligibility of Lead Partner, as declared in the statement⁹;
- Eligibility of Project Partners, as declared in the statement;
- Requirements regarding the minimum and maximum number of partners, including maximum numbers of applications per partners;
- “Non-profit organizations” Partners registered at least in the last 12 month, as declared in the statement.

⁹ Both for lead and project partners, including legal seat / operational branches of partners in Italy, Albania or Montenegro, as well as the Italian and IPA countries different co-financing rates are respected.

The formal assessment will be performed by the Joint Secretariat with the support of the respective National Authorities and National Info Points, under the supervision of the Managing Authority as responsible for the procedure. Only the project proposals that fulfill the admissibility and eligibility criteria are admitted to the further quality assessment, while the not eligible ones are rejected by the decision of the MC.

Partners may be requested to provide minor integrations or to correct minor clerical errors in the documents, upon approval by the Managing Authority and within a fixed deadline. Besides these cases, following errors lead to an automatic rejection, without possibility to amend or correct these:

- 1) Delayed submission or submission not through the JeMS (automatic application to all proposals sent outside the JeMS);
- 2) Missing statements, or not duly signed, not in compliance with official format and stamped (if stamp is applicable), i.e. no or insufficient evidence of the willingness of the legal representative of the partner's organisation;
- 3) Incorrect statements submitted or with severe deviations, e.g. compulsory/essential parts crossed-out or deleted in the text of the statement;
- 4) One or more key documents are missing, e.g. accompanying act attesting the legal power of the signatory or lack of evidence on the capacity of partners;
- 5) Partners not having legal seat in Italy, Albania or Montenegro;
- 6) The signatory has not the legal power to represent the partner's organisation;
- 8) Number of applications exceeds the rule on maximum number of applications per partner¹⁰;
- 9) Missing parts of major importance for the assessment of the entire application form.

Quality check

The project proposals are checked against following set of quality criteria¹¹ approved by the MC.

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Operational - Relevance criteria	
A.5. Project outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted) – if not, it is justified. How far are the project outputs going to be further used and the sustainability ensured once the project has been finalised? If applicable, how far the project envisages durability of relevant project outputs? – AF C.8.2	5
A.6. The communication objectives are relevant and are expected to contribute to project specific objectives. – AF C.4 Objectives in work packages	3
A.7. The project clearly and consistently contributes to specified EUSAIR macroregional Strategy objectives and actions – AF C.2.5	5
A.8. The project clearly and consistently described how synergies and complementarities with other programmes and funding are ensured, especially transnational, national-regional programmes and EU Commission programmes – AF C.2.6	3

¹⁰ According to the chronological order of submission, the applications exceeding the maximum admissible number per organisation shall be excluded.

¹¹ The criteria below were selected according to the harmonised implementation tool of the Interact programme, thus validated at European level by a group of Managing Authorities of Interreg programmes.

A.9. The project demonstrates to build up adequate links at governance level, as to ensure sustainability and capitalisation of results– AF C.8.3	3
Operational - Partners criteria	
B.2. Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.) – AF B.1.6	5
B.3. The project involves relevant Project Partners from both Albania and Montenegro – AF B.1.2	5
B.4. The project involves relevant Project Partners from both Puglia and Molise regions – AF B.1.2	3
B.5. For 2014-2020 Lead Partners: The 2014-2020 Lead Partner demonstrated competency in managing EU funded projects and ensured adequate measures for management support. – AF B.1.2	5
B.6. For 2014-2020 Project Partners: Project partners demonstrated that they efficiently implemented project activities – AF B.1.2	3
B.7. One or more NGOs are project partners (0 = no NGO, 1 = NGOs are associated, 2 = One NGO is partner, 3 = more than one NGO are partners) – AF B.1.2	3
Operational - Capitalisation criteria	
C.2. The project tries to avoid overlaps and replications; there is evolution of ideas. The project demonstrates new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions. – AF C.2.2	5
C.3. The project activities include relevant capitalization actions, i.e. it demonstrates to aiming at transferring or re-using achieved results, which were clearly identified, through suitable and coherent actions – AF C.2.2	5
Operational – Intervention logic criteria	
D.1. Project specific objectives are specific, realistic and achievable. See Specific objectives in work packages – AF C.4	5
D.2. The project outputs clearly link to programme output indicators and their contribution to programme targets is sufficient. Project outputs and results are realistic (it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget - and they are realistic based on the quantification provided). – AF C.4, C.5, C.6, D	3
D.3. Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to planned outputs and results. – AF C.4, C.5	3
Operational – Financial criteria	
E.1. The application of lump sums, flat rate and unit costs is appropriate and in line with the programme rules. – AF D.2 & E.3	3
E.2. The available information in the budget is transparent and sufficient. On that basis, the project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan, project outputs and project's contribution to programme indicators aimed for. – AF D.2 & E.3	3

TOTAL operational criteria	70
Total Score from Relevance Filter (including SC)	29
SC.2 criteria: Globally, the project complies with national and regional policies, its actions and outputs precisely address concrete needs of the territories, and it involves a suitable partnership, capable to reach the expected impacts	5
TOTAL	105

Like the relevance filter, the full quality assessment is made by the Joint Secretariat officers, according to a four-eyes principle, supported by the National Info Points / National Authorities or by technical experts, who may be asked by the JS to provide an unbiased technical opinion on complex engineering, scientific or technical aspects, if necessary, even though unlikely in the SSP capitalisation call.

The SC may provide its assessment, while applying the above-mentioned SC criteria for additional maximum 5 points. The result of the full assessment, including also the scoring reached in the first phase of the relevance filter, is going to be submitted to the MC, who is responsible for the final decision, on the basis of outcomes of the assessment, for the ranking list to be published like this, one per priority axis:

Priority axis no. / acronym

S.O/Acronym/No.	Amount requested	JS/NIPs Score incl. relevance filter score approved by MC	SC Score	Total Score approved by MC
Project proposals approved for financing:				
Project proposals exceeding financial allocation, eligible for future financing upon decision by the MC:				
Project proposals rejected for non-fulfilling the minimum eligibility and admissibility criteria:				
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Based on the outcomes of the quality assessment and any specific conditions, which the MC may decide to apply to any project, after the funding decision a negotiation phase is open, where the JS/MA and the LP optimize project planning, activities and budgets.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

11. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROCEDURE

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

12. ENCLOSURES

- Application form offline
- LP/PP declaration templates