Interreg V B ADRIATIC-IONIAN
COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2014-2020

“ADRION”

Programme Manual
Priority Axes 1-3
Version 2.0 March 2016

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

Disclaimer:

The present manual intends to provide useful information for applicants. It does not replace or overrule the official EU Regulations and Adriatic Ionian Cooperation Programme.

List of acronyms

ADRION	INTERREG V-B Adriatic-Ionian Transnational Cooperation Programme 2014 - 2020
AF	application form
CP	cooperation programme
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ESI FUNDS	European Investment and Structural Funds
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EUSAIR	European Union Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region
ERDF Partner States	Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia
ICT	information and communication technologies
IP	investment priority
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPA Partner States	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia
JS	joint secretariat
MA	managing authority
MC	monitoring committee
NCP	national contact point
PA	priority axis
Partner States	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina Croatia, Greece, Italy, , Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia
PRAG	Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
SO	specific objective
TO	thematic objective
Lead Partner, Lead beneficiary and Lead applicant have been used as synonyms	
Project Partner and project beneficiary have been used as synonyms	
Operation and project have been used as synonyms	

Table of contents

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE ADRIATIC IONIAN PROGRAMME *5*
1 Introduction *6*
2 Legal and strategic framework *7*
3 The ADRION programme in a nutshell *9*
3.1 The Programme eligible area 9
3.2 The ADRION programme budget 10
3.3 The ADRION Cooperation Programme structure 10
4 Outputs indicators - What the programme funds *12*
4. The EU Strategy of the Adriatic and Ionian region - EUSAIR *14*
4.1 Links between the EUSAIR and the ADRION Programme 15
5 Programme key principles *15*
6 Horizontal principles *16*
6.1 Equality between men and women and non-discrimination 16
7 State Aid discipline *18*
7.1 How to deal with State Aid 19
8 The Programme language *19*
FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS: KEY ELEMENTS *20*
8.1 First call for proposals funds allocation 21
8.2 Project financial size 21
9 Project partnership *21*
9.1 Eligible partners 22
European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation - EGTC 23
Private bodies 23
International organizations 23
Assimilated partners 24
Other indications regarding the eligibility of partners 24
Other forms of participation within the projects 24
9.2 Lead applicant 26
10 Partners' obligations *26*
10.1 Lead partner responsibility 26
10.2 Project partner responsibility 27
11 Exclusion criteria *28*
11.1 Exclusion from participation 28
11.2 Exclusion from subsidy 28
12 Ways of cooperation within a project proposal *29*
13 Location of the operation and related activities *30*
14 Project duration *31*
15 Funding method *32*
16 Project budget *33*
16.1 Use of Euro 33
16.2 Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure 34
16.3 General eligibility requirements 35
16.4 Project budget lines 36
16.4.1 Staff costs 37
16.4.2 Office and administrative expenditure 39
16.4.3 Travel and accommodation costs 40
16.4.4 External expertise and services costs 41
16.4.5 Equipment expenditure 43
PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION AND SELECTION OF OPERATIONS *46*
17 Publication *47*
18 Submission of grant applications *47*

19 Structure of the Application Form 48
19.1 Project work packages 49
19.1.1 Project management and coordination of activities 50
19.1.2 Communication activities 50
19.1.3 Project implementation 51
19.1.4 Non-compulsory work packages 51
20 Assessment of the applications 52
20.1 Admissibility and eligibility check 52
20.2 Quality assessment 53
20.3 Financial capacity check of private partners 54
20.4 State Aid check 56
20.5 Anti-fraud checks 56
20.6 Finalization of the project assessment grid 56
21 Decision making and Communication to the Lead Applicants 56
22 Contractual provisions 57
23 Advance payment 59
24 Publicity by the Programme 59
25 Complaints procedure 59
26 Data Protection 60
27 Contacts 60
Annex 1 – programme intervention logic 61
Annex 2 – Alignment between EUSAIR indicative actions and ADRION programme 74
Annex 3 – Alignment between ADRION and EUSAIR indicative actions 82
Annex 4– Admissibility and Eligibility Criteria 107
Annex 5 – Quality Criteria and awarding score criteria 111

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE ADRIATIC IONIAN PROGRAMME

1 Introduction

This Programme Manual is based on the legal framework establishing the ESI Funds, the Adriatic-Ionian V B (ADRION) Cooperation Programme and the decisions adopted by the ADRION Monitoring Committee (MC).

The Manual intends to give guidance to potential beneficiaries interested in submitting project applications in the framework of the first call for proposals, which will be open to the Priority Axes 1, 2 and 3.

The present document does not replace the legal framework upon which the Programme has been drafted: applicants are warmly advised to carefully read the Cooperation Programme (CP) and the other legal documents mentioned in the following pages.

Further guidelines and information on the submission of the project applications (e.g.: fact sheets) will be available on the ADRION web site www.interregadrion.eu.

2 Legal and strategic framework

The legal framework supporting the ADRION Programme is the following:

Programme documents

- The Interreg V B Adriatic Ionian – ADRION - Cooperation Programme document adopted by the European Commission on 20 October 2015, Decision C(2015)7147;
- The Interreg ADRION Programme Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- The Call announcement of each call for proposals.

European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Key regulations

- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and on general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006;
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal;
- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002;
- Commission implementing decision of 16 June 2014 setting up the list of regions and areas eligible for funding from the European Regional Development Fund under the cross-border and transnational components of the European territorial cooperation goal for the period 2014 to 2020;
- Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation(EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation(EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings;
- Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes;
- Directives and rules on public procurement.

Strategic framework

- EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Communication from the Commission, COM(2010)2020 final;
- Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020: Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions, Gödöllö, May 2011;

- Sixth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion: Investment for jobs and growth. Promoting development and good governance in EU regions and cities, European Commission, July 2014.

Macro-regional strategy

- Endorsement of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), European Council, Brussels, 23-24 October 2014;
- Council conclusions on the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) - General Affairs Council meeting - Brussels, 29 September 2014;
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region COM(2014) 357 final;
- Commission staff working document - Action Plan - Accompanying the document - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region SWD(2014) 190 final;
- Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies - 20.05.2014 - COM(2014) 284 final.

Kindly note that the above list is not exhaustive and it only includes the most relevant legislation.

Additional documents

- The present Programme Manual;
- Other publications (e.g.: manuals and fact sheets) published on the programme web site.

For reference and further documentation please consult the following websites:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/regulations/

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/delegated-acts/

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/implementing-acts/

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/overview/index_en.htm

3 The ADRION programme in a nutshell

The ADRION overall objective is to act as a policy driver and governance innovator fostering European integration among Partner States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia), 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.

ADRION intends to contribute to "*the harmonious development of the Union's territory (…) and to strengthen cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Union's cohesion policy priorities*"[1] through the funding of project proposals aimed at positively contributing to the needs and challenges of the living conditions in the ADRION area (economic activities, quality of the environment, safety, etc.), rather than highlighting on the needs of a limited number of partners.

3.1 The Programme eligible area

The ADRION Programme includes a wide transnational area with more than 70 million inhabitants, and has distinct physical, environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics. Hence, it addresses all three dimensions of sustainability, including social, economic and environmental aspects but also institutional elements.

The Programme eligible area involves 8 Partner States: primarily surrounding the Adriatic and Ionian Sea basin and covering an important terrestrial surface as well. Four countries are EU Member States, whereas the other four are candidate or potential candidate countries.

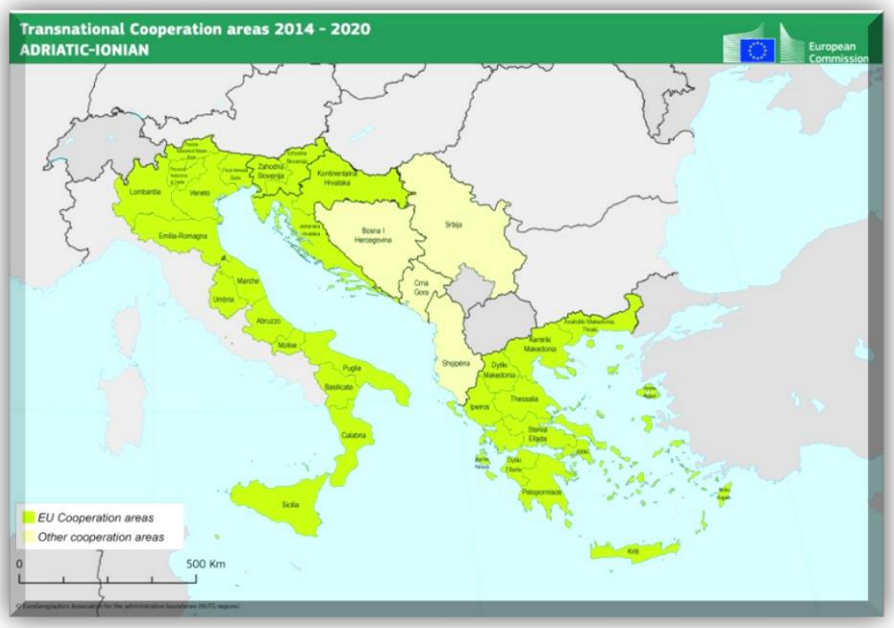
EU Partner States:

- Croatia (NUTS regions: Jadranska Hrvatsk; 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.

[1] Recitals No 4 and 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.



The EU Member States benefit from ERDF funds (hereinafter: ERDF Partner States), whereas the others from IPA II (IPA) contribution (hereinafter: IPA Partner States).

3.2 The ADRION programme budget

The overall programme budget amounts to EUR 117.918.198, out of which EUR 99.156.616 of EU public resources (EUR 83.467.729 ERDF and EUR 15.688.887 IPA funds).

Funds devoted to operations to be allocated through calls for proposals refer to the three priority axes:

a) Priority Axis No 1 - Innovative and smart Region;

b) Priority Axis No 2 - Sustainable Region;

c) Priority Axis No 3 – Connected Region.

	ERDF	IPA	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority Axis 1	16.693.547	2.998.111	3.475.815	23.167.473
Priority Axis 2	38.395.155	7.077.221	8.024.538	53.496.914
Priority Axis 3	15.024.191	2.684.333	3.125.034	20.833.558
TOTAL	**70.112.893**	**12.759.665**	**14.625.387**	**97.497.945**

3.3 The ADRION Cooperation Programme structure

As all the Cooperation Programmes approved in the 2014-2020 programming period, ADRION is based on a result oriented approach too, and follows a programme intervention logic aimed at defining its structure and goals in accordance with the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

The result oriented approach is based on:

a) Result orientation of the programme;

b) Programme monitoring through indicators;

c) Definition of a performance framework whose targets must be reached in 2018;

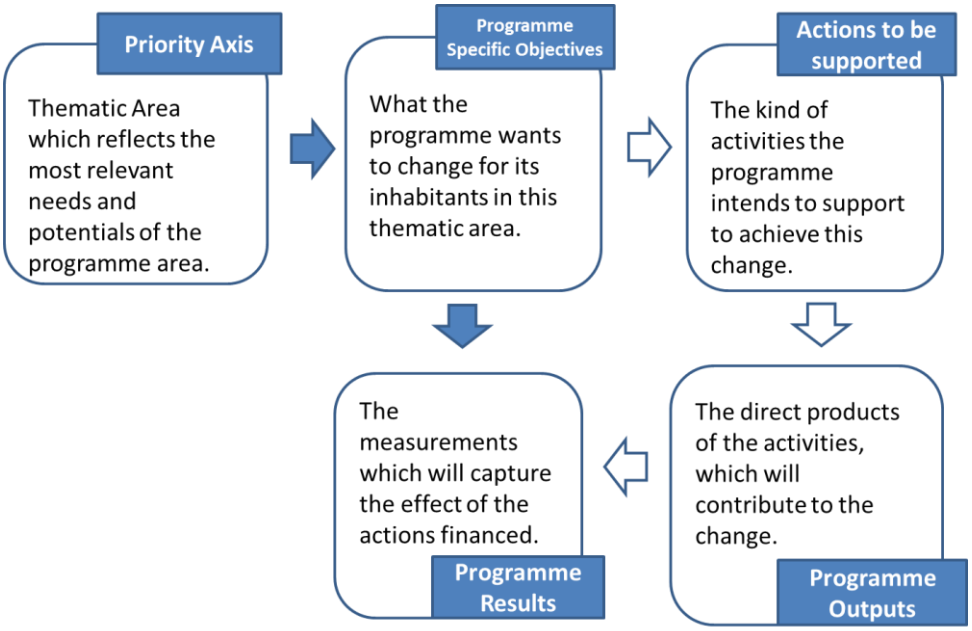
d) Evaluation and reporting.

The programme intervention logic is the theoretical framework that structures and visualises the entire logical and sequential process adopted by the programme to define its thematic and specific objectives aimed at contributing in reaching the expected change within the programme area.

The programme structure is characterised by Priority Axes, Programme Specific Objectives, actions to be supported, outputs and results each other closely interlinked.

In accordance with what above:

- A priority axis corresponds to a thematic objective as described in art. 9 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and to art. 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013;
- Each priority axis includes specific objectives and expected results for the specific objectives;
- A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported under each investment priority and their expected contribution to the specific objectives;
- Output indicators including their quantified target value, which are expected to contribute to the results (e.g.: number of firms supported, number of action plans elaborated, etc.);
- Result indicators relating to the specific objectives of the Priority Axis. They refer to the effects on direct beneficiaries brought about by the programme. They provide information on changes to, for example, the behaviour, or the capacity or performance of beneficiaries. Such indicators can be physical (e.g.: reduction of energy consumption, increase of a competence etc.) or financial (e.g.: additional financial resource mobilised, decrease of an expense etc.)[2].



[2]ADRION Cooperation Programme, page 130.

4 Outputs indicators - What the programme funds

As reported in the previous paragraph, outputs indicators are used to measure the direct products (outputs) of supported projects, which in turn contribute to result.

Identified outputs are aimed at supporting the achievement of the desired change.

With reference to the first call for proposals, ADRION shall mainly support the delivery of the following outputs:

- Networking structures;
- Joint management systems and cooperation agreements;
- Strategies and Action Plans;
- Methodologies and Tools;
- Pilot Actions (small scale investments and demonstration projects);

where:

Networking structure: to be understood as the systematic establishment and management of internal and external links (communication, interaction, and co-ordination) between people, teams or organizations with a long-term perspective in order to improve performance.

Joint management system and cooperation agreement: to be understood as a system based on a shared joint management of topics of mutual concern among the partners. It can refer to, e.g.: the marine sites of community interest or the implementation of joint solutions to solve shared problems. The joint management system is characterized by joint governing tools, like a joint governing board, a joint secretariat or joint key figures for the implementation.

Strategy: to be understood as an integrated framework endorsed by all the project partners to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to the identified achievements.

Action Plan: to be understood as a strategic document that defines precisely how the good practices will be implemented in the strategy/policy papers of each participating region/country.

Methodology: to be understood as the document defining how the partnership intends to rule the process of achieving a pre-defined goal. It is constituted by general principles, rules and approaches.

Tool: to be understood as a specific instrument jointly implemented by the partnership to reach their predefined goal. It can be a physical tool (e.g.: a monitoring system) or a soft tool (e.g.: events to increase the awareness).

Pilot action: to be understood as testing, evaluating and/or demonstrating the feasibility, effectiveness and replicability in a transnational perspective. It must have an experimental or demonstration character. It can cover either the testing of innovative solutions or the demonstration of the application of existing solutions to a certain territory/sector. Additionally, it shall be limited in its scope (area, duration, scale etc.) being unprecedented in a comparable environment. A pilot action includes a clear transnational effect being

jointly strived for and evaluated by the partnership, showing a clear potential to be transferred to other institutions and/or territories beyond the project.

The realization of these outputs shall have to be attested by adequate supporting documentation.

A detailed overview of the programme intervention logic is provided in Annex 1, which also contains information on the programme goals in terms of quantification of output and results, and target group.

4. The EU Strategy of the Adriatic and Ionian region - EUSAIR

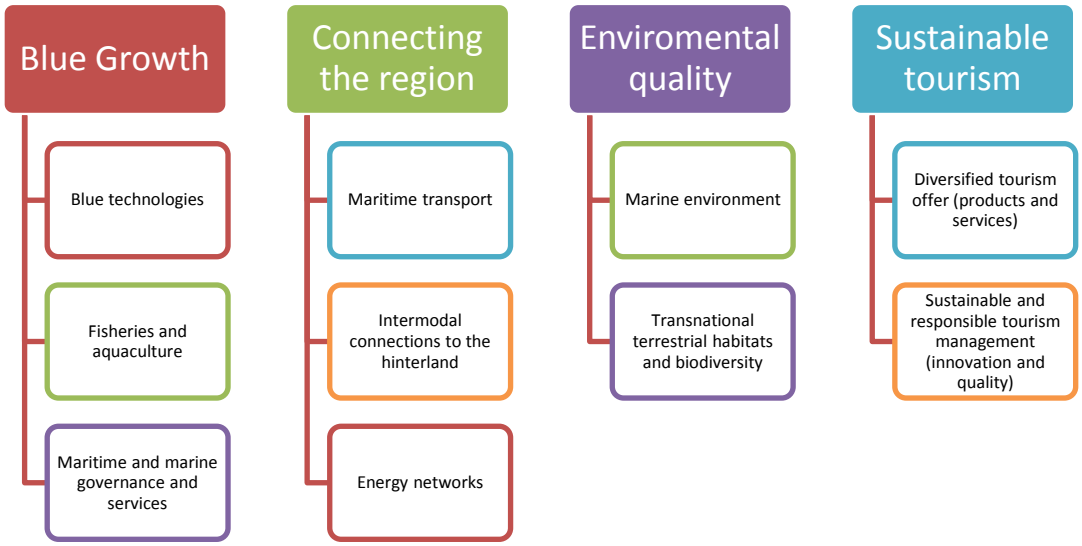
The geographical area covered by the ADRION Programme coincides with the one encompassed by the EU macro regional strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR), which offers a framework for policy coordination reflected in a joint action plan[3] shared between several countries or regions.

A macro region is an area including the territory of several countries or regions which shares common features or challenges.

The EUSAIR was jointly developed by the countries and stakeholders of the Adriatic-Ionian Region with the support of the European Commission. EUSAIR was finally endorsed by the European Council in October 2014, in order to identify and address common challenges together.

Through the development and implementation of EUSAIR the Partner States actually aim at fostering coordination of interventions across all territories and policy areas in the Adriatic-Ionian Region and to add value to those actions which significantly contribute to address joint challenges and opportunities.

The Strategy is structured into 4 pillars; its action plan identifies topics for joint actions, defines the related targets and will be periodically revised to take into account achievements and changes in the Region.



The Strategy encourages a horizontal approach, highlighting interdependence between its four pillars.

EUSAIR is one of the four macro regional strategies put in place; the others are[4]:

- The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR);
- The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR);
- The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP).

Updated information on the EUSAIR strategy can be found in:

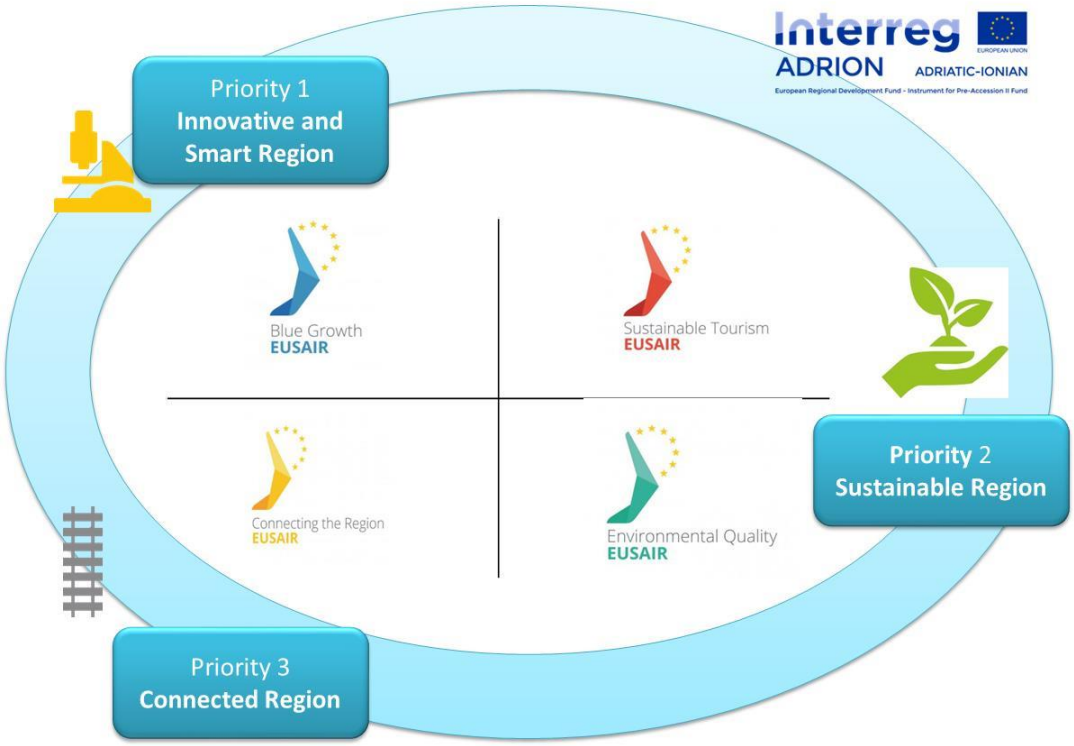
- http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionian/

[3]http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/adriat_ionian/pdf/com_357_en.pdf
[4]http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/

- http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/.

4.1 Links between the EUSAIR and the ADRION Programme

The ADRION programme must be seen as a strategic programme due to its direct alignment - geographically, thematically, and operationally - to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.



Priority Axis 1 on innovation addresses directly Pillar 1 on Blue Growth but also encompasses elements of the other three Pillars;

Priority Axis 2 on natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity addresses directly Pillar 4 on Sustainable Tourism through the Investment Priority (IP) 6c, but also Pillar 1 on Blue Growth and 3 on Environmental Quality through IP 6d;

Priority Axis 3 on sustainable transport and mobility addresses directly Pillar 2 on connecting the Region and indirectly Pillar 3 through the promotion of environmental friendly low carbon transport and also Pillar 4 as a prerequisite for tourism.

However, it should be highlighted that the alignment is not comprehensive, as not all the ADRION topics are present in EUSAIR, and not all EUSAIR ones are mirrored in ADRION.

The alignment between EUSAIR indicative actions with ADRION programme is reported in Annexes 2; the alignment between ADRION indicative actions and those of EUSAIR indicative actions is provided in Annex 3.

5 Programme key principles

The ADRION Programme does not start from scratch: it has its roots in the projects mainly funded by the transnational programme South East Europe and by the IPA cross-border Adriatic programme in the area.

A wide variety of actors have been involved on both Adriatic and Ionian coastlines as well as on its bordering terrestrial surface and a wealth of knowledge, experiences, innovative practices, valuable outputs and results have been generated and must not be dispersed: indeed they shall be taken into account and capitalised to progress in cooperation and achievements.

In this respect the ADRION programme intends to consolidate the capital built by Interreg projects and programmes with the objectives of:

- Making the knowledge and results generated by projects more accessible, thus improving transfer of knowledge;
- Obtaining additional results through benchmarking and detailed content analysis, building on existing knowledge and experience;
- Promoting the re-use and / or transfer of this knowledge and these results, in order to boost performance and delivery.
- Raising awareness and improving communication of results in specific fields of regional policy[5].

This approach shall support the leading principles guiding the ADRION implementation which can be summarised as follows:

- Effective **contribution of funded operations** to the **programme results** through the realization of **programme outputs;**
- **Positive contribution to the needs and challenges in a transnational perspective** of the living conditions **in the ADRION area** (economic activities, quality of the environment, safety, etc.), **rather than highlighting on the needs of a limited number of partners**;
- **Support the exchange and transfer experiences** between regions, transnational interventions and capacity building, and **ensure that results are disseminated and used beyond project partners;**
- (Relevance of) **cohesion policy and capacity building as multiplier of prosperity and growth;**
- **Leverage for future initiatives and investments.**

6 Horizontal principles

6.1 Equality between men and women and non-discrimination

In addition to the thematic orientation, the ADRION Programme incorporates horizontal aspects highlighted in EU regulations, namely:

- **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**:

  Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented do not generate sex discrimination of any kind (sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and to explain how the equal opportunity principle is rooted in the project design and implementation. All projects, regardless the priority axis under which they are submitted are encouraged to foresee measures or actions to promote equal opportunities and preventing any discrimination.

- **Equality between men and women:**

  Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equality between men and women and to demonstrate how this principle is rooted in the project design and

[5] Sources of inspirations can be found in the INTERACT database KEEP which collects information on project and partners of Territorial Cooperation www.keep.eu, programmes projects portfolios and INTERACT thematic studies.

implementation. This aspect applies to all projects, regardless the priority axis under which they are submitted.

Furthermore, specific cross-cutting issues will be addressed in all the Priority Axes contributing to the overall objectives of the programme:

- Wide-spread take-up and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT);
- Social cohesion and social innovation;
- Promotion of data availability and knowledge management according to the "open data" principle;
- Integrated territorial and eco-systemic approach, i.e.: a way of making decisions in order to manage activities sustainably. It recognises that humans are part of the ecosystem and that their activities both affect the ecosystem and depend on it. The ecosystem approach requires:
  - An integrated approach that considers all ecosystem components (e.g. human activities, habitats and species, and physical processes);
  - Consideration of ecosystem functions and resulting ecosystem services;
  - Strong participation of stakeholders[6].

The operations to be supported shall practically demonstrate their contribution not only to the expected results, specific objectives, investment priorities of a selected Priority Axis, but should also be conceived, designed and implemented so that those horizontal principles are actually promoted and practically implemented (see Section 1 and Section 8 of the CP).

6.2 Sustainable development

The ADRION programme invites to promote eco-innovation, i.e.: aiming to make a more sustainable use of natural resources under all Priority Axes. More precisely, beneficiaries are requested to describe in their project proposals the efforts they will undertake to reduce the project's "carbon footprint".

In line with the principle of sustainable development:

- Projects which have a positive effect on the environment or which conserve, enhance or rehabilitate existing endowments will be preferred to those that are neutral from this perspective;
- Projects that have a potentially harmful effect on the environment will be excluded;
- Actions designed to raise environmental awareness and compliance both within the economic and administrative sectors, and among the general public, including acknowledgement that a high level of environmental performance can provide a long term competitive advantage will be supported.

Additionally, ADRION invites to implement actions/adopt specific measures to reduce the environmental impact. Indicatively, they can include:

- Use of video conferencing to reduce travelling;

[6] The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines the ecosystem approach as "*a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way*". In the marine environment, ICES defines it as "*the comprehensive integrated management of human activities based on best available scientific knowledge about the ecosystem and its dynamics, in order to identify and take action on influences which are critical to the health of the marine ecosystems, thereby achieving sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services and maintenance of ecosystem integrity*".

- Publications on FSC certified paper;
- Use of "green public procurement" procedures and innovative public procurement where appropriate;
- Use of short supply chains in the implementation of projects activities;
- Raising awareness of partners, beneficiaries and target groups on sustainability issues;
- Promotion of activities with limited use of energy and natural resources.

7 State Aid discipline

Any public support granted by public funds must respect the State Aid disclipline applicable at the point of time when the public support is granted.

According to Article 107 (ex. Article 87) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, State Aid is defined as any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods.

In relation to the above, the presence of State Aid can be confirmed only if all the following 5 points (cumulative criteria) are fulfilled:

1) The measure must confer a benefit or advantage on the recipient which it would not otherwise have received (which is always the case for any Interreg programme);
2) It must be granted by a EU Member State or through State resources (which is always the case for any Interreg programme);
3) It must selectively favour certain undertakings or the production of certain goods;
4) It must distort or threaten to distort competition;
5) It must affect trade between EU Member States.

State Aid discipline applies to undertaking, i.e.: an entity engaged in an economic nature and which offers goods and services in competition (actual or potential) with other operators active in the market, carrying out activities of an economic nature, devoted to the production and marketing of goods and services in the market. The concept of undertaking is very wide and also includes all private and public firms and the entirety of what they produce. Activities carried out within the framework of statutory tasks normally performed by public authorities do not fall within the concept of an undertaking, in view of their non-business purposes and procedures.

In the evaluation of the existence of a potential State Aid issue, the nature of the beneficiary is therefore not relevant since, as said, even a not-profit organisation can be engaged in economic activities. The main element to take into account is the nature of the activities that the partner institution and the project intend to implement through the public funding[7].

[7]Further information on State Aid can be found on the European Commission's DG Competition website: (*http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/overview/index_en.html*) where also comprehensive guidelines on the notion of State aid are available.
The INTERACT programme has also summarised a list of questions and answers on this topic:
http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/9263/Questions_Answers_ETC_and_State_Aid_April_2015.pdf.

Due to the specificities of the ADRION Programme and to ensure equal treatment among all beneficiaries, the State Aid discipline shall apply both to ERDF and IPA project partners.

Applicants are invited to check the ADRION programme web site for further information and may also consult the relevant national authorities to obtain more specific information on rules and limitations concerning State Aid.

7.1 How to deal with State Aid

The ADRION Programme shall treat State Aid relevant activities in accordance with the *de minimis* Regulation[8] which foresees:

- The ceiling for the aid covered by the *de minimis* rule is EUR 200 000 (cash grant equivalent) over any three tax year period;
- The ceiling applies per EU Member State; in the case of ADRION Programme the aid will be considered as granted by Italy (location of the MA) and will not cumulate with State Aid under *de minimis* regime granted by another EU Member States;
- The ceiling will apply to the total of all public assistance considered to be *de minimis* aid. The ceiling applies to aid of all kinds, irrespective of the form it takes or the objective pursued.

The regulation only applies to "transparent" forms of aid, which means aid for which it is possible to determine in advance the gross grant equivalent without needing to undertake a risk assessment.

In order to allow the necessary verifications, all applicants shall fill-in the State Aid declaration which is part of the Application Package.

However, in case the grant would distort or threaten competition by favouring some project partners, the Programme shall identify possible measures and conditions the project will have to apply in order to minimize or annulling the State Aid relevance of the identified project activities/outputs. If this is not possible, the Programme shall adopt measures to ensure the respect of the *de minimis* rule.

8 The Programme language

The official language of the 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.

[8]Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid.

FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS: KEY ELEMENTS

8.1 First call for proposals funds allocation

The EU funds allocated to the first call for proposals amount to 40% of the funds of the Priorities Axes 1-3:

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

EU project partners from Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia shall benefit from ERDF funds, project partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia shall benefit from IPA funds.

Should the project spend more than what approved by the MC, the EU contribution shall not be increased accordingly.

The availability of IPA funds is subject to the signature of the Financing Agreement between the ADRION Programme Managing Authority (MA), the European Commission and each one of the concerned IPA Partner State. It is expected however that such agreements will be signed before the finalisation of the evaluation process and in due time before the signature of the Subsidy Contracts and the start of projects' implementation.

8.2 Project financial size

Projects submitted within the framework of the ADRION Programme first call for proposals shall have an EU contribution request ranging from:

EU contribution (ERDF + IPA)	
From: EUR 800.000	**To: EUR 1.500.000**

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

The EU co-financing rate shall be up to 85% of eligible expenditure both for the ERDF and IPA partners.

The proposed project budget must be built on the principle of sound financial management, i.e. it must truly reflect the activities foreseen in the project.

9 Project partnership

The project proposal must involve partners located in the Programme geographical area (see paragraph 3.1).

The minimum eligible partnership comprises at least three financing partners (i.e.: directly contributing to the project implementation) from:

- At least 3 Partner States, out of which

- At least one partner must be from an ERDF Partner State.

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

The number of partners may considerably vary between the projects, depending on their goals and activities. The project consortium should be comprised in a strategic manner and well adapted to its purpose.

Please note that each partnership shall always consider that it is not the number of institutions listed in the proposal that makes the project partnership ideal, but rather their expertise to carry out the planned activities and deliver effective outputs and results, reaching out to their target groups.

The topics addressed by the project (e.g.: common environmental problems) determine the profile of the organisations that could be involved in the project activities.

Project partners should be involved already in the project drafting phase in order to incorporate ideas and contributions from all applicants and to ensure a high level of commitment to the project.

9.1 Eligible partners

All bodies/institutions interested in being part of a project proposal must fulfil all the following criteria (with some exceptions reported in the following paragraphs).

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

In addition to what above, eligible partners shall be:

- **National, regional and local public bodies** (including **EGTCs** in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, (see the sub-paragraph "*European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation*") and associations formed 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, as defined in Article 2(4) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement, i.e. bodies that have all of the following characteristics:

  (a) They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;

  (b) They have legal personality; and

  (c) They are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose

members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law;

- **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 one of the Partner States participating to the Programme operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation - EGTC

According to art. 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 the category bodies governed by public law also frame "*any European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) established in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, regardless of whether the EGTC is considered to be a public law body or a private law body under the relevant national implementing provisions*".

EGTC can be a project partner on condition that it is governed by the law of the country where the EGTC has its registered office, which is located in one of the EU countries/part of the country participating to the Programme. The minimum number of members of an EGTC is the one reported in art. 3 a) of Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 modifying Regulation 1082/2006[9].

As far as the EGTC is concerned, and in accordance with art. 12.3 of ETC Regulation, an EGTC may be the sole beneficiary of an operation provided that it is set up by public authorities or bodies from at least two participating countries.

Private bodies

Private bodies are understood as bodies established under private law, having legal personality, irrespective of their size and scope.

Private bodies must be operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

International organizations

Only international organizations acting under the national law of a Partner State participating to the Programme are considered eligible (international organizations acting under international law are not eligible).

International organizations must be operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

---

[9] *"In accordance with Article 4(3a), an EGTC may be made up of members located on the territory of at least two Member States and of one or more third countries neighbouring at least one of those Member States. For the purposes of this Regulation, a third country shall be considered to be neighbouring a Member State where the third country and that Member State share a common land border or where both the third country and the Member State are eligible under a joint maritime cross-border or transnational programme under the European territorial cooperation goal, or are eligible under another cross-border, sea-crossing or sea-basin cooperation programme, including where they are separated by international waters".*
2. An EGTC may be made up of members located on the territory of only one Member State and of one or more third countries neighbouring that Member State, where the Member State concerned considers that EGTC to be consistent with the scope of its territorial cooperation in the context of cross- border or transnational cooperation or bilateral relations with the third countries concerned.
3. Third countries neighbouring a Member State include maritime borders between the countries concerned".

Assimilated partners

In order to overcome to the Programme 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, with equal rights and obligations to applicants located within the programme area.

The attribution of the characteristic of assimilated partner to an Italian institution located outside the Programme area shall be duly justified in the project application and further assessed with the support of the NCP.

Other indications regarding the eligibility of partners

All applicants, irrespective their legal status, must ensure that:

- They have adequate human and technical resources to ensure a sound project implementation and management;
- Their administrative involvement in the project does not undermine their daily activities;
- Their financial commitment within the project is adequate to their size and capacity;
- They have the capacity of advancing payments for the implementation of project activities and eventual delays in reimbursement of EU contributions will not undermine their capacity of implementing the foreseen activities within the project.

Only legal entities eligible for funding and listed in the Application Form (AF) may report their costs. In order to ensure a proper audit trail the MA needs to know which organisations receive programme funding and whether they are eligible according to the programme rules. Therefore, an **"umbrella" type of partnership structure, where one partner acts on behalf of, collects funding and represents other partners without naming them, is not possible**.

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.

Finally, applicants are strongly advised to **carefully check the indicative list of potential beneficiaries included in the description of each Programme Priority Axis, namely section 2 of the ADRION CP**: such lists are referred to the typologies of beneficiaries that can best contribute to the Programme specific objectives.

Other forms of participation within the projects

The ADRION Programme does not allow bodies located outside the Programme, either from other EU countries or from Third Countries to directly benefit from its ERDF/IPA funds. In case their participation is relevant and strategic to the project, other forms of participations are possible.

Associated partners

The ADRION Programme foresees the involvement of *associated partners*, i.e.: those bodies willing to be involved in a project with an observer or associated status without financially contributing to the project. The associated institutions 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.

The partnership must demonstrate the benefits that the involved associated partner shall bring to the project and its follow up. Expenditure incurred by these bodies shall be limited to reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs related to their participation in project meetings.

Associated partners can also be located outside the Programme area.

Participation of Non-EU Partners located outside the Programme area

The Programme allows the participation of financing partners from non-EU countries outside the Programme area Participation is open to public institutions located in Third Countries not included in the Programme area: their financial participation cannot be, however, supported with Programme funds. Interested organizations from Third Countries shall search for other sources of funding (e.g.: ENI, IPA II, United Nation) or use their own funds. Third Countries participation shall not count for the fulfilment of the minimum eligible partnership size requirement.

The following table summarizes how bodies can be involved in the ADRION Programme without prejudice of the requirements explained in the paragraphs above.

	Lead applicant	Project partner	Associated partner	Partner from a non-EU country outside the programme area
ERDF public body	YES	YES	YES	
ERDF body governed by public law	YES	YES	YES	
ERDF private body		YES	YES	
International organization acting under national law located in a ERDF partner country	YES	YES	YES	
IPA public body		YES	YES	
IPA body governed by public law		YES	YES	
IPA private body		YES	YES	
International organization acting under national law located in a IPA partner country		YES	YES	
Assimilated partner public or governed by public law body	YES	YES	YES	

(only for Italian Partners)				
Public body located in non-EU countries outside the Programme area.			**YES**	**YES**
Body (regardless its status) located inside or outside the EU programme area			**YES**	

9.2 Lead applicant

According to art. 13 of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 "*where there are (two or) more beneficiaries of an operation in a cooperation programme, one of them shall be designed by all the beneficiaries as lead beneficiary*" (lead partner principle).

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

- Public bodies (national, regional or local level), including associations formed by one or several regional or local authorities governed by public law;
- Bodies governed by public law, including associations formed by one or several bodies governed by public law;
- EGTC;
- Assimilated partners;
- International organizations acting under national law.

All eligible bodies located in IPA Partner States can participate to projects only as partners.

10 Partners' obligations

Eligible partners shall be directly responsible for preparation and implementation of their share of project's activities within the partnership, not acting as an intermediary.

10.1 Lead partner responsibility

The partner designated by all partners to act as lead partner (art. 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2014) assumes the following responsibilities:

a) Is responsible for the coordination of the drafting of the project application and of its submission on behalf of the entire partnership. In case clarifications are necessary during the assessment phase, the Joint Secretariat (JS) will address to it;

b) Signs a subsidy contract on behalf of the entire partnership with the MA;

c) Ensures arrangements with the other partners comprising provisions able to guarantee the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the project and arrangements for recovering the amounts unduly paid (a template of the subsidy contract and partnership agreement are elaborated by the Programme and downloadable from the Programme web site);

d) Assumes the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the entire operation; in this respect it sets the coordination structure through the appointment of key figures (e.g.: a project coordinator, a financial coordinator and a communication manager) operating for the entire partnership;

e) Ensures that expenditure presented by all partners has been incurred in implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the beneficiaries, and is in accordance with the subsidy contract;

f) Ensures that the expenditure presented by all partners has been verified by the controllers appointed by the country where the partner is located according to the specificities of the national system;

g) Ensures that the promised outputs as in the approved application are delivered in accordance with the set timeline;

h) Receives the reimbursed amount from the Programme on behalf of the entire partnership and transfers the due amounts to its partners as soon as possible without deducting any amount or specific charge;

i) Guarantees the reimbursement of amounts unduly paid to the MA upon receiving a recovery order following the detection of an irregularity on behalf of the affected partner(s) (itself or project partner);

j) Ensures that all project documentation (e.g.: progress report etc.) shall be kept available for a period of two years from 31 December following the submission of the payment request of the MA to the European Commission including the final expenditure of the completed projects or otherwise required by the specific legislation (e.g.: State Aid). The time period referred to shall be interrupted either in the case of legal proceedings or by a duly justified request of the Commission;

k) Coordinates the communication flow towards the MA/JS with regard to the timely submission of the progress reports and requests for reimbursement;

l) Is responsible of the communication flow between the partnership and the Programme (mainly with the JS and the MA), it is in charge of spreading communication and information received by the Programme to its project partners, including the announcements to participate to seminars organized by the Programme;

m) Ensures prompt solutions of management problems (e.g.: change of partners, requests for revision of activities etc.).

10.2 Project partner responsibility

Each project partner carries out activities planned in the approved AF within the deadline agreed at Programme and partnership level. Each project partner shall:

a) Assume responsibility towards the lead partner of repaying the received undue amount and it assumes its responsibility in case of irregularities in the expenditure it has declared;

b) Carry out information and communication measures for the public about the project activities;

c) Ensure that all project documentation (e.g.: progress report etc.) shall be kept available for a period of two years from 31 December following the submission of the payment request of the MA to the European Commission including the final expenditure of the completed projects or otherwise required by the specific legislation (e.g.: State Aid). The time period referred to shall be interrupted either in the case of legal proceedings or by a duly justified request of the Commission.

Obligations of the lead partners and project partners are laid down in the Subsidy Contract and in the Partnership Agreement respectively.

The Subsidy Contract determines the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Partner – according to the lead partner principle - the conditions for the project implementation, requirements for reporting, financial controls, litigation etc.

The Partnership Agreement transfers rights and responsibilities from the Lead Partner to the project partners.

Detailed information on these two legal documents shall be provided on the ADRION web site.

11 Exclusion criteria

11.1 Exclusion from participation

According to art 106 of Regulation (EU) No 966/2012, potential beneficiaries might be excluded if any of the following conditions apply:

- They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Partner State which has the force of res judicata;
- They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify, including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
- They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- They - or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them - have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- They are subject to an administrative penalty imposed by any contracting authority for behaviours mentioned above.

11.2 Exclusion from subsidy

According to art 107 of Regulation (EU) No 966/2012 applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

- Are subject to a conflict of interests;
- Are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Programme as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;

- Find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in the previous paragraph.

12 Ways of cooperation within a project proposal

The cooperation among partners shall be compulsorily characterised by the following elements (art 12.4 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013):

- Development of the operation;
- Implementation of the operation.

Additionally, ADRION requires that also financing of operation is to be considered as compulsory.

The partners can also cooperate in staffing the operation (optional).

Cooperation in the development of the operation
All partners shall contribute to the project idea generation and mirror their ideas and actions.
They will also define how they intend to work together and the tasks distribution, having regard to their knowledge and experience.
The development of activities should not consider the realization of "mirror" activities, i.e.: the same activities to be implemented by all partners, but a real distribution of tasks according to their skills and abilities, which shall be available for the benefit of the entire partnership.
The Lead Partner plays a coordination role of the process.

Cooperation in the implementation of the operation
Under the overall coordination of the Lead Partner, the partnership starts the implementation of the approved operation. The implementation refers both to the realization of activities described in the approved application form and to the internal management activities.
Activities must properly be carried out and coordinated: it is not enough that activities run in parallel: There must be clear content based links between what is happening on different sides of the border sand regular contact between them. The Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring that activities are properly coordinated, that schedules are kept and that the right quality levels are achieved.

Cooperation in the financing of the operation
The project is characterized by one budget which is the sum of each partner allocation.
According to the lead partner principle characterizing the ETC projects, the financial responsibility of the project budget vis-à-vis the Programme lies within the lead partner, whereas a partnership agreement is signed between the lead and the project partners mirroring the subsidy contract duties and obligations.
The partner budget mirrors the partners' responsibilities within the project.

Cooperation in the staffing of the operation
The project defines its internal organization attributing roles and the necessary staff to fulfil them.
Duplication of functions are to be avoided: the project shall have only 1 joint project coordinator, 1 joint financial manager etc., who will keep regular contacts with the partners for the fulfilment of their tasks.

While the presence/absence of the first three dimensions of cooperation is considered as a condition of eligibility of project proposals, their actual shaping in project proposals will be also qualitatively assessed, whereas the fourth dimension (joint staffing) will be evaluated only as a quality element.

13 Location of the operation and related activities

In accordance with the requirements for the geographical location of partners (art. 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013), the ADRION programme supports activities that are implemented in the programme area (the Union part of the programme area and the area of the IPA Partner States) and for its benefit.

The same goes for the assimilated Italian partners, whose project management activities can, however, be implemented outside the geographical Programme area.

Specific eligibility rules must be respected in relation to the location of operation.

Location of operation

The *location of the operation* is the area where the operation is implemented/taking place: the wording 'location', 'located', 'implemented' and 'taking place' shall be used as synonyms.

The *location of an operation* must be distinguished from and cannot be confused with the place *where expenditure is incurred*, i.e. where the expenditure is generated (e.g.: in case a flight ticket to a third country outside the Union part of the programme area is booked in the Union part of the programme area, the expenditure will be generated and thus incurred in the Union part of the programme area). The place where the *expenditure is paid* could be different from the place where expenditure is generated and it has no impact on the place where the expenditure is incurred (in case a hotel outside the Union part of the programme area is booked within the Union part of the programme area, the expenditure will be generated and thus incurred within the Union part of the programme area even if the hotel bill is paid outside the Union part of the programme area).

In relation to what above, and in accordance with art. 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, activities of the ERDF partners:

a) shall be implemented within the Union part of the Programme area; activities of ERDF partners outside the Union part of the Programme area but within the Union can be accepted on a case by case basis (e.g.: participation to an event taking place in Brussels), provided the following conditions are met:
   - are for the benefit of the project and considered as essential for its implementation.
   - are clearly mentioned in the AF, or, if not, have been authorized in advance by the MA/JS during the project implementation phase.

   No activities of different nature than those mentioned above shall be accepted.

b) Implemented within one of the IPA Partner State involved in the Programme, the total amount allocated for the implementation of these activities cannot be higher than 20% of the project budget.

IPA partners shall implement their activities within their countries.

Travel destinations

ERDF project partners: there is no budget ceiling to be respected while defining the travel and accommodation costs related to travels *inside the Union part of the programme area*; travels outside the Union part of the programme area but within the EU shall be duly justified.

ERDF project partners do not have to comply with any budget ceiling in case they travel *outside the Union part of the programme area* (i.e.: to the IPA Partner States) on conditions that costs are covered by daily allowance. If this condition does not apply, meals, accommodation and local travel costs are counted under the ceiling of 20% of the total project budget.

IPA project partners: all travels and accommodation, irrespective the destination, shall not be higher than 20% of the total eligible project budget.

Further information is provided in paragraph 16.4.3.

Project partners from non EU Countries (outside the programme area): all travels and accommodation shall be paid by their own funds.

Example

	Destination **Travel and accommodation costs**		
Location of the partner	**Greece**	**Albania**	**Belgium**
Greece	No ceiling	20% project eligible budget No ceiling (if allowance applies)	No ceiling (but it has to be duly justified)
Albania (Inside the programme but outside the EU part of the programme area)	20% project eligible budget	20% project eligible budget	20% project eligible budget
Turkey	Own funds	Own funds	Own funds

As far as the associated partners are concerned, they shall be requested to indicate in their Declaration (see paragraph 17) which financing partner shall fund their travel and accommodation expenditure.

14 Project duration

As far as the first call for proposals is concerned, the project implementation shall not be longer than 24 months. Applicants shall indicate the start and end date in the AF, taking into account the necessary time for the evaluation process and contracting procedures. Approved operations will be offered the possibility of modifying this starting date and project duration as reported in the AF before the signature of the subsidy contract.

The *preparatory phase* for the elaboration of the project proposal and the time needed for project administrative and financial closure shall be separately considered, i.e. added to the implementation period.

The preparatory phase can start as from 1st January 2014 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. Any preparation costs incurred by the partnership shall be indicated in the AF, under the specific budget line(s) concerned and included under the budget of the affected partners.

The preparation costs shall have the form of a lump sum reimbursement: this means that in case of project approval, preparation costs shall be reimbursed to partners with no need to present invoices or other administrative justification for the incurred costs.

Details on the preparation costs are provided in the paragraph 19.1.4.

The *implementation phase* starts with the date of signature of the subsidy contract or with an earlier date if the project so decides: in this latter case the partnership decides, at its own risk, to start the project implementation irrespective the decision for funding of the MC.

Operations shall not be selected where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for funding is submitted to the MA, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made by the beneficiaries.

Planned activities shall be implemented within the indicated project start and end date.

The *project closure phase* refers to the finalization of all the legal and administrative obligations related to the granted activities and to incurred expenditure. It includes the preparation of the last progress report, the final report and the reconciliation with the initial granted amount, if necessary. These activities take place after the project official finalization of activities reported in the AF and can last not more than 3 months.

Details on how to structure the project activities are provided in paragraph 19.1 "*project work packages*".

15 Funding method

ADRION contribution is 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, i.e.:

a) **Public funding**: public co-financing provided by central, regional or local public bodies, obtained either through specific-co-financing schemes established at Partner State 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[10];

b) **Own resources of International Organizations**: they may be considered as public co-financing, depending on the decision by the National Authorities of the Partner States where such organisation is 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.

[10] In the Application Form, Lead Partner and Project Partners' declaration public funding is disentangled in *Automatic public contribution* and *Other public contribution*.

Each financing partner involved in a project proposal, regardless its status, shall declare the nature of its co-financing while submitting the AF (see paragraph 17) in the form of a declaration.

A general overview on the national co-financing systems of the ADRION Partner States is available on the Programme website.

16 Project budget

The system of financing is a budget-based grant (eligible costs). The grants are financed through reimbursement of eligible costs and will be calculated on the basis of a detailed estimated budget, indicating clearly the costs that are eligible for ERDF/IPA funding. Eligible partners shall ensure stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure both project implementation and the continuity of the organisation activities throughout the lifespan of the project.

The EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiaries (profit is defined as a surplus of receipts over eligible costs incurred by the beneficiaries).

The budget of the project must be drafted following the real cost principle[11], fully accomplishing the principles of adequacy of costs and sound financial management. As provided under chapter 7 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 the principle of sound financial management builds on the following three principles:

- The **principle of economy:** it requires that the resources used by the beneficiary in the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price;
- The **principle of efficiency:** it concerns the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved;
- The **principle of effectiveness:** it concerns the attainment of the specific objectives set and the achievement of the intended results.

16.1 Use of Euro

The budget must be drawn up in Euro. Applicants not based in the Euro zone are advised to draft their budget share using the exchange rate published on the Official Journal of the EU on the date of the publication of the call for proposals on the ADRION website, keeping in mind that reimbursement - based on actually incurred expenditure - will have to be converted into Euro by the beneficiaries using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which such expenditure will be submitted for verification to the national controller.

The exchange rate used for accounting expenditure might be different from the one used for the purpose of drafting the budget. Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate are not eligible.

[11] Except for preparation costs and when simplified cost options (flat rate) are used for calculating costs under staff and office and administration budget lines.

16.2 Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure

Three levels of rules apply to the eligibility of expenditure in the framework of all Interreg programmes, including ADRION. The following list expressly refers to the hierarchy of rules to be respected as far as the financial rules are concerned and **it is applicable both to ERDF and IPA project partners.**

EU Regulations:

- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (Financial regulation) on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union;
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions;
- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 on the European Regional Development Fund (its art 3 refers to the scope of support from the ERDF);
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal (reference to articles No 18, 19, 20, 27 and 28);
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes;
- Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 (Common implementing regulation) laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action as far as the application of public procurement is concerned.

Programme rules

- ADRION Cooperation Programme;
- Programme Manual and other Programme guidance documents to projects issued by the MA/MC/JS (e.g.: Guidance on communication, Implementation Manual).

Only in case there are no EU level and/or Programme level provisions or they do not offer detailed provisions, national, regional or local legislation and institutional rules apply.

National rules

- National legislation;
- Local and/or regional legislation;
- Institutional rules and regulations.

National rules cannot prejudice or restrict the rules established at a higher level (EU and programme rules). Stricter programme and national rules may apply only in areas that are not precisely regulated at the EU level or where EU Regulations provide the Partner States with a discretionary power to set such rules.

Whenever different sets of rules apply to ERDF and IPA beneficiaries, these are expressly indicated in the paragraphs and sub-paragraphs below.

16.3 General eligibility requirements

In the following paragraphs a set of financial rules are presented: **they are applicable both to ERDF and IPA partners.**

As a general rule, expenditure is eligible for funding if it fulfils all the following general eligibility requirements:

- It has occurred in the eligible period defined by the Programme and within the eligible period related to the duration of the project (with the exception of preparation costs and project closure costs);
- It refers to costs occurred for the implementation of the project and in accordance with the proposal approved by the MC or its subsequent revisions approved by the Programme implementing bodies, if any;
- It is incurred within the ADRION programme area (with the specifications described in paragraph 13);
- It is essential for the implementation of the project and it would not be incurred if the project is not carried out;
- It relates to a product or service foreseen in the approved project proposal and that has been delivered and complies with publicity and information requirements;
- It is borne directly by the beneficiary and supported by accounting documents justifying incurred expenses/payments (invoices, pay rolls…) except for costs calculated as flat rates and lump sums;
- It relates to an activity which has not benefitted from financial support by another public source (double funding);
- It complies with the principle of sound financial management referred to above (efficiency, effectiveness and economy);
- It complies, if required, to the public procurement rules applicable in that Partner State;
- It is registered in the beneficiary's accounts through a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code set in place specifically for the project;
- It is not in contradiction with specific Programme rules;
- It has been validated by an authorised national controller.

In accordance with the scope of support of the Regulation (EU) No 1301/2014 the following activities **shall not be supported**:

a) The decommissioning or the construction of nuclear power stations;

b) Investment to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from activities listed in Annex I to Directive 2003/87/EC;

c) The manufacturing, processing and marketing of tobacco and tobacco products;

d) Undertakings in difficulty, as defined under Union State aid rules[12];

e) Investment in airport infrastructure unless related to environmental protection or accompanied by investment necessary to mitigate or reduce its negative environmental impact.

[12]Guidelines on State aid for rescuing and restructuring non-financial undertakings in difficulty (OJ C 249, 31.07.2014)

Without prejudice to the specific Programme rules defined in the specific paragraph, the following expenditure is considered **as not eligible** (reference to art. 69 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2014 and art. 2 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014):

- In kind contributions (in the form of provision of works, goods, services, land and real estate for which no cash payment supported by invoices, or documents of equivalent probative value, has been made);
- Interest on debt;
- Purchase of land;
- Recoverable value added tax (VAT), except where it is not recoverable under national VAT legislation;
- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
- Costs for gifts, except those not exceeding EUR 50 per gift where related to promotion, communication, publicity or information;
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate;
- Charges for national financial transactions.

The Programme also considers as not eligible the following expenditure:

- Under travel and accommodation budget line, the cost of taxis shall not be reimbursed, except when (i) it can be demonstrated that no public transport was available at the time and place needed or (ii) local transportation is covered with a daily allowance provided for by the internal rules of the concerned partner;
- Costs for alcoholic beverages;
- Costs for the creation of a project web site, as ADRION will offer in its web site space for all funded projects in order to guarantee a coordinated visibility, unless duly justified;
- Heavy investments, infrastructures and works, as described by the Directive 2014/24/EU (annex II).

Additionally, revenues, i.e.: cash in-flows *directly paid by users* for the goods and/or services provided by the project, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payments for services shall reduce the eligible expenditure and consequently the granted amount, with the exception of those operation whose total eligible budget does not exceed EUR 1.000.000. Further information shall be provided in the Implementation Manual.

Finally, 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.

16.4 Project budget lines

Project budgets submitted to ADRION must be structured according to the following budget lines: (as provided for by the Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014:

a) Staff costs;

b) Office and administrative expenditure;

c) Travel and accommodation costs;

d) External expertise and services costs;

e) Equipment expenditure.

Please note that these budget lines do not apply to all work packages as described in paragraph 19.

In the case of small scale investments implemented in pilot actions, the related expenditure must be included in the budget line e) “equipment expenditure”.

The information provided herewith is intended to help applicants to properly allocate costs to each budget line during the application phase.

Detailed guidance on how to report such costs, together with specific information on the national first level control systems in place in each Partner State, will be provided in the Implementation Manual, expected to be published by the time of the approval for funding of the operations submitted in the framework of the first call for proposals.

16.4.1 Staff costs

They refer to the gross employment costs of staff employed by the beneficiary institution (lead partner or project partner) for implementing the project. Staff can either be already employed by the beneficiary or contracted specifically for the project.

Staff costs shall be budgeted and reimbursed according to one of two options:

1. real costs;
2. flat rate of 20% of direct costs other than staff costs[13].

The choice is made at partner level and cannot be changed during the project implementation.

Staff costs reimbursed based on real costs

Eligible expenditure under this budget line is limited to:

Salary payments related to the activities which the entity would not carry out if the operation concerned was not undertaken, fixed in an employment document (employment contract or appointment decision) or by law, relating to responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned.

Payments to natural persons working for the beneficiary under a contract other than an employment/work contract may be assimilated to salary payments and such costs are eligible under staff costs only when the following conditions are met:

- The person works under the beneficiary’s instructions and, unless otherwise agreed with the beneficiary, on the beneficiary’s premises;
- The result of the work carried out belongs to the beneficiary;
- The costs are not significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.

[13]Direct costs other than staff costs are: travel and accommodation costs; external expertise and services costs; equipment expenditure.

If those conditions are not met, this expenditure must be allocated under budget line External expertise and services costs.

Any other costs directly linked to salary payments incurred and paid by the employer (such as employment taxes and social security including pensions) as covered by Regulation (EC) N 883/2004 provided that they are:

- Fixed in an employment document or by law;
- In accordance with the legislation referred to in the employment document and with standard practices in the country and/or institution where the individual staff member is working;
- Not recoverable by the employer.

Methods for calculating the eligible staff cost vary according to the type of assignment to any individual staff member, as specified below:

1. **full time**: an employee dedicated 100% of his/her working time to the project. The full-time assignment to the project must be included in the employment/work contract or in a specific statement/order issued by the partner structure. No registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) is required. In such cases the **total of the gross employment cost is eligible**.
2. **part-time with a fixed percentage of time worked per month**: an employee dedicated to the project by a fixed percentage of his/her working time. This percentage is set out in a document issued by the partner at the beginning of the project, and/or in the same employment/work contract. No registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) is required. In such cases the **fixed percentage of the gross employment cost is eligible.**
3. **part-time with a flexible number of hours worked per month**: an employee dedicated to the project by a flexible percentage of his/her working time. In such case the hourly rate shall be calculated according to the following:

   hourly rate = latest documented annual gross employment cost/1720 (standard annual working time fixed by Regulation (EU) No 481/2014).

   Eligible staff cost shall result by multiplying the hourly rate by the number of hours actually worked on the project by each concerned staff, as resulting from the working time registration system (e.g. time sheets) covering 100% of the actual working time of the individual concerned.
4. **contracted on an hourly basis**: an employee is contracted on an hourly basis and dedicates a certain number of hours to work on the project. The staff costs are calculated on the basis of the hourly rate fixed in the employment/work contract. Data from the working time registration system (e.g. time sheets) providing information on the number of hours spent per month on the project are required. Eligible staff cost shall result by multiplying the hourly rate by the number of hours actually worked on the project by each concerned individual.

Staff costs reimbursed according to the flat rate

Staff costs of any beneficiary choosing this option will be reimbursed for an amount equal to 20% of the sum of costs under all other budget lines, except “staff costs” and “office and administrative expenditure”, without the need of submitting any employment/work contract, any invoice or document having equivalent value nor any proof of payment;

The following table intends to support the choice between staff costs based on real costs and flat rate highlighting pros and cons:

Staff costs reimbursed based on real costs	Staff costs reimbursed base on flat rate (20% of the direct costs other than staff costs)
Project elaboration	
Partnership can decide, in principle, the extent of involvement of their staff;	Ceiling for staff costs;
Project appraisal shall be aimed at verifying whether the staff costs are proportioned with the proposed activities and in accordance with average personnel costs expenditure within the programme area;	Project appraisal shall be aimed at verifying whether the staff costs are in accordance with the proposed activities;
Project implementation	
Adequate audit trail of the necessary documentation shall be kept in accordance with the rules set above to get the reimbursement of staff costs;	No accountancy is foreseen (i.e.: no provision of supporting documentation shall be provided to first level controllers); When reporting staff costs, the distribution of costs between work packages shall reflect the distribution between work packages of the respective direct costs (e.g. costs for external experts and equipment amount to 40% of work package 1 and 60% of work package 2; thus 40% of staff costs shall be allocated to work package 1 and 60% to work package 2);
Staff costs expenditure shall be prior validated by the national controller to be reimbursed;	Staff costs shall not be subject to the validation of national controllers to get reimbursed;
Staff costs can be revised (increased or decreased) during the project implementation.	Flat rate option must be kept along the entire project implementation.
	Staff costs are automatically generated in the work package if costs under one or more of the following budget lines: travel and accommodation, external experts and services, and equipment are budgeted.

16.4.2 Office and administrative expenditure

It covers operating and administrative expenditure incurred by the beneficiary organisation that support delivery of project activities. Cost items comprised in the budget line are the following (exhaustive list):

- Office rent;
- Insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g. fire, theft insurances);
- Utilities (e.g. electricity, heating, water);
- Office supplies;
- General accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation;
- Archives;
- Maintenance, cleaning and repairs;
- Security;
- IT systems;
- Communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);

- Bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened;
- Charges for transnational financial transactions.

Office and administrative expenditure shall be reimbursed by the Programme according to a flat rate of 10% of eligible staff costs. No detailed budget needs to be planned for this budget line since the expenditure shall be automatically calculated by the on line system for the applications submission (e-MS), both in the application phase and when submitting financial progress reports. This expenditure will be reimbursed without the need of submitting any invoice or document having equivalent value or any proof of payment.

16.4.3 Travel and accommodation costs

Expenditure under this budget line refers to the costs incurred by the partner organisation for travels and accommodation of its own staff necessary for the delivery of the project.

The following items are eligible under this budget line:

- Travel costs (e.g. tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees);
- Meals costs;
- Accommodation costs;
- Visa costs;
- Daily allowances.

The following principles apply:

1. Travel and accommodation costs must clearly link to any project's activities and be essential for their effective delivery;
2. Costs must be definitely borne by the beneficiary organisation (direct payment by a staff member of the partner organisation must be supported by a proof of reimbursement from the employer);
3. The principle of sound financial management should guide to the choice of transport and accommodation. In line with the result-oriented policy approach, effectiveness should be the leading principle. In the second instance, cost-efficiency should be ensured, taking into account the entire cost of the mission (travel cost, staff costs related to the travel, etc.). In particular:
    - Beneficiaries must always choose the most economical modes of transport. Exceptions from this principle must be duly justified in each case;
    - Accommodation costs can be accepted if they are in the middle price range, while higher price ranges must be duly justified in each case;
    - Beneficiaries must respect either their ordinary internal rules for travel and accommodation costs (if any), or respect any maximum ceiling for travel and hotel costs established at national level, whichever is stricter;
    - In the absence of internal and/or national rules, maximum ceilings for travel and accommodation established by the Commission and applicable throughout the programme area shall apply. They shall be considered as maximum ceilings[14]. The amounts exceeding such values shall be in any case considered not eligible;

[14]http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/fp7/89566/flat-rates-subsistence_en.pdf.

4. Any expenditure item defined as travel costs, accommodation costs, costs of meals or visa costs that is already covered by a daily allowance, cannot be accounted for and reimbursed in addition to the daily allowance, i.e. no double funding is allowed (ref: Article 65.11 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013). Beneficiaries shall choose the accounting method (daily allowance or direct costs) which is closer to their ordinary practice and/or internal rules.

Travel and accommodation outside the Union part of the programme area must be in accordance with paragraph 13 and must be clearly indicated in the AF.

Travel and accommodation costs of:

a) External experts and service providers including speakers, chairpersons, teachers, etc. shall be reimbursed under the external expertise and services budget line; the same applies to travel and accommodation costs;

b) Associated partners can only be claimed under the external expertise and services budget line.

In case of approval of project proposals, costs for travel and accommodation for attending programme or national authorities meetings and events shall be considered as eligible: it is advisable that some additional budget is allocated to attend these events.

16.4.4 External expertise and services costs

This budget line covers costs paid by beneficiaries to external experts and service providers on the basis of contracts or written agreements and against invoices or requests for reimbursement.

Sub-contracting between beneficiaries inside the same project partnership is not allowed.

Beneficiaries can sub-contract to external experts and service providers only tasks or activities which are essential for the implementation of the project.

When awarding external expertise and service contracts all project partners irrespective their legal status must ensure that EU and national rules on public procurement are respected, in accordance with the amount of the contract. All contracts must comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment as defined in the EC Treaty and the Commission Interpretative Communication on the Community law applicable to contract awards below the EU thresholds[15].

In particular:

EU beneficiaries shall respect EU Directives and their respective national legislation on public procurement, depending on the amount concerned.

Furthermore, whenever public bodies or bodies governed by public law have defined internal rules for the purchase of goods and service below the minimum thresholds set by national laws, such internal rules must be respected.

[15](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/docs/keydocs/communication_en.pdffollow

IPA beneficiaries shall refer to Article 45 – *Procurement* – of the Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II) says that "*For the award of service, supply and work contracts, by beneficiaries the procurement procedures shall follow the provisions of Chapter 3 of Title IV of Part Two of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and of Chapter 3 of Title II of Part Two of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 which apply in the whole programme area, both on the Member State and on the IPA II beneficiary/ies' territory*". This means that the EU External Action procurement rules are to be used (PRAG) with regard to services, supplies and works contracts awarded through transnational grant[16].

In case of procurements of goods and/or services of an amount for which national legislations or internal rules of beneficiaries allow direct granting of contracts and for private beneficiaries the following Programme rules shall be respected:

Contracts below EUR 2.500 (plus VAT): beneficiaries must perform and document the execution of adequate market researches (e.g. through collecting bids, using centralised e-procurement services, etc.) from at least three independent external providers.

Contracts of more than EUR 2.500 (plus VAT): beneficiaries must perform and document the execution of adequate market researches (e.g. through collecting bids, using centralised e-procurement services, etc.) from at least from five independent external providers.

Contracts shall be awarded to the bidders offering best value for money, i.e. the economically most advantageous bid. Documentary evidence of the competitive procedure carried out shall be submitted to national First Level Control, including evidence of comparative evaluation of bids and evaluation criteria applied for awarding the contract.

Detailed information shall be provided in the Implementation Manual.

Expenditure of external expertise and service costs shall be limited to the following:

a) Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);

b) Training (e.g. venue and trainers);

c) Translations;

d) IT systems, modifications and updates (e.g. setting-up and/or update of a project IT system);

e) Promotion, communication, publicity or information;

f) Financial management;

g) Services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);

h) Participation in events (e.g. registration fees);

i) Legal consultancy and notarial services, technical and financial expertise, other consultancy and accountancy services;

j) Intellectual property rights;

k) Verification and validation of expenditure carried out by authorized national controllers;

[16]Information on the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG) can be found in: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/?header_description=DEVCO+Prag+to+financial+and+contractual+procedures+applicable+to+external+actions+financed+from+the+general+budget+of+the+EU+and+from+the+11th+EDF&header_keywords=ePrag%2C+europa

l) Provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by the programme;

m) Travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;

n) Other specific expertise and services needed for the project.

Eventual costs for promotional material (e.g.: gadgets) must be allocated under this budget line and will be considered as eligible only if it is demonstrated its efficacy in reaching one or more target groups. It is recommended that its expenditure will not be higher than 1% of the total eligible budget unless duly justified.

External expertise and services have to be duly specified in the full AF by describing at least the nature and quantity of the expertise/service, the link to the relevant deliverable or output as listed in the work plan and the related budget of the concerned project partner.

Costs referring to project-related tasks sub-contracted by the beneficiary to in-house bodies are eligible under external expertise and service budget line on condition that the following 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.

16.4.5 Equipment expenditure

This budget line covers costs related to equipment purchased, rented or leased by a beneficiary which is essential for the implementation of the project and for carrying out project activities.

Cost of equipment is only eligible if foreseen in the approved AF. During project implementation, purchase of any equipment not explicitly mentioned in the AF will have to be subject to prior approval by the MA/JS.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are:

- Office equipment;
- IT hardware and software;
- Furniture and fittings;
- Laboratory equipment;
- Machines and instruments,
- Tools or devices;
- Vehicles;
- Other specific equipment needed for the project.

In principle, the above mentioned equipment items can be grouped into the following categories:

(i) Equipment necessary for the project implementation: i.e.: a tool or device used to carry out project activities and necessary for the delivery of the project outputs and, therefore, used for that scope.

Under this category there is, for example, the equipment for general office use as computers, office furniture, printers, cameras, etc. upon condition that it is for the exclusive use for the project and it can be demonstrated. When the exclusive use for project purposes and activities cannot be demonstrated, such costs are deemed to be covered under the office and administration budget line;

(ii) Equipment considered as thematic and functional to the implementation of pilot actions (small scale investments and demonstration projects). It can be a tool or a device that remains in use by the target group after the completion of the project.

Cost items accounted under the equipment budget line cannot be reimbursed under any other budget line.

Costs of office equipment already in possession of the beneficiary organisation and used to carry out project activities are not eligible under this budget line, as such costs are already covered under the budget line office and administration.

Depreciation costs of equipment should be charged to the time period when the equipment is used for the project purposes.

The full cost of equipment is only eligible when the following conditions are cumulatively satisfied:

- Equipment item is exclusively used for the project implementation;
- The depreciation period is shorter than the time lap between the purchase of the equipment and the end of the project;
- Equipment item is not depreciable (e.g. low value asset) according to the national legislation of the concerned partner.

Moreover, the equipment cannot be sold (i.e.: change of owner) for at least 5 years after the project end date.

The selection of the suppliers for the purchasing, rental and/or leasing of any equipment item shall comply with the relevant EU and national public procurement law in force, and in case of the IPA partners, with the PRAG rules in line with the provisions of the Financial Regulation.

In case of procurement of equipment of an amount for which national legislation or internal rules of beneficiaries allow direct granting of contracts and for private beneficiaries the following Programme rules apply:

Contracts below EUR 2.500 (plus VAT): beneficiaries must perform and document the execution of adequate market researches (e.g. through collecting bids, using centralised e-procurement services, etc.) from at least three independent external providers.

Contracts of more than EUR 2.500 (plus VAT): beneficiaries must perform and document the execution of adequate market researches (e.g. through collecting bids, using centralised e-procurement services, etc.) from at least from five independent external providers.

Contracts shall be awarded to the bidders offering best value for money, i.e. the economically most advantageous bid. Documentary evidence of the competitive procedure carried out shall be submitted to national First Level Control, including evidence of comparative evaluation of bids and evaluation criteria applied for awarding the contract.

Contracts shall be awarded to the bidders offering best value for money, i.e. the economically most advantageous bid.

Documentary evidence of the competitive procedure carried out shall be submitted to national controllers, including evidence of comparative evaluation of bids and evaluation criteria applied for awarding the contract.

Detailed information shall be provided in the Implementation Manual.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION AND SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

17 Publication

The announcement of the call for proposals and the related Application Package will be published on the web site of the ADRION Programme.

The Application Package contains:

- The present manual;
- The ADRION Cooperation Programme;
- The off-line Application Form (AF);
- The compulsory annexes (templates) to be filled in and attached to the AF:
    - Lead Applicant and State aid declarations;
    - Project partner and State aid declarations;
    - Self-assessment financial viability (for private partners only);
    - Declaration of interest by each associated partners (if any).

    Declarations and self-assessment financial viability must be dated, stamped, signed in blue ink by the legal representative (or his/her authorized delegated person), and on headed paper and scanned and uploaded to the programme on line system while submitting the application form.

    Declarations signed by the legal representative/delegated person must be accompanied by a document attesting that he/she holds the power of signature and representation and by a valid identity document (e.g. identity card, passport).

The Application Package can be downloaded from the ADRION web site www.interregadrion.eu.

18 Submission of grant applications

Applications must be submitted through the online application system (e-MS) available on the programme web site www. interregadrion.eu.

Lead Applicants need to be registered to get an ID and password on the e-MS system to be able to create and submit valid application forms on behalf of the entire partnership.

Grant applications must be drawn up in English, using the online form specifically designed for this purpose.

Applications must be submitted by the deadline (date and CET time) mentioned in the announcement of the call for proposals, using the online AF.

No other method of submission of an application will be accepted. Applications submitted in any other way will be automatically rejected. No exceptions will be made.

The project proposal shall:

- Be submitted by the Lead Applicant on behalf of the entire partnership;
- Be submitted using the credentials of the Lead Applicant;
- Lead Applicant's credentials (e.g.: email address) must coincide with the email address of the legal representative as reported in the section B of the application form. Generic email addresses (e.g.: info@xxx.xx shall not be accepted).

Lead Applicants shall ensure to have officially submitted their electronic AFs and to have received an e-mail acknowledging receipt of their submission. The Lead Applicant shall regularly inform the other project partners on the communications received by the MA/JS.

Interested potential applicants are requested to submit their project proposals through a one-step application procedure, i.e.: the submission of the project proposal in its entirety.

At the stage of electronic submission of project proposal, no paper documents should be sent to the Programme MA/JS. Declarations in original shall be asked to the applicants only if their application is approved for funding.

19 Structure of the Application Form

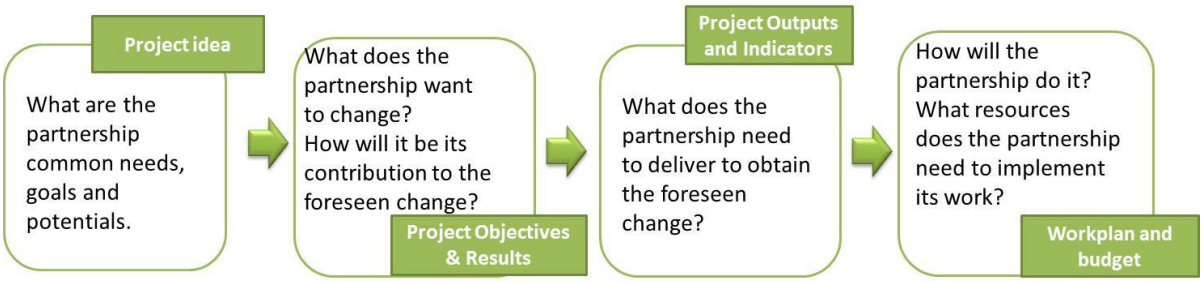
The Application Form is structured according to the following:

1. *Project summary*;
2. *Partnership*;
3. *Project description;*
4. *Work plan,* structured according to work packages;
5. *Project budget overview;*
6. *Partners' budget;*
7. *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.

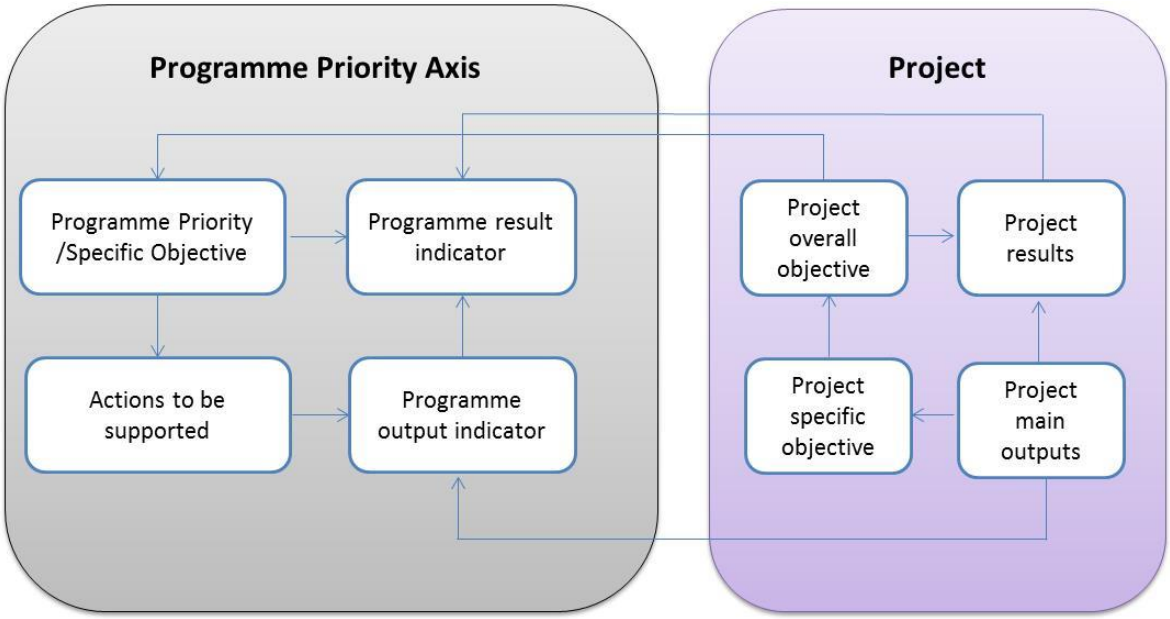
Its intervention logic can be visualized as follows:



The submitted project proposal must show a direct link to the programme intervention logic (see paragraph 3.3 and Annex 1) and its contribution to the programme objectives achievement:

- The project main overall objective contributes to the programme priority specific objective; the project overall objective describes the general, strategic and long term change the project intends to support for the benefit of the identified target group(s);

- The project specific objective describes the specific and immediate effects of the project that can be realistically achieved within the project life-time; The project result contributes to programme result, even if project results will not be directly aggregated on programme level, as programme result indicator measures the change in the whole programme area;
- The project outputs contribute to the achievement of programme outputs so they can be aggregated at programme level.



Under the terms of the first call for proposals, a project proposal must focus on one Priority Axis and one of its related Specific Objectives.

19.1 Project work packages

Project activities within the frame of the ADRION Programme shall be organised around work packages, i.e.: a group of related project activities necessary to produce project deliverables and outputs. The organisation of the activities in work packages ensures a shared knowledge about the project's structure and objectives among all partners; additionally, it increases the capacities of the ADRION Programme MA/JS to follow up the implementation of the expected activities and facilitates the procedures for reporting and accounting of expenditure.

Each work package, structured in activities, shall provide information on the partners involved, the description of the related deliverables and expected outputs, and the related budget.

More specifically, each work package is composed of defined activities and related deliverables and expected outputs:

- An activity is a specific task performed for which resources are used; the proposed activities shall have a logical sequence and for the direct benefit of the area concerned by the authorities involved in the project;

- A deliverable is a tangible or intangible object produced as a side-product of the project that contributes to the achievement of a project output. More than one deliverables can be necessary to produce one output;
- An output is what has actually been produced as a result of the funding given to the project. It shall be captured by an output indicator and directly contributes to the achievement of project result(s).

The partnership can structure its project proposal according to a maximum number work packages; some of them are, however, compulsory:

a) Project management and coordination of activities;

b) Communication;

c) Project implementation – which can be disentangled in further 3 work packages.

19.1.1 Project management and coordination of activities

In this work package the activities aim at ensuring a sound management and coordination of the project concerning: both the overall project management and all aspects linked to the financial management must be described. It shall also provide proof on how the work between the partners involved by building a strong collaborative relationship is organized and distributed. The coordination and management activities shall result in the successful implementation of the project as well as in the production and submission of the administrative documents for accounting of expenditure and reporting on the activities implemented.

Structure, responsibilities, and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination (including whether it is foreseen the externalization of the management), the reporting and evaluation procedures, if foreseen, risk and quality management shall be included in this work package.

The work package shall also include the activities related to the project closure that have to be finalized within 3 months after the official end date of the project: they include the submission of the required final administrative documents - the final progress report – the final payment claim and the eventual reconciliation with the initial granted amount, if necessary.

19.1.2 Communication activities

The communication work package shall include the strategic planning of activities and clear indication of the target group(s) to address. Communication objectives must be specific and measurable (i.e.: proposing of “raising awareness” or to “spread results” without providing to whom and how is not enough).

The following elements shall be considered:

- Identification and definition of the objective, message, approach/tactics chosen and target group the project intends to achieve;
- Integration with the overall project strategy and project specific objectives;
- Quantification of the communication products (target values), detailed planning of their realization and estimated budget;
- Specification between internal (management) and external communication;
- Definition of the related budget;
- Interaction of the partners (e.g.: activities implemented at partner level, dissemination of results);

- Measurement of the efficiency of the planned communication activities;
- Provisions for feedback mechanisms and evaluation measures for the communication activities;
- Insurance of adequate capitalization of the project achievements (capturing knowledge produced by the project and drawing lessons on an ongoing basis).

In order to ensure a shared and consistent brand identity of the ADRION programme a common brand identity has been developed. Each approved operation shall be required to use an integrated project logo (template to be provided by the ADRION programme).

Additionally, in order to ensure accessibility, durability and consistency of the information, each ADRION project will have its own dedicated page on the programme website, showcasing the project to a wide audience. The project page(s) will include a pre-filled information field completed by the programme, and dynamic information to be filled-in by projects.

Targeted information shall be provided in the Implementation Manual.

19.1.3 Project implementation

The project implementation is the heart of the project and describes what the partnership intends to implement to reach the foreseen goals.

One up to three work packages can be devoted to describe the project implementation; it refers to a group of related project activities necessary for the realization of the described project outputs and goals.

The realization of pilot actions (demonstration activities or small scale investments) shall be included in one of these work packages.

Each project proposal shall contribute to the realization of at least 2 programme outputs; project outputs must feed programme output indicators.

19.1.4 Non-compulsory work packages

Preparation costs

The approved projects which have successfully signed the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement with the MA are entitled to receive reimbursement of their preparation costs in the form of a lump-sum of max EUR 11.800 of total eligible expenditure per project[17]. That means that in case projects implement activities related to the preparation of the project proposal in the AF (the lump sum is not automatic), they will be reimbursed with no need to present invoices or other supporting documents for the incurred costs.

The reimbursement of preparation costs will follow the principles specified hereunder:

- Any preparatory costs incurred by the partnership must be indicated in the AF, under the specific budget line(s) concerned and included under the budget of the concerned partners;
- The formal request for reimbursement of the preparatory costs can be submitted by the Lead Partner only after the signature of the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement;

[17] Reimbursement shall take place if funds are available; if not they will be reimbursed together with the first request for reimbursement sent by the projects.

- The amount of actual reimbursement will result from applying the co-financing rate applicable (up to 85%) to the respective preparatory cost budget of the concerned partners (e.g. to which the lump sum is allocated), as indicated in the AF;
- The lump sum will be reimbursed to the Lead Partner; it will be its duty to transfer to its partners their respective shares, according to the approved preparatory costs;
- Any costs incurred by the projects between the date of submission of the AF and the date of signature of the subsidy contracts (between the end of the preparation period and the start of the implementation period) for negotiating/satisfying specific conditions for approval cannot be claimed as they are not considered part of the preparation costs;
- In case a project is not implemented or even started, the MA will recover the amounts of EU funds already reimbursed based on this lump-sum.

Under the Work Package Preparation costs all budget lines but equipment can be budgeted.

20 Assessment of the applications

The assessment of the application is coordinated by the MA and performed by the JS, with the support of the NCPs and eventually of external experts selected through dedicated Call for Applicants.

In order to ensure equal, fair and transparent approach, the project proposals are assessed according to a set of criteria and sub-criteria previously elaborated by the Programme, approved by the MC and specified in the Annexes 4 and 5. The results of the assessment are reported in a project assessment grid to be prepared for the supporting the MC decision.

The MC is in charge of the final decision on the selection of the operations for funding.

Only the information provided in the application form shall be subject to the assessment.

20.1 Admissibility and eligibility check

The admissibility and eligibility checks are aimed at ensuring the minimum project requirements.

Only those applications which successfully pass these checks are allow to progress in the evaluation process. The list of administrative and eligibility checks to be fulfilled is provided in Annex 4.

It is not possible to remedy any mistake of those listed in Annex 4.

In case other formal mistakes are detected than those listed in Annex 4, the Lead Applicant shall have the chance of remedying it in a maximum of 5 working days from the receipt of the communication by the JS.

The verification of the presence of all the requirements is performed by the JS with the support of the NCPs which will be mainly in charge of verifying the correctness of the applicants' legal status. Applicants can be contacted by their NCPs for the submission of further documentation aimed at confirming their declarations or other formal statements included in the AF.

Results of the admissibility/eligibility check shall be communicated to the MC for endorsement.

All Lead Applicants shall be informed about the results of the admissibility and eligibility checks.

20.2 Quality assessment

Only those applications which have passed the admissibility and eligibility check shall be assessed from a quality point of view.

The goal of the quality assessment is to provide the MC an overall picture containing the relevant information in order to allow its approval or rejection.

The quality assessment shall be performed by the JS in cooperation with the eventual support of a team of experts.

As mentioned above, the assessment is performed according to a list of criteria and sub-criteria and their fulfilment by the project proposal.

The quality assessment criteria are divided into two 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. foreseen achievements.

Strategic assessment **Group 1**	*Criteria*
	Project's context (relevance and strategy)
	Cooperation character
	Partnership relevance
	Project's contribution to programme's objectives
Operational assessment **Group 2**	*Criteria*
	Management
	Communication
	Work plan
	Budget

Moreover, each sub-criterion will be attributed a score ranging from 1 to 5 according to the following grid:

5	**Excellent** – the section of the application analysed in accordance with the requirement of the criterion is of excellent quality and provides clear and coherent information
4	**Good**– the section of the application analysed in accordance with the requirement of the criterion is clear and contain minor shortcomings
3	**Adequate** -the section of the application analysed in accordance with the requirement of the criterion is sufficiently clear and requires further clarification from the applicant
2	**Sufficient** - the section of the application analysed in accordance with the requirement of the criterion is of low quality

1	**Poor**- the section of the application analysed in accordance with the requirement of the criterion does not meet the requirement/the information is not present

The total score of each criterion is the sum of the scores attributed to each sub-criterion.

The score attributed to each Group of criteria is the sum of the scores attributed to each criterion.

The overall project score will result from summing up of each Group of criteria category/criterion score.

The quality assessment will be organised in two steps: first projects will undergo a strategic assessment according to the criteria of Group 1.

Strategic assessment

Only those project proposals having reached an overall score of at least 48/80 (60% of the overall score related to strategic elements) and of at least 12/20 for each criteria (60% of the score at criterion level) of the Strategic Assessment will be subject to the Operational assessment and be appraised according to the criteria of Group 2.

The project proposals having reached at least 60% of the overall maximum score in the Strategic Assessment shall be further appraised for the eventual attribution of an additional awarding score up to 5 points if the project proposal contributes to the implementation of the EUSAIR strategy. Overview tables highlighting the alignment between EUSAIR example of actions and ADRION and between ADRION examples of actions and EUSAIR are provided in Annex 2 and 3 respectively.

The awarding score does not contribute to the overall strategic score but it shall contribute to the overall final project score.

Operational assessment

As far as the Operational Assessment is concerned, the proposal must reach at least 48/80 (60% of the overall score related to operational elements) and of at least 12/20 for each criteria (60% of the score at criterion level).

Only those proposals having passed the quality assessment (Strategic and Operational) with an overall score of at least 96/160 (i.e.: 60% of the overall maximum score) and of at least 12/20 (60% of the score at criterion level) for each criterion shall be appraised according to the further following steps described below.

The list of the quality assessment criteria and related sub-criteria (strategic and operational) and the list criteria for the attribution of the awarding score are provided in Annex 5.

20.3 Financial capacity check of private partners

In order to minimize the risk of difficulties in further project implementation from the side of the private partners, verification on their financial capacity takes place.

The self-assessment financial viability is aimed at verifying if the private partner:

a. Has the ability in managing the project budget;

b. Has the capacity in incurring expenditure in advance;

c. Has the ability in managing the project along the project duration.

Each private partner shall fill-in a self-assessment financial viability whose template is part of the application package.

In case of private commercial partner 3 out of 4 of the following criteria shall be met:

Liquidity rate**:**	the ratio "current assets" / "current liabilities" is higher than 1
Debt rate**:**	the ratio "total debts" / "total assets" is lower than 0.8
Subvention rate*	the ratio "total grant requested divided by the number of project years" / "shareholders' equity" is lower than 1
Operating profit rate*	there is a positive operational profit

**The non-fulfilment of one of these two criteria can nevertheless lead to the acceptance of the private partner*

In case of private non-commercial partner (e.g.: NGOs) 2 out of 3 of the following criteria shall be respected:

Liquidity rate**:**	the ratio "current assets" / "current liabilities" is higher than 1
Debt rate**:**	the ratio "total debts" / "total assets" is lower than 0.8
Subvention rate	the ratio "total grant requested divided by the number of project years" / "subsidies" is lower than 1

During the eligibility check the JS verifies the correctness of the calculations reported in the declarations on the financial capacity of the private partners (see criterion 2.9 of Annex 4 and consequences of failure).

In case the application passes the assessment steps described in the previous paragraphs, the private partners shall be asked to deliver the documentation (i.e.: balance sheets or signed declarations by the board of statutory auditors) which has used to fill-in the self-assessment financial viability to provide evidence of their declaration.

The correspondence between the aforementioned declarations and the last two years' balance sheets or signed declarations by the board of statutory auditors shall be verified.

In case the affected project partner(s) does not submit the required documentation within the set deadline or the verifications highlight mismatching, it will be excluded from the partnership. Its exclusion – depending on the number of partners involved in the project proposal – may also determine the ineligibility of the project proposal.

This verification shall be supported by the NCPs.

20.4 State Aid check

The State Aid check will be performed during the project evaluation and will be based on the examination of the AF and the Lead Applicant and project partners' declarations. The check is performed by external experts; in case of clarifications, the Lead Applicant may be contacted by the JS on behalf of the expert.

The analysis shall bring to one of the following outcomes:

a) The project activities are not State Aid relevant;

b) Some project activities are State Aid relevant (list shall be provided) but the application of the State Aid discipline (*de minimis*) can be avoided if specific countermeasures apply (list shall be provided);

c) The application of the State Aid discipline for some activities cannot be avoided, bringing to the respect of the *de minimis* threshold to those specific activities and partners (list shall be provided).

In case letter b), or c) or both apply, references shall be included in the conditions for improvement and then in the Subsidy Contract in order to ensure their respect; additionally, they will be regularly checked by the MA/JS during the project implementation.

20.5 Anti-fraud checks

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

The anti-fraud checks shall take place only on those applications which successfully passed all the previous checks described in the appraisal process.

The checks will be done at Partner State level by the relevant national authorities with the support of the NCPs and with the use of tools and practices currently in use (e.g.: cross checks with the national authorities administering other funds, knowledge of previous fraudulent applications and other fraudulent practice; use of EU databases).

In case the fraudulent behaviour/practice affects:

a) the lead applicant: the application form shall be rejected;
b) a project partner: it will be excluded from the project proposal; in case the exclusion of such partner(s) leads to non-fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements this will cause the rejection of the project proposal.

20.6 Finalization of the project assessment grid

The results of the assessment shall be reported in a project assessment grid to be submitted to the MC in charge of the funding decision. The assessed projects shall also be included in a ranking list according to the received overall final score.

21 Decision making and Communication to the Lead Applicants

The decision for funding is adopted by the MC by consensus.

A project proposal can be:

a) **Approved**: the proposal is considered ready to start, fulfilling the requested quality level and responding to the selection criteria;

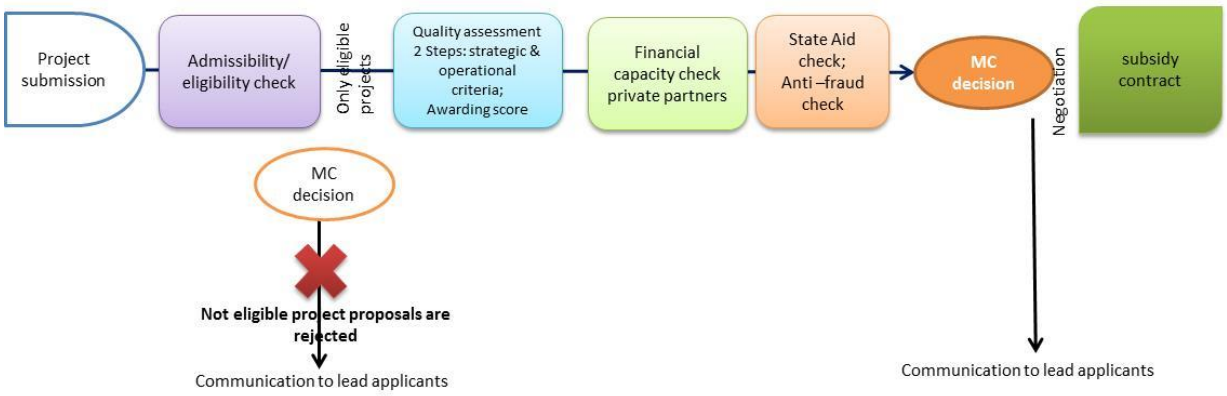
b) **Approved under conditions**: the proposal is considered approved provided that the Lead Partner and/or the project partners satisfy specific conditions within a given deadline;

c) **Rejected**: the proposal is considered not matching a certain readiness and quality level and responding to the selection criteria.

If a project proposal is funded under conditions, the latter are approved by the MC too; conditions may also foresee a lower budget than the amount requested by the partnership.

All Lead partners of the assessed projects shall be notified by MA/JS in written form about the MC decision. The Lead Applicant shall immediately inform all the partners accordingly.

The picture below summarizes the assessment process:



Additionally:

- Under no circumstances the amount awarded may exceed the amount requested;
- The grant awarding does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

The approved operations shall be asked to deliver the MA/JS within the set deadline the originals of the partners' declarations (including the financial capacity declaration(s) in case of private project partners) uploaded to the e-MS when submitting the candidature and/or their updated version if any element therein has been modified as a consequence of the negotiation process between MA/JS and the Lead Partner.

If these requirements are not met by the Lead Partner, the project becomes ineligible; if these requirements are not met by one or more partner, the partner(s) will become ineligible (or the entire project proposal, if the minimum partnership eligible requirements are no longer met).

22 Contractual provisions

Financial guarantee

In case private bodies are involved as partners, they shall provide the MA a financial guarantee for an amount corresponding to their respective share of EU contribution, as a condition for the MA to sign the Subsidy Contract.

The purpose of the guarantee is to make a bank, a financial institution or third party stand as irrevocable collateral security for, or first-call guarantor of, the grant beneficiary's obligations.

This financial guarantee, in Euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Partner States; in case of IPA Partner States, the identified bank or financial institution may provide the guarantee if it offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in an EU Member State. The financial guarantee is an eligible expenditure.

Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint or several guarantees by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same Subsidy Contract.

The guarantee shall be released after the finalization of the project, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Subsidy Contract.

Update of the de minimis declaration

As reported in paragraph 7, the *de minimis* ceiling applies both to IPA and ERDF project partners: in case the activities proposed in the approved operations by one or more ERDF or IPA project partners are State Aid relevant, and the *de minimis* regime has to be applied, the concerned partners shall provide, before the signature of the Subsidy Contract takes place, an updated declaration including the total amount of *de minimis* aid granted by Italy, where the MA is located, if any, other than the grant to be received by the ADRION programme.

Principle of non-cumulative award (double funding)

Lead and project partners must declare to inform the MA/JS on any EU or other public funding source, be international, national, regional or local, received after the signature of the Declarations signed at the time of the submission of the project proposal have changed.

If during project implementation evidence emerges that an activity/item of expenditure which is being co-financed by ERDF/IPA funds of the ADRION programme, is at the same time being co-financed by any other public fund, the MA may:

- Impose the modification of the concerned activities and/or exclude from the eligible expenditure the item which would be double-financed;
- Withdraw from the subsidy contract and demand the repayment of amounts already disbursed.

Contractual provisions

In the event a subsidy is awarded, a Subsidy Contract, drawn up in Euro and detailing the conditions and percentage of funding, will be sent to the lead partner on behalf of the entire partnership. All procedures in view of formalising the obligations of the parties will be provided as well.

The Subsidy Contract will be signed by the MA and by the Lead Partner.

Two copies of the original Subsidy Contract shall be signed by the Lead Partner on behalf of all project partners and must be returned to the MA immediately. The MA will sign them last.

As far as the Partnership Agreement is concerned, the Lead Partner shall inform the MA about its signature by all partners.

False declarations detected after the approval of the project will imply the exclusion of the concerned project partner from the partnership; if false declarations are provided by the Lead Partner, the subsidy contract will not be signed or withdrawn.

Payment procedure

The requests for reimbursement shall be submitted by the Lead Partner on behalf of the entire partnership twice a year covering a six-month activity period. Project implementation rules and instructions for the requests for reimbursement shall be provided in the Implementation Manual.

23 Advance payment

The signature of the Partnership Agreement is a condition for the disbursement of a pre-financing addressed only to the IPA partners up to 10% of their approved budget; pre-financing will be allocated according to the availability of funds by the Programme.

The advance payment shall be compensated - in equal shares - with the first two payments due to the concerned partners, according to actually incurred and validated expenditure included in the related Progress Reports.

In case the concerned partners do not manage to submit enough validated expenditure for compensating the advance payment received, the MA/JS will further enquire in order to adopt the necessary steps.

24 Publicity by the Programme

The MA, National Authorities and/or the European Commission may publish the list of operations, including:

- beneficiary name (only of legal entities; no natural persons shall be named);
- operation name;
- operation summary;
- operation start date;
- operation end date (expected date for physical completion or full implementation of the operation);
- total eligible budget allocated to the operation;
- Union co-financing rate, as per priority axis;
- operation postcode; or other appropriate location indicator;
- country;
- name of category of intervention for the operation.

25 Complaints procedure

Any complaint related to the assessment and selection of the project proposals shall be addressed by the Lead Applicant, on behalf of the entire partnership, to the MA. The MA, with the support of the JS and/or experts, shall examine it and provide its position regarding the merit of the complaint.

Complaints received by project partners individually shall not be taken into consideration.

If the information provided by the MA is not considered as satisfactory, the Lead Applicant, on behalf of the entire partnership, has the right to start a formal complaint on the adopted decision not later than 10 working days after the receipt of the decision of the MC. Complaints received by project partners individually shall not be taken into consideration.

In this case, the MA will present the case for examination and final decision to a complaint committee composed by the MC and representatives of the MA.

In principle, the reasons for complaints must be well grounded and shall follow a specific procedure. Reasons for complaints shall only refer to the following reasons:

a) The assessment does not take into account the information provided in the AF;

b) The project assessment procedure has not followed what reported in the call for proposals and/or in the Programme Manual.

26 Data Protection

All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data[18].

The applicant's replies to the questions in the AF are necessary to evaluate and further process the grant application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposals. Personal data will be processed solely for that purpose by the MA and JS. Personal data may be transferred on a need to know basis to third parties involved in the evaluation of applications or in the grant management procedure, without prejudice of transfer to the bodies in charge of monitoring and inspection tasks in accordance with EU law. In particular, for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interests of the Union, personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, or to the European Anti-Fraud Office.

The applicant has the right of access to, and to rectify, the data concerning him or her. For any question relating to these data, please contact the MA/JS.

27 Contacts

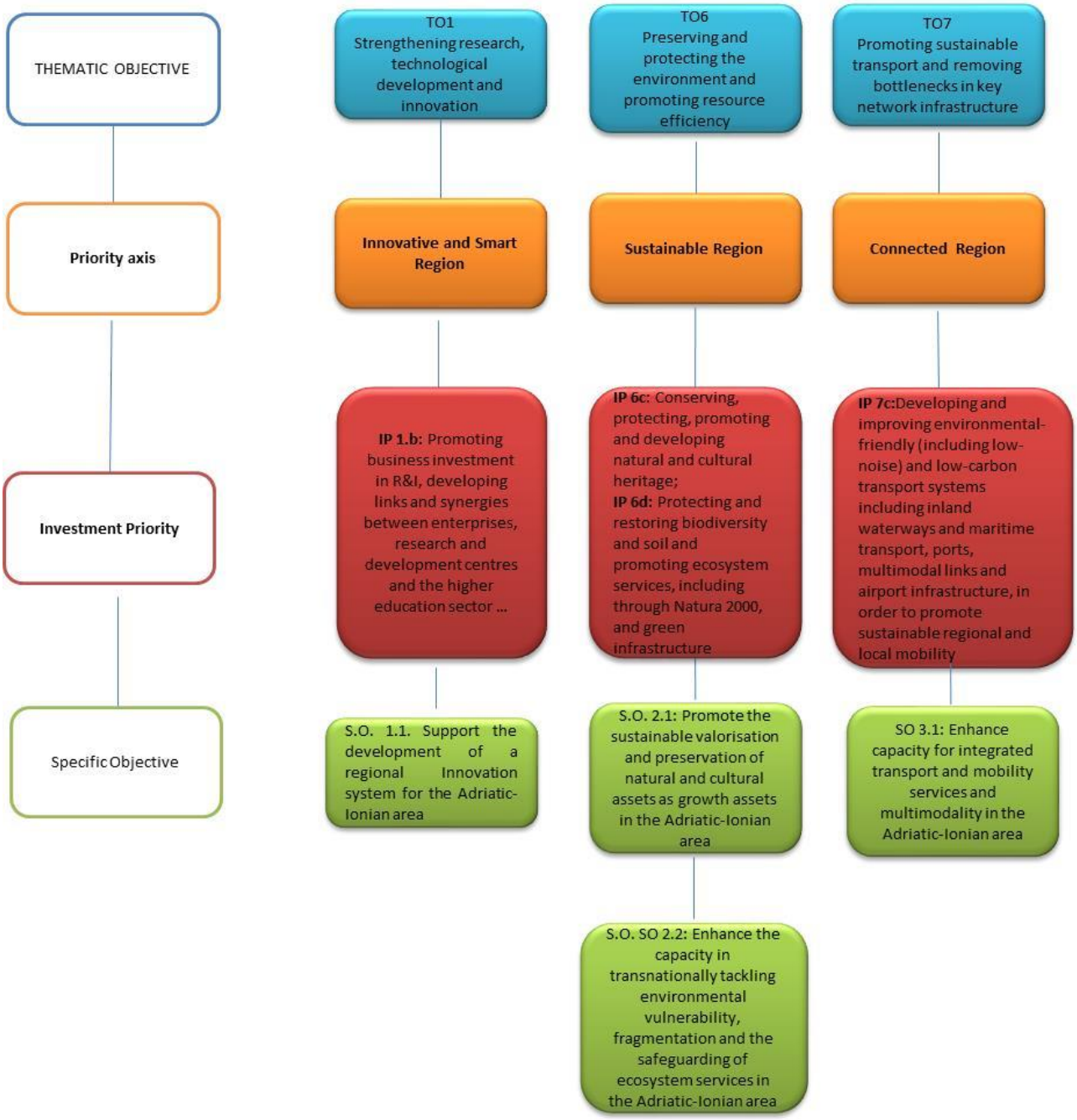
For any further information please contact:

- the NCP of your Partner State: coordinates are reported on the ADRION web site;
- The ADRION programme: info@interregadrion.eu

It is warmly recommended that the Lead Applicants address to the JS and the project partners applicants to the NCPs.

[18] Official Journal L 8, 12.1.2001.

Annex 1 – programme intervention logic



Priority Axis 1
Innovative and Smart Region

Investment Priority 1b
Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector

Specific Objective 1.1
Support the development of a regional Innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area

Expected Results

- Common understanding among ADRION Partner States on the potential fields of transnational innovation actions and fostering diffusion and uptake of innovation;
- Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties;
- Improvement of the framework conditions (awareness and foresight, legal, economic aspects, innovation governance, organisational issues, policy solutions, technology impact assessments);
- Mobilisation of stakeholders in the fields of research, innovation and utilisation in order to increase knowledge transfer between business, users, academia and administration actors (quadruple helix approach);
- Identification of emerging market opportunities in relation to the programme area competitive advantages, the fields of the EUSAIR and the smart specialisation strategies of the regions in order to develop an ADRION "critical mass";

Result indicator
Level of capacity of key innovation actors to be effectively involved in transnational actions for the development of a regional Innovation system.

Indicative actions

- Establishment of transnational innovation networks in order to visualise possible options for cooperation in the ADRION area, identify relevant sectors of common interest, map existing research and innovation resources, and secure coordination with the EUSAIR, regional and national RIS3 strategies, innovation governance initiatives and competence networks;
- Analysis of the framework conditions for innovation (legal, financial, administrative, technical, social, cultural and environmental) in order to define the "feasible domain" for innovation in the ADRION area;
- Development of framework structures related to the consultation on legal, intellectual property, technical and financial issues and provision of related services especially for SMEs (including start-ups, spin-offs, collaborations), such as the support for Identifying access schemes to financial engineering for proof of concept mechanisms for start-ups;
- Development of actions for raising competencies/skills of the stakeholders specially focusing on the involvement of partners from candidate and potential candidate countries including education and training concepts for the uptake and diffusion of innovation and circular knowledge management promoting the mobility of Researchers and PhD candidates in the ADRION region;
- Development of platforms for knowledge sharing (knowledge innovative communities, data clouds) and creation of functional networks of joint distributed research facilities;
- Development of transnational "quadruple helix" clusters in common interest fields addressing all stages of the innovation cycle, including idea generation, conception and prototyping, transfer, patenting, commercialization, etc.;
- Development of transnational models for the design, testing, up-scaling, comparison and evaluation of innovations (policies, tools, processes, actors, organisations and interfaces);
- Development of transnationally designed products, services, investment models and funding support instruments of business support centres, chambers of commerce, public administration and financing institutions;
- Development of strategies, schemes and tools for improving creativity and innovative approaches in the whole spectrum of the society including education, social services health, volunteer organisations and social enterprises;
- Building up transnational networks for the transfer of knowledge among public administration on technological solutions;
- Facilitating policy learning by integrating also results generated through previous EU initiatives related to innovation and cluster support, for instance the Regions of Knowledge (FP7) that promoted Europe-wide cooperation between public and private research centres, enterprises and authorities and supported regional research-driven clusters;
- Promoting the development of eco-innovation technologies related to air quality and emission control (e.g. cleaner domestic combustion installations, fuel switching emission abatement technologies or power supply from the shore for vessels for sustainable ports.

Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Target value (2023)
Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises (Number)		1000
Number of supported transnational cooperation networks and clusters	Number		8
Number of strategies and action plans developed by transnational innovation networks and clusters	Number	2	12

Target groups	▪ General public; ▪ Local public authorities; ▪ Regional public authorities; ▪ National public authorities; ▪ Agencies; ▪ International Organisations; ▪ Research organisations; ▪ (Public) service providers; ▪ Higher education institutions; ▪ Education/training centres; ▪ Business support organisations; ▪ Interest groups including NGOs and cultural/citizen organisations; ▪ Financial institutions, banks; ▪ Enterprises, including SME.

Priority Axis 2
Sustainable Region

Investment Priority 6c
Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

Specific Objective 2.1
Promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the ADRION area

Expected Results

- Common understanding among ADRION Partner States on the potential fields of transnational cooperation in tourism and consensus-building on the content of sustainable valorisation and tourism under an ADRION brand;
- Enhancement of the competencies/skills of relevant stakeholders parties in the fields of sustainable valorisation and tourism;
- Enhancement of the "body of knowledge" through transnational research, pilots, tools and experimentation;
- Development of a well-defined transnational identity and raising awareness on common heritage in the Adriatic-Ionian area as an orientation framework for individual actions;
- Improved involvement of tourism stakeholders, visitors and the society for the development of jointly agreed utilisation approaches;
- Preserved natural and cultural heritage and valorised within the Programme area brand name;
- Diversification of tourism products along topic, season, target group and environmental and social impact.

Result indicator
Level of capacity for the stakeholders in the fields of natural and cultural heritage protection and tourism to sustainably valorise natural and cultural heritage as a growth asset.

Indicative actions

- Creation of transnational networks and working groups for the definition of the principles of ADRION's sustainable cultural/natural and tourism valorisation as well as the development of an ADRION brand name;
- Support to the exchange of best practices for the identification of challenges and trends in the tourism sector including marketing, management of increased tourism flows, including joint analysis of tourism, trends and their potential impact, joint access to new tourism markets, business opportunities and dissemination of new technologies and know-how;
- Development of actions for raising competencies/skills in cultural heritage preservation on sustainable tourism and tourism management of the stakeholders specially focusing on the involvement of actors from small tourism locations and facilities;
- Formulation of implementation strategies, set up and testing of clusters and models to better preserve, capitalize and innovate cultural and natural heritage and either combine them with tourism or maintain them for their intrinsic value by enterprises, research institutions, NGOs and local population using exchange of experiences, mutual learning and pilot activities;
- Building up of transnational networks and working groups and development of tools and pilots to monitor, evaluate and mitigate the environmental and social pressures and impacts and the risks for and by tourism;
- Set up, test and implementation of negotiation, mediation, participation and conflict resolution models in the context of tourism, culture preservation, local needs and economic growth in the context of cultural and natural heritage, especially for land uses in coastal zones;
- Organisation of knowledge transfer, exchange of good practice examples, networking and development of innovations concerning also the immaterial cultural heritage and related to the creative industries;
- Development of distinct and diversified tourism products such as transnational thematic tourism clusters and routes (e.g. monasteries routes, ancient heritage, wine routes, Adriatic-Ionian area routes etc.); seasonal variations of tourism offer (e.g.: off season arrivals for spring and autumn tourism for elder groups also in the context of climate change); offers for special interest groups (e.g. sailing, diving, mountaineering, history hobbyists, attracting visitors to inland destinations etc.); use of IT applications to generate interest on the heritage of the region; promotion of transnational nautical routes and of innovative strategies for marinas in terms of services and of their connections to the hinterland;
- Development of an integrated and coordinated approach to heritage and cultural tourism;
- Development of sustainable tourism models focusing on low carbon, on air quality improvement and decreasing PM and NO2 emissions, low ecological footprint, "slow food", involvement of young people and volunteers and other alternative offerings in line with the natural and cultural heritage in line with the ADRION brand;
- Small scale investments and demonstration projects for the provision of innovative services and products in the touristic sector, for specific forms of tourism, like cultural tourism, thematic tourism, elder citizens' services, etc.

Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Target value (2023)
Number of supported transnational cooperation networks	Number		20
Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of natural and cultural heritage and tourism	Number	3	30
Number of small scale investments and demonstration projects	Number		10
Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year		20.000

Target groups	▪ General public; ▪ Public authorities; ▪ International Organisations; ▪ Agencies; ▪ Research institutions; ▪ Higher education institutions; ▪ Schools, education/training centres; ▪ Tourism and/or cultural public or private organisations (incl. SMEs); ▪ Business support organisations; ▪ Interest groups including NGOs and cultural/citizen associations; ▪ Enterprises, including SMEs.

Priority Axis 2
Sustainable Region

Investment Priority 6d
Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

Specific Objective 2.2
Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the ADRION area

Expected Results

- Common understanding among ADRION Partner States for the *status quo*, the international and EU framework and the remaining needs of transnational cooperation in the fields of environmental protection, biodiversity management, ecosystem services and climate change adaptation;
- Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties;
- Increased availability of data and information for delivering evidence-based responses through interoperability and systematic monitoring;
- Increased transnational cooperation, exchange and communication among authorities and civil society organisations;
- Harmonised infrastructures, management structures and hazard/risk response mechanisms;
- Increased number of "*state of the art*" management and planning tools.

Result indicator
Level of capacity of the involved organisations to operate transnational, providing service and management regarding environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystems' services.

Indicative actions

- Enhancement and complement of transnational frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of existing databases, promotion of data availability, observatory functions and the integration of management approaches (hazard and risk assessment, planning methodologies, management plans, sustainability and adaptation assessments etc.) especially in coordination with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and related IPA initiatives on civil protection, floods management, risk management etc.;

- Development of implementation strategies, models and testing of pilot activities and transnational, regional and intercommunity cooperation of risk management (risk assessment, risk communication, risk managing measures and hazard prevention) and climate change adaptation in terrestrial and aquatic environments;

- Implementation of research and evaluation activities through the development of a common monitoring and assessment reference framework and the deployment of advanced tools for mapping, diagnosing, protecting and managing terrestrial and maritime landscapes and habitats including awareness-raising and environmental education;

- Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for increasing capacity and coordination in the fields of biodiversity protection e.g. in connection to the NATURA 2000 and EMERALD networks, joint management actions for large carnivores, harmonization and enforcement of national laws with EU legislation and similar actions;

- Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for increasing marine knowledge in order to ensure a sound basis for the implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, including Deep Sea Resources Monitoring & Surveillance and Management and Mapping of threats to coastal and marine biodiversity;

- Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for the development of transnational Special Spatial Plans (e.g. on RES, on tourism, on agriculture and forestry), Maritime Spatial Planning, Multiannual Fishery Management Plans and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans and Procedures;

- Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for the development of transnational terrestrial and maritime protected areas and habitats and integration thereof in the tourism product of the ADRION area;

- Development of and integration of existing transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for identifying, managing and preventing localised and diffusing pollution from various sources (oil spills from maritime transport and marine litter in general, coastal industries and discharges, accidents, nitrates from agriculture, organic load from aquaculture, noise, light- and wastewater-pollution from tourism hotspots, landfills, soil contamination etc.);

- Development of and integration of existing of transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for forecasting, managing and preventing natural and manmade hazards (forest fires, sea and river floods, industrial accidents, droughts, storms, algal blooms, earthquakes erosion and etc.) especially in coordination with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and related IPA initiatives on civil protection, floods management, risk management etc.;

- Enhancement and complement of transnational frameworks and platforms for the harmonisation and enforcement of national laws and EU legislation (e.g. implementation of the EU Flood directive (2007/60), regional Strategies and international obligations (e.g. the Barcelona Convention), with special attention on coastal urban areas and trans boundary issues, the joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response and interoperability of civil protection mechanisms and organisations;

- Enhancement and complement of transnational frameworks and platforms for the exchange of best practices especially in coordination with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and related IPA initiatives on civil protection, floods management, risk management etc., the experimentation and piloting with new innovative and integrated approaches (e.g. integrated and sustainable management of protected areas with cultural heritage as a powerful asset for inclusive economic development) approaches and the evaluation of existing and perspective methods and procedures in order to develop an ADRION environmental protection knowledge base and promotion of the topics in the society and especially among the youth;

- Improvement of the interoperability of existing databases.

All proposals and initiatives in the area of cross-border civil protection and disaster management should not overlap with the existing European structures such as the Union Civil Protection Mechanism which is the European framework for cooperation and coordination in the field of disaster prevention, preparedness and response. Activities under this Programme should be complementing and supporting the countries' participation in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and similar capacity building activities which are being provided to the region through the Mechanism and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (e.g.: regional IPA programmes on civil protection cooperation, floods management and risk assessment and mapping).

Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Target value (2023)
Number of supported transnational cooperation networks	Number		20
Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of environmental protection	Number	2	15

Target groups	▪ General public; ▪ Public authorities; ▪ Agencies; ▪ Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure management organisations; ▪ Higher education institutions; ▪ Schools, education/training centres; ▪ Business support organisations; ▪ Interest groups including NGOs and environmental/citizen associations; ▪ Enterprises, including SME.

Priority Axis 3
Connected Region

Investment Priorit 7c
Developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility

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

Expected Results

- Common understanding among ADRION Partner States of the "status quo" and the potential in the ADRION area for multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services;
- Enhancement of the competencies/skills of the stakeholders and involved parties;
- Increase in the implementation options for multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services;
- Enhanced involvement of tourism actors, residents and economic operators for investment in multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services;
- Harmonised and/or joint infrastructures, tools and management structures;
- Enhancement of the maturity and coordination of investments in multimodal, environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility infrastructures and services.

Result indicator
Level of capacity of organisations in the field of transport and mobility to transnationally plan and implement sustainable and multimodal transport and mobility solutions.

Indicative actions

- Set up of transnational frameworks, platforms and networks for the identification of existing potentials and obstacles in the fields of integrated transport, mobility services and multimodality (mapping of resources, studies, pilots and strategies, market demand e.g. for freight routes, prerequisites and "soft" factors for implementation and the monitoring of the outcomes of integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality nodes;
- Development of joint approaches and instruments in the field of maritime transport, such as a modern ship reporting system in the Adriatic Sea (Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System ADRIREP), motorways of the sea, and related port infrastructures and ITS (Intelligent Transport System);
- Building up of networks and working groups for the standardisation of legal requirements, technical specifications and capacity building in the field of planning and environmental impact assessment of intermodal transport investments and related operation and logistics services along with related communication activities;
- Establishment of networks and working groups on issues related to the design, coordination and operation of integrated environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality structures especially in metropolises, functional urban areas and in areas under land use pressure (e.g. coasts);
- Support the transfer and uptake of existing local/regional solutions and instruments; capitalisation of on-going technological innovations for a more sustainable organisation of environmental-friendly - low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality nodes, as well as new technologies applications;
- Study, design and testing of operational, technological and funding models for the preparation of infrastructure investments for environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality;
- Development of transnational platforms for the coordination of environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and infrastructures taking into account the possibilities offered by modern technologies, the environmental and seasonal constraints and the synergies of the demand by tourism, resident population and economic operators.

Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Target value (2023)
Number of supported transnational cooperation networks in the field of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems	number		6
Number of strategies and action plans developed in the field of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems	number	2	12

Target groups	▪ General public; ▪ Enterprises, including SME; ▪ Local Authorities; ▪ Regional Authorities; ▪ National Authorities; ▪ Agencies; ▪ Infrastructure and (public) service providers; ▪ Research & Engineering Institutions; ▪ Higher education institutions; ▪ Business support organisations; ▪ Interest groups including NGOs and citizen associations.

Annex 2 – Alignment between EUSAIR indicative actions and ADRION programme

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
Pillar 1 Blue Growth	*Topic 1.1* *Blue technologies*	***Action - R&D&I platforms on green sea mobility, deep sea resources, biosecurity and bio-technologies:*** to boost blue technologies in the Region, there is a need to develop macro-regional research & development & innovation platforms on selected themes of relevance. The most promising themes are green sea mobility, deep sea resources (including the development of unmanned marine vehicles), bio-security and blue bio-technologies. ***Action - Macro-regional cluster development:*** to support the establishment of transboundary clusters on promising sectors such as green shipbuilding and new materials in order to enhance exploitation of emerging technologies and internationalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises. ***Action - Researchers mobility:*** to promote "brain circulation" amongst research institutes/academies and companies as a condition for developing macro-regional cooperation in the field of blue technologies. ***Action - Improving access to finance and promoting start-ups:*** boosting blue technologies requires financial resources. Improving access to funding and promoting start-ups for development and testing prototypes or ideas is crucial, as well as supporting business spin-offs from scientific research.
	Topic 1.2 *Fisheries and aquaculture*	***Action - Scientific cooperation on fisheries and fish stocks:*** Supporting regular assessment of shared fish stocks in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas and evaluating main elements for sustainable management of fisheries are important for strategic decisions in the sector. These assessments require increasing scientific cooperation and capacities. Existing frameworks of cooperation10 should be more extensively used. ***Action - Sustainable management of fisheries:*** Multiannual fishery management plans are crucial for sustainable fisheries. In order to become useful and powerful instruments, these plans should be combined with economic impact assessment and established in close cooperation between the different areas at national or international level. ***Action - EU compliance and common standards and practices:*** In the fields of both fisheries and aquaculture, efforts are needed to develop and apply common standards and practices. Compliance with the EU *acquis* in these sectors and alignment to common standards are needed for sustainable fishery management and sustainable aquaculture, as well as for implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy. Establishment of thematic EU compliance networks may help to increase awareness among fishermen and public authorities, as well as sharing of data, exchange of experiences and best practice, and capacity building. ***Action - Diversification and profitability of fisheries and aquaculture:*** Sustainable and profitable fisheries and aquaculture require strengthened stakeholder involvement in the overall management, as well as improved and diversified activities. With regard to aquaculture, this may also imply developing tools for proper site management, environmental monitoring and improving quality schemes. ***Action - R&D platform for seafood:*** Seafood-related R&D and internationalization of existing seafood clusters are critical to

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		increasing the added value of fisheries and aquaculture products. Actions include research aiming at improving productivity, quality and environmental sustainability of aquaculture (including offshore aquaculture), as well as at increase the industry's ability to respond to market needs and to diversify its offer (new species). ***Action - Developing skills:*** Professional skills and competencies are needed as well as higher capacity to develop them. This action focuses on promoting and strengthening networks of academies and training institutes aiming to develop specific educational and (joint) training programs for fishermen and aquaculture farmers on innovative fishing and aquaculture techniques and safety at work. ***Action - Marketing of seafood products:*** Communication and customer awareness on quality and origin of seafood products are critical to creating added value throughout the fisheries and aquaculture value chains in the Region. This involves development of market intelligence to ensure that marketing and processing of fisheries and aquaculture products in the Region are clear (labelling, traceability and certification), efficient and in full compliance with applicable rules, as well as organisation of and participation in relevant fairs.
		Not aligned EUSAIR action with ADRION programme: ***Sustainable management of fisheries:*** Multiannual fishery management plans are crucial for sustainable fisheries. In order to become useful and powerful instruments, these plans should be combined with economic impact assessment and established in close cooperation between the different areas at national or international level
	Topic 3 Maritime and marine governance and services	***Action - Governance of maritime space:*** Proper joint governance of the maritime space provides an important framework for a sustainable and transparent use of maritime and marine resources. This will include supporting the implementation of the new Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (through coordinated planning) and may imply adopting clearer legal frameworks for exploiting deep-sea water and marine mineral resources. ***Action - Institutional capacity to harmonise standards and regulations:*** This action aims at improving the quality of public services and improving governance mechanisms for international cooperation. In a wide range of sectors (e.g. fishery policy, maritime spatial planning, integrated coastal management), the development of common understandings and harmonised standards and regulations as well as sharing of best practices are needed. This requires institutional capacity of the involved public bodies and stakeholders. ***Action - Data and knowledge sharing:*** This action aims at improving the evidence base for policy and decision-making in the Region. Sharing data and knowledge among public bodies in the Region can increase the efficiency of the public administration (e.g. by avoiding duplication of monitoring or data collection efforts) and increase their capacity to seize opportunities or react to challenges which can be detected earlier if data and information is shared and analysed across countries. ***Action - Maritime skills:*** Working in the maritime sectors requires skills and increasingly specialised professional profiles and expertise. This actions aims at improving the levels of skills in the Region, e.g. by strengthening networks of academics, training organisations and professional organisations in the maritime sector.

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		Not aligned EUSAIR action with ADRION programme: ***Action - Citizen and business awareness and involvement:*** This action aims at promoting citizen and business awareness regarding blue economy, new technologies, fisheries and aquaculture.
Pillar 2 Connecting the region	*Topic 2.1 Maritime transport*	***Action - Clustering port activities/services throughout the region:*** Following the example of the existing NAPA cooperation agreement, harmonising the ports processes through a common ITS (Intelligent Transport System) would attract traffic that is now avoiding the Region. ***Action - Improving and harmonising traffic monitoring and management:*** Strengthening and securing frequent exchange of information between coastal countries through the development of a Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System (by building on existing regional exchange of Automated Identification of Ships data and Ship Mandatory Reporting system, i.e. ADRIREP), will improve safety and security of maritime traffic in the region. ***Action - Developing ports, optimising port interfaces, infrastructures and procedures/operations*:** Developing the ports and port terminals in order to boost maritime transport, short-sea shipping capacity and cross-border ferry connectivity. Ports should favour development of combined infrastructure (trade, procedures, movement of goods information systems, structures, vehicles and operations), improving links to the mainland and emphasising the supply chain of goods.
	Topic 2.2 Intermodal connections to the hinterland.	○ all indicative actions with the exception of *Development of air transport.* ***Action - Developing the Western Balkans comprehensive network*:** Western Balkans need to prioritise investments on the defined SEETO comprehensive network (railway, inland waterways, nodes and hubs, notably with the motorways of the sea), aimed at promoting sustainable transport in the Region, and to prepare their integration in the Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T) network. This implies elaborating integrated planning for infrastructure developments and defining joint roadmaps for investments. ***Action - Improving the accessibility of the coastal areas and islands*:** Coastal area and island accessibility are mostly affected by tourism seasonality and commercial and passenger maritime transport are not sufficiently developed. This needs to be addressed by exploring new coordinated and market-based options, optimising use of freight and passenger routes and involving private and public stakeholders. ***Action - Developing motorways of the sea****:* Intermodal transport requires integrated management of the whole logistic chain. Essential elements are, inter alia, improved road and rail infrastructure linking ports with the hinterland and improved infrastructure within a port and ITS solutions. ***Action - Railway reform:*** Taking measures to expedite progress in **railway reform,** e.g. transparent non-discriminatory access to rail terminals, in particular in sea and inland ports, introducing a concession approach for infrastructure, with direct costoriented track access charges, performance schemes and management contracts for authorised applicants ***Action - Development of air transport*:** Establishing a dialogue amongst stakeholders on regional flight connections aiming to develop better links within the Region and to optimise year-round regional flights connections with outside destinations. ***Action – Cross-border facilitation*:** This requires physical and non-physical investments on specific transport axes.

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		Not aligned EUSAIR action with ADRION programme: ***Action - Development of air transport*:** Establishing a dialogue amongst stakeholders on regional flight connections aiming to develop better links within the Region and to optimise year-round regional flights connections with outside destinations
	Topic 2.3 Energy networks	**Not aligned with ADRION Programme**
Pillar 3 Environmental quality	*Topic 3.1 The marine environment*	○ *:* all indicative actions with the exception of *Ensure prioritisation of investments to reflect the contribution to reducing pollution of the sea;* **a) Threat to coastal and marine biodiversity** ***Action - Increasing marine knowledge:*** To ensure a sound basis for actions related to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, it is important for the Region to: - Make an inventory of marine biodiversity and detailed habitat mapping in coastal and offshore areas - Agree on a common approach to be applied across the Adriatic and Ionian sea basin for monitoring diversity descriptors on the status of the marine environment the two seas, and for determining Good Environmental Status indicators and targets - Establish a common infrastructure platform in terms of data collection, marine research, lab analysis through common survey programs, research vessels and laboratories - Develop a Web-GIS Observatory Network to gather and process geographical and statistical data related to sustainable development and the marine environment. ***Action - Enhancing the network of Marine Protected Areas***: By possible designation of new areas in coordination with the process of designation of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance under United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP MAP); by establishment of Fisheries Restricted Areas under the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), by completing marine NATURA 2000 network under Birds and Habitats Directives; by designating further protected areas to form a coherent and representative network of MPAs according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive; and by ensuring their joint or coordinated management, also in relation to maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management; ***Action - Exchanging best practices among managing authorities of Marine Protected Areas:*** Aiming to achieve and/or to maintain the Good Ecological Status of marine waters and to preserve biodiversity also by integrating a fishing component in each MPA (e.g. Fishing Protected Areas); ***Action - Implementing Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management:*** By ensuring coordination of different projects/initiatives with the frameworks provided by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Priority Action Plan of UNEP/MAP. The latter plays an important role in supporting ICM by Mediterranean countries and in implementing the ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. *b) pollution of the sea* ***Action - Implementing a life cycle approach to marine litter***. - Establishing a coordinated monitoring system and database on marine litter and marine pollution, including sources and types of litter and pollution and a GIS database on the location and sources of marine litter.

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		- Strengthening collaboration between sectors for the development of new possibilities for marine litter recycling including production of packaging waste and fishing gears to enable recycling; - Preparation of a joint strategy for the assessment, prevention and reduction of marine litter, building on the work of MED POL programme and in line with the Regional Plan of the Barcelona Convention on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, including an economic assessment of the costs and benefits of different options for reducing marine litter, as well as actions intervening at different stages of production, sources, transmission and loss. - Supporting the preventative measures to address Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), implementing gear marking and gear registration, marine spatial management, codes of practice for fishermen. ***Action - Supporting clean-up programmes*** for both floating and sunken litter, integrating these activities with recycling programmes, and investing in necessary infrastructure. ***Action - Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan*** for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response. ***Action - Identifying hotspots*** and investing in reducing emissions of pollutants by realising a Hot Spot Inventory and aiming to depollute the sea. ***Action - Ensure prioritisation of investments to reflect the contribution to reducing pollution of the sea*** in the catchment area of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. Aligning existing funding instruments, including funding from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, to support investment in waste management, waste water treatment and environmentally-friendly agricultural practices. ***Action - Address diffuse sources*** (e.g. nitrates from agriculture) by decreasing fertiliser use and by enhancing the recycling of nutrients through e.g. awareness raising among farmers on the impacts of excessive use of fertilisers, education and training activities on the implementation and financial aspects of environmentally friendly farming practices.
		Not aligned EUSAIR action with ADRION programme: ***Action - Ensure prioritisation of investments to reflect the contribution to reducing pollution of the sea*** in the catchment area of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. Aligning existing funding instruments, including funding from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, to support investment in waste management, waste water treatment and environmentally-friendly agricultural practices.
	Topic 3.2 Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	***Action – Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystems,*** which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change; ***Action - Joint population level management plans for large carnivores and awareness-raising activities***, e.g. developing GIS database of large carnivore habitats to underpin transnational planning, monitoring and management of large carnivore populations and their habitats and identifying needs for developing green infrastructure. Alleviating habitat fragmentation, and supporting awareness-raising activities, targeting the rural population, so as to increase awareness of benefits to be reaped from

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		healthy carnivore populations, notably for species preservation and for marketing areas for eco-tourism. ***Action - Harmonisation and enforcement of national laws*** with EU legislation, with respect to length and timing of hunting season, list of species which can be hunted, designation of 'no hunting' areas. Protecting migratory birds and other species through awareness-raising and capacity building, including assessing the impact of laws on species and communities. Improving the ability of nature protection authorities and customs officials to enhance enforcement of hunting laws. Awareness raising activities among local populations on the benefits of species preservation, and activities enabling the capitalisation of species preservation, including marketing of areas for eco-tourism; ***Action - Protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas and karst fields*** relevant for the Adriatic Flyway: Activities to restore wetland areas including restoration of water flows and vegetation, investments in green infrastructure and removal of grey infrastructure; clean-up of sites and investment in waste water treatment. ***Action – Awareness-raising activities on implementation and financial aspects of environmentally-friendly farming practices*** (e.g. organic farming, agri-environmental measures) complementing restoration and preservation of biodiversity. Coordination should be ensured between actions foreseen at national level through use of the existing networking, coordination and cooperation instruments, such as those under the National Rural Networks and the European Network for Rural Development.
Pillar 4 Sustainable tourism	*Topic 4.1 Diversified tourism offer (products and services)*	***Action - "Brand-building of the Adriatic Ionian tourist products/services".*** Gradual establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian brand which would posit the Region as one destination in the eyes of visitors, residents and stakeholders. This strategic approach will only be effective through a brand-building process based on a common identity and strongly collaborative efforts, pooling of joint resources, networking, partnerships in association with an appropriate communication strategy. Overall, the branding exercise should formulate a vision emphasising the clear benefits that improved tourism products/services will bring to both residents and visitors in the Region. In this regard, actors should also explore how to take stock of existing synergies. ***Action – "Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer".*** Although improving quality in tourism offer is a horizontal issue that should touch upon all topics and actions, it is to be treated also as a distinct action. Improving the quality of the existing offer and delivering new services and products of enhanced quality should be at the basis of sustainable tourism offer In this context, a tourism offer addressing specific target of tourists, such as: seniors, youth or people with disabilities, would be of interest. The tourism offer in the Adriatic-Ionian Region could also derive its strength from individual excellences in each country, in particular with regard to quality and visibility. Thanks to a critical mass of interconnected niches of excellence, the overall offer of the Region will be significantly optimised. ***Action - "Diversification of the cruise and nautical sectors and enhancement of the yachting sector"***. While the cruise and nautical sectors are already operating at a macro-regional level with a strong potential for further growth, local coastal and hinterland economies have not tapped into their full potential. Subsequently, local economies have not developed appropriate ways of managing profitably effects of intensive influx of tourists within a relative short period. By exploring alternative routes and/or business model, linking better the cruise offer to local people and products, unsustainable congestion can be better tackled and the full potential could be better exploited, with more lasting economic benefits for local economies. To secure the support of the local population, such developments should be linked to sustainable transport plans. ***Action - "Sustainable tourism R&D platform on new products and services".*** This action focuses on joining forces in the Region among university departments, research centres, innovation and technology transfer networks, together with the business community for development and marketing of new products and services, development of clusters and smart specialisation

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		strategies. ***Action - "Sustainable and thematic tourist routes".*** This action focuses on development and branding of macro-regional tourism routes, through mapping and further promoting existing routes, (i.e. cruise, motor bike, walking/hiking, cycling, sailing). In addition, one should also explore creation of new routes building on the assets and diversity of the Adriatic-Ionian Region. This will include developing strategies for attracting new niche markets, especially for cultural, luxury and business tourism. The action should build on knowledge, skills and heritage assets, which would connect and promote lesser-known destinations of the Region. ***Action - "Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage".*** In order to diversify the Region's profile in the eyes of its visitors and to extend the tourism inflows beyond the summer season, the rich cultural background and assets should be further exploited. This could be achieved by strengthening cultural cooperation. In this way the implementation of the Ljubljana process40 will be reinforced and there will be increased demand for use of the creative, cultural and natural industries sector. With a critical mass of cultural hotspots at macro-regional level certain areas could be rejuvenated and enjoy increased tourism attention. ***Action - "Improving accessibility for Adriatic-Ionian tourism products and services".*** This action is expected to adjust tourism products and services in the Region to the needs of both residents and visitors with special access needs (i.e. senior groups, young people and schools, disabled people, families with low income). By successfully creating a "critical mass" across the Region of 'year-round' accessible destinations, attractions, sights and tourism-related quality services, more tourists can be expected to be attracted while tourism flows could be maintained also in the low season. ***Action - "Upgrade of Adriatic-Ionian tourism products".*** The Region has a unique variety of products - especially in agriculture and food processing sector – generated through processes that are unique in the world. Investment opportunities may arise from exploration of new ways of entering the global markets. In addition, labelling and upgrading local products at macro-regional level is likely to result in stronger affiliation with the Region. At the same time development of local products could be an effective economic development tool.
	Topic 4.2 Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation and quality)	○ all indicative actions with the exception of *Adriatic Ionian cooperation for facilitating tourist circulation;* ***Action - Network of Sustainable Tourism businesses and clusters:*** Stimulating innovation through interaction between different tourism actors and creation of strong synergies with complementary sectors along the value chain. Useful lessons could be also learnt from applying the Smart Specialisation approach and, in particular, through adapting the Entrepreneurial discovery process, actively involving the private sector in identifying sustainable tourism activities with the most promising potential for growth and for absorbing research outputs. ***Action - Facilitating access to finance for new innovative tourism start-ups:*** This action would facilitate access to information on funding possibilities for innovative sustainable tourism start-ups, and for SMEs and university spin-offs capitalising on new research results and bringing new products and services into the sector. Establishment of joint ventures and innovation incubators can also boost the Adriatic- Ionian SMEs at an international level. This could be done through European Structural and Investment Funds, COSME programme for the competitiveness of Enterprises and small-medium-sized enterprises, and other relevant funding programmes. ***Action – Promoting the Region in world markets:*** Improving the promotion of destinations in international key markets is needed for increased tourist flows. More tourists want to discover the rich artistic and monumental heritage of a destination and to discover new places beyond the mainstream attractions of Europe. The attractiveness of the Region could, therefore, be enhanced

EUSAIR indicative actions aligned with ADRION programme		
		from common promotion campaigns in key markets49. Creating B2B and B2C European platforms would link the Region's business actors among themselves and with customers. This can give the Region a comparative advantage. **Action - *Expanding the tourist season to all year-round:*** The Action will seek to alleviate seasonality in the Adriatic Ionian, and expand the tourist season. It will promote off-season tourism (such as culture activities, comfortable transport and accommodation), target markets (such as senior and accessible tourism, business and conference tourism, winter tourism, rural tourism) and design a strategy for setting Adriatic-Ionian as an excellent off-season destination. ***Action – Training in vocational and entrepreneurial skills in tourism:*** Tourism in the Region is experiencing a gap in skills; a lack of qualified and skilled labour represents (together with increased competition from other destinations) a main threat for the sector. Tourism entrepreneurship is also in need of strategic information, new learning concepts taking into account new global tourism trends and new management concepts. The action will focus on the need for training for SMEs (including e-training), the creation of an Adriatic-Ionian Observatory on Sustainable Tourism skills, and training for tourism entrepreneurship. ***Action - Adriatic Ionian cooperation for facilitating tourist circulation:*** Given the current fragmented cooperation at macro-regional level, framework conditions for better overall cooperation in tourism are needed. Common procedures on visas, and nautical licenses valid for visitors wishing to visit a range of Adriatic and Ionian attractions, revising the legislative regime for skippers and recreational boating and establishing stable and simplified legislative and fiscal framework are some of the actions needed for considerably increasing the tourism inflows. ***Action - Adriatic-Ionian action for more sustainable and responsible tourism****:* This action would include the establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian Charter to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices in the Region. It would be based on tested ideas and practices to be easily taken up by the sector actors, and especially the SMEs that form the majority of tourism enterprises. It would promote the use of indicators to measure sustainable development at destination level
		Not aligned EUSAIR action with ADRION programme: ***Action - Adriatic Ionian cooperation for facilitating tourist circulation:*** Given the current fragmented cooperation at macro-regional level, framework conditions for better overall cooperation in tourism are needed. Common procedures on visas, and nautical licenses valid for visitors wishing to visit a range of Adriatic and Ionian attractions, revising the legislative regime for skippers and recreational boating and establishing stable and simplified legislative and fiscal framework are some of the actions needed for considerably increasing the tourism inflows.

Annex 3 – Alignment between ADRION and EUSAIR indicative actions

Priority Axis 1 – Innovative and Smart Region
Specific Objective 1.1: Support the development of a regional Innovation system for the Adriatic-Ionian area

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Establishment of transnational innovation networks in order to visualise possible options for cooperation in the ADRION area, identify relevant sectors of common interest, map existing research and innovation resources, and secure coordination with the EUSAIR, regional and national RIS3 strategies, innovation governance initiatives and competence networks.	**Blue technologies**	**R&D&I platforms on green sea mobility, deep sea resources, biosecurity and bio-technologie**s: to boost blue technologies in the Region, there is a need to develop macro-regional research & development & innovation platforms on selected themes of relevance. The most promising themes are green sea mobility, deep sea resources (including the development of unmanned marine vehicles), bio-security and blue bio-technologies.
		Macro-regional cluster development: to support the establishment of transboundary clusters on promising sectors such as green shipbuilding and new materials in order to enhance exploitation of emerging technologies and internationalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises.
	Fisheries and Aquaculture	**Scientific cooperation on fisheries and fish stocks**: Supporting regular assessment of shared fish stocks in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas and evaluating main elements for sustainable management of fisheries are important for strategic decisions in the sector. These assessments require increasing scientific cooperation and capacities. Existing frameworks of cooperation should be more extensively used.
		R&D platform for seafood: Seafood-related R&D and internationalisation of existing seafood clusters are critical to increasing the added value of fisheries and aquaculture products. Actions include research aiming at improving productivity, quality and environmental sustainability of aquaculture (including offshore aquaculture), as well as at increase the industry's ability to respond to market needs and to diversify its offer (new species).
	Maritime and marine governance & services	**Governance of maritime space**: Proper joint governance of the maritime space provides an important framework for a sustainable and transparent use of maritime and marine resources. This will include supporting the implementation of the new Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (through coordinated planning) and may imply adopting clearer legal frameworks for exploiting deep-sea water and marine mineral resources.
		Data and knowledge sharing: This action aims at improving the evidence base for policy and decision-making in the Region. Sharing data and knowledge among public bodies in the Region can increase the efficiency of the public administration (e.g. by avoiding duplication of monitoring or data collection efforts) and increase their capacity to seize opportunities or react to challenges which can be detected earlier if data and information is shared and analysed across countries.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Analysis of the framework conditions for innovation (legal, financial, administrative, technical, social, cultural and environmental) in order to define the "feasible domain" for innovation in the ADRION area.	**Blue technologies**	**Improving access to finance and promoting start-up**s: boosting blue technologies requires financial resources. Improving access to funding and promoting start-ups for development and testing prototypes or ideas is crucial, as well as supporting business spin-offs from scientific research.
Development of framework structures related to the consultation on legal, intellectual property, technical and financial issues and provision of related services especially for SMEs (including startups, spin-offs, collaborations), such as the support for Identifying access schemes to financial engineering for proof of concept mechanisms for start-ups.	**Blue technologies**	**Improving access to finance and promoting start-up**s: boosting blue technologies requires financial resources. Improving access to funding and promoting start-ups for development and testing prototypes or ideas is crucial, as well as supporting business spin-offs from scientific research.
	Fisheries and Aquaculture	**EU compliance and common standards and practices**: In the fields of both fisheries and aquaculture, efforts are needed to develop and apply common standards and practices. Compliance with the EU acquis in these sectors and alignment to common standards are needed for sustainable fishery management and sustainable aquaculture, as well as for implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy. Establishment of thematic EU compliance networks may help to increase awareness among fishermen and public authorities, as well as sharing of data, exchange of experiences and best practice, and capacity building.
Development of actions for raising competencies/skills of the stakeholders specially focusing on the involvement of partners from candidate and potential candidate countries including education and training concepts for the uptake and diffusion of innovation and circular knowledge management promoting the mobility of Researchers and PhD candidates in the ADRION region.	**Blue technologies**	**Researchers mobility**: to promote "brain circulation" amongst research institutes/academies and companies as a condition for developing macro-regional cooperation in the field of blue technologies.
	Fisheries and Aquaculture	**Developing skills**: Professional skills and competencies are needed as well as higher capacity to develop them. This action focuses on promoting and strengthening networks of academies and training institutes aiming to develop specific educational and (joint) training programs for fishermen and aquaculture farmers on innovative fishing and aquaculture techniques and safety at work.
	Maritime and marine governance & services	**Maritime skills**: Working in the maritime sectors requires skills and increasingly specialised professional profiles and expertise. This actions aims at improving the levels of skills in the Region, e.g. by strengthening networks of academics, training organisations and professional organisations in the maritime sector.
Development of platforms for knowledge sharing (knowledge innovative communities, data clouds) and creation of functional networks of joint distributed research facilities.	**Fisheries and Aquaculture**	**Scientific cooperation on fisheries and fish stocks**: Supporting regular assessment of shared fish stocks in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas and evaluating main elements for sustainable management of fisheries are important for strategic decisions in the sector. These assessments require increasing scientific cooperation and capacities. Existing frameworks of cooperation should be more extensively used.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
	Maritime and marine governance & services	**Data and knowledge sharing:** This action aims at improving the evidence base for policy and decision-making in the Region. Sharing data and knowledge among public bodies in the Region can increase the efficiency of the public administration (e.g. by avoiding duplication of monitoring or data collection efforts) and increase their capacity to seize opportunities or react to challenges which can be detected earlier if data and information is shared and analysed across countries.
Development of transnational "quadruple helix" clusters in common interest fields addressing all stages of the innovation cycle, including idea generation, conception and prototyping, transfer, patenting, commercialization, etc..	**Blue technologies**	**Macro-regional cluster development:** to support the establishment of transboundary clusters on promising sectors such as green shipbuilding and new materials in order to enhance exploitation of emerging technologies and internationalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises.
		Improving access to finance and promoting start-ups: boosting blue technologies requires financial resources. Improving access to funding and promoting start-ups for development and testing prototypes or ideas is crucial, as well as supporting business spin-offs from scientific research.
	Fisheries and Aquaculture	**R&D platform for seafood:** Seafood-related R&D and internationalisation of existing seafood clusters are critical to increasing the added value of fisheries and aquaculture products. Actions include research aiming at improving productivity, quality and environmental sustainability of aquaculture (including offshore aquaculture), as well as at increase the industry's ability to respond to market needs and to diversify its offer (new species).
		Marketing of seafood products: Communication and customer awareness on quality and origin of seafood products are critical to creating added value throughout the fisheries and aquaculture value chains in the Region. This involves development of market intelligence to ensure that marketing and processing of fisheries and aquaculture products in the Region are clear (labelling, traceability and certification), efficient and in full compliance with applicable rules, as well as organisation of and participation in relevant fairs.
		Diversification and profitability of fisheries and aquaculture: Sustainable and profitable fisheries and aquaculture require strengthened stakeholder involvement in the overall management, as well as improved and diversified activities. With regard to aquaculture, this may also imply developing tools for proper site management, environmental monitoring and improving quality schemes.
Development of transnational models for the design, testing, up-scaling, comparison and evaluation of innovations (policies, tools, processes, actors, organisations and interfaces).	**Blue technologies**	**Macro-regional cluster development:** to support the establishment of transboundary clusters on promising sectors such as green shipbuilding and new materials in order to enhance exploitation of emerging technologies and internationalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises.
		Improving access to finance and promoting start-ups: boosting blue technologies requires financial resources. Improving access to funding and promoting start-ups for development and testing prototypes or ideas is crucial, as well as supporting business spin-offs from scientific research.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
	Fisheries and Aquaculture	**Diversification and profitability of fisheries and aquaculture:** Sustainable and profitable fisheries and aquaculture require strengthened stakeholder involvement in the overall management, as well as improved and diversified activities. With regard to aquaculture, this may also imply developing tools for proper site management, environmental monitoring and improving quality schemes.
	Maritime and marine governance & services	**Governance of maritime space**: Proper joint governance of the maritime space provides an important framework for a sustainable and transparent use of maritime and marine resources. This will include supporting the implementation of the new Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (through coordinated planning) and may imply adopting clearer legal frameworks for exploiting deep-sea water and marine mineral resources.
Development of transnationally designed products, services, investment models and funding support instruments of business support centres, chambers of commerce, public administration and financing institutions.	**Blue technologies**	**R&D&I platforms on green sea mobility, deep sea resources, biosecurity and bio-technologie**s: to boost blue technologies in the Region, there is a need to develop macro-regional research & development & innovation platforms on selected themes of relevance. The most promising themes are green sea mobility, deep sea resources (including the development of unmanned marine vehicles), bio-security and blue bio-technologies.
		Macro-regional cluster development: to support the establishment of transboundary clusters on promising sectors such as green shipbuilding and new materials in order to enhance exploitation of emerging technologies and internationalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises.
		Improving access to finance and promoting start-ups: boosting blue technologies requires financial resources. Improving access to funding and promoting start-ups for development and testing prototypes or ideas is crucial, as well as supporting business spin-offs from scientific research.
	Fisheries and Aquaculture	**Diversification and profitability of fisheries and aquaculture:** Sustainable and profitable fisheries and aquaculture require strengthened stakeholder involvement in the overall management, as well as improved and diversified activities. With regard to aquaculture, this may also imply developing tools for proper site management, environmental monitoring and improving quality schemes.
		R&D platform for seafood: Seafood-related R&D and internationalisation of existing seafood clusters are critical to increasing the added value of fisheries and aquaculture products. Actions include research aiming at improving productivity, quality and environmental sustainability of aquaculture (including offshore aquaculture), as well as at increase the industry's ability to respond to market needs and to diversify its offer (new species).
Development of strategies, schemes and tools for improving creativity and innovative approaches in the whole spectrum of the society including education, social services health, volunteer organisations and social enterprises.		no matching found

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Building up transnational networks for the transfer of knowledge among public administration on technological solutions.	**Maritime and marine governance & services**	**Institutional capacity to harmonise standards and regulations**: This action aims at improving the quality of public services and improving governance mechanisms for international cooperation. In a wide range of sectors (e.g. fishery policy, maritime spatial planning, integrated coastal management), the development of common understandings and harmonised standards and regulations as well as sharing of best practices are needed. This requires institutional capacity of the involved public bodies and stakeholders.
		Data and knowledge sharing: This action aims at improving the evidence base for policy and decision-making in the Region. Sharing data and knowledge among public bodies in the Region can increase the efficiency of the public administration (e.g. by avoiding duplication of monitoring or data collection efforts) and increase their capacity to seize opportunities or react to challenges which can be detected earlier if data and information is shared and analysed across countries.
Facilitating policy learning by integrating also results generated through previous EU initiatives related to innovation and cluster support, for instance the Regions of Knowledge (FP7) that promoted Europe-wide cooperation between public and private research centres, enterprises and authorities and supported regional research-driven clusters.	**Fisheries and Aquaculture**	**EU compliance and common standards and practices**: In the fields of both fisheries and aquaculture, efforts are needed to develop and apply common standards and practices. Compliance with the EU acquis in these sectors and alignment to common standards are needed for sustainable fishery management and sustainable aquaculture, as well as for implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy. Establishment of thematic EU compliance networks may help to increase awareness among fishermen and public authorities, as well as sharing of data, exchange of experiences and best practice, and capacity building.
	Blue technologies	**Macro-regional cluster development:** to support the establishment of transboundary clusters on promising sectors such as green shipbuilding and new materials in order to enhance exploitation of emerging technologies and internationalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises.
Promoting the development of eco-innovation technologies related to air quality and emission control (e.g. cleaner domestic combustion installations, fuel switching emission abatement technologies or power supply from the shore for vessels for sustainable ports.		no matching found

Priority Axis 2 – Sustainable Region

Specific Objective 2.1 - Promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the ADRION area

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Creation of transnational networks and working groups for the definition of the principles of ADRION's sustainable cultural/natural and tourism valorisation as well as the development of an ADRION brand name.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Brand-building of the Adriatic Ionian tourist products/services**. Gradual establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian brand which would posit the Region as one destination in the eyes of visitors, residents and stakeholders. This strategic approach will only be effective through a brand-building process based on a common identity and strongly collaborative efforts, pooling of joint resources, networking, partnerships in association with an appropriate communication strategy. Overall, the branding exercise should formulate a vision emphasising the clear benefits that improved tourism products/services will bring to both residents and visitors in the Region. In this regard, actors should also explore how to take stock of existing synergies.
		Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer. Although improving quality in tourism offer is a horizontal issue that should touch upon all topics and actions, it is to be treated also as a distinct action. Improving the quality of the existing offer and delivering new services and products of enhanced quality should be at the basis of sustainable tourism offer In this context, a tourism offer addressing specific target of tourists, such as: seniors, youth or people with disabilities, would be of interest. The tourism offer in the Adriatic-Ionian Region could also derive its strength from individual excellences in each country, in particular with regard to quality and visibility. Thanks to a critical mass of interconnected niches of excellence, the overall offer of the Region will be significantly optimised.
		Sustainable tourism R&D platform on new products and services. This action focuses on joining forces in the Region among university departments, research centres, innovation and technology transfer networks, together with the business community for development and marketing of new products and services, development of clusters and smart specialisation strategies.
		Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage". In order to diversify the Region's profile in the eyes of its visitors and to extend the tourism inflows beyond the summer season, the rich cultural background and assets should be further exploited. This could be achieved by strengthening cultural cooperation. In this way the implementation of the Ljubljana process will be reinforced and there will be increased demand for use of the creative, cultural and natural industries sector. With a critical mass of cultural hotspots at macro-regional level certain areas could be rejuvenated and enjoy increased tourism attention.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Network of Sustainable Tourism businesses and clusters**: Stimulating innovation through interaction between different tourism actors and creation of strong synergies with complementary sectors along the value chain. Useful lessons could be also learnt from applying the Smart Specialisation approach and, in particular, through adapting the Entrepreneurial discovery process, actively involving the private sector in identifying sustainable tourism activities with the most promising potential for growth and for absorbing research outputs.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Promoting the Region in world markets: Improving the promotion of destinations in international key markets is needed for increased tourist flows. More tourists want to discover the rich artistic and monumental heritage of a destination and to discover new places beyond the mainstream attractions of Europe. The attractiveness of the Region could, therefore, be enhanced from common promotion campaigns in key markets Creating B2B and B2C European platforms would link the Region's business actors among themselves and with customers. This can give the Region a comparative advantage.
		Adriatic-Ionian action for more sustainable and responsible tourism*:* This action would include the establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian Charter to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices in the Region. It would be based on tested ideas and practices to be easily taken up by the sector actors, and especially indicators to measure sustainable development at destination level.
Support to the exchange of best practices for the identification of challenges and trends in the tourism sector including marketing, management of increased tourism flows, including joint analysis of tourism, trends and their potential impact, joint access to new tourism markets, business opportunities and dissemination of new technologies and know-how.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer**. Although improving quality in tourism offer is a horizontal issue that should touch upon all topics and actions, it is to be treated also as a distinct action. Improving the quality of the existing offer and delivering new services and products of enhanced quality should be at the basis of sustainable tourism offer In this context, a tourism offer addressing specific target of tourists, such as: seniors, youth or people with disabilities, would be of interest. The tourism offer in the Adriatic-Ionian Region could also derive its strength from individual excellences in each country, in particular with regard to quality and visibility. Thanks to a critical mass of interconnected niches of excellence, the overall offer of the Region will be significantly optimised.
		Sustainable and thematic tourist routes. This action focuses on development and branding of macro-regional tourism routes, through mapping and further promoting existing routes, (i.e. cruise, motor bike, walking/hiking, cycling, sailing). In addition, one should also explore creation of new routes building on the assets and diversity of the Adriatic-Ionian Region. This will include developing strategies for attracting new niche markets, especially for cultural, luxury and business tourism. The action should build on knowledge, skills and heritage assets, which would connect and promote lesser-known destinations of the Region.
		Improving accessibility for Adriatic-Ionian tourism products and services. This action is expected to adjust tourism products and services in the Region to the needs of both residents and visitors with special access needs (i.e. senior groups, young people and schools, disabled people, families with low income). By successfully creating a "critical mass" across the Region of 'year-round' accessible destinations, attractions, sights and tourism-related quality services, more tourists can be expected to be attracted while tourism flows could be maintained also in the low season.
		Upgrade of Adriatic-Ionian tourism products. The Region has a unique variety of products - especially in agriculture and food processing sector - generated through processes that are unique in the world. Investment opportunities may arise from exploration of new ways of entering the global markets. In addition, labelling and upgrading local products at macro-regional level is likely to result in stronger affiliation with the Region. At the same time development of local products could be an effective economic development tool.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Network of Sustainable Tourism businesses and clusters**: Stimulating innovation through interaction between different tourism actors and creation of strong synergies with complementary sectors along the value chain. Useful lessons could be also learnt from applying the Smart Specialisation approach and, in particular, through adapting the Entrepreneurial discovery process, actively involving the private sector in identifying sustainable tourism activities with the most promising potential for growth and for absorbing research outputs.
		Expanding the tourist season to all year-round: The Action will seek to alleviate seasonality in the Adriatic Ionian, and expand the tourist season. It will promote off-season tourism (such as culture activities, comfortable transport and accommodation), target markets (such as senior and accessible tourism, business and conference tourism, winter tourism, rural tourism) and design a strategy for setting Adriatic-Ionian as an excellent off-season destination.
Development of actions for raising competencies/skills in cultural heritage preservation on sustainable tourism and tourism management of the stakeholders specially focusing on the involvement of actors from small tourism locations and facilities.	**Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)**	**Training in vocational and entrepreneurial skills in tourism:** Tourism in the Region is experiencing a gap in skills; a lack of qualified and skilled labour represents (together with increased competition from other destinations) a main threat for the sector. Tourism entrepreneurship is also in need of strategic information, new learning concepts taking into account new global tourism trends and new management concepts. The action will focus on the need for training for SMEs (including e-training), the creation of an Adriatic-Ionian Observatory on Sustainable Tourism skills, and training for tourism entrepreneurship.
Formulation of implementation strategies, set up and testing of clusters and models to better preserve, capitalize and innovate cultural and natural heritage and either combine them with tourism or maintain them for their intrinsic value by enterprises, research institutions, NGOs and local population using exchange of experiences, mutual learning and pilot activities.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Sustainable and thematic tourist routes**. This action focuses on development and branding of macro-regional tourism routes, through mapping and further promoting existing routes, (i.e. cruise, motor bike, walking/hiking, cycling, sailing). In addition, one should also explore creation of new routes building on the assets and diversity of the Adriatic-Ionian Region. This will include developing strategies for attracting new niche markets, especially for cultural, luxury and business tourism. The action should build on knowledge, skills and heritage assets, which would connect and promote lesser-known destinations of the Region.
		Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer. Although improving quality in tourism offer is a horizontal issue that should touch upon all topics and actions, it is to be treated also as a distinct action. Improving the quality of the existing offer and delivering new services and products of enhanced quality should be at the basis of sustainable tourism offer In this context, a tourism offer addressing specific target of tourists, such as: seniors, youth or people with disabilities, would be of interest. The tourism offer in the Adriatic-Ionian Region could also derive its strength from individual excellences in each country, in particular with regard to quality and visibility. Thanks to a critical mass of interconnected niches of excellence, the overall offer of the Region will be significantly optimised.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage. In order to diversify the Region's profile in the eyes of its visitors and to extend the tourism inflows beyond the summer season, the rich cultural background and assets should be further exploited. This could be achieved by strengthening cultural cooperation. In this way the implementation of the Ljubljana process will be reinforced and there will be increased demand for use of the creative, cultural and natural industries sector. With a critical mass of cultural hotspots at macro-regional level certain areas could be rejuvenated and enjoy increased tourism attention.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Network of Sustainable Tourism businesses and clusters**: Stimulating innovation through interaction between different tourism actors and creation of strong synergies with complementary sectors along the value chain. Useful lessons could be also learnt from applying the Smart Specialisation approach and, in particular, through adapting the Entrepreneurial discovery process, actively involving the private sector in identifying sustainable tourism activities with the most promising potential for growth and for absorbing research outputs.
Building up of transnational networks and working groups and development of tools and pilots to monitor, evaluate and mitigate the environmental and social pressures and impacts and the risks for and by tourism	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Sustainable tourism R&D platform on new products and services**. This action focuses on joining forces in the Region among university departments, research centres, innovation and technology transfer networks, together with the business community for development and marketing of new products and services, development of clusters and smart specialisation strategies.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Adriatic-Ionian action for more sustainable and responsible tourism***:* This action would include the establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian Charter to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices in the Region. It would be based on tested ideas and practices to be easily taken up by the sector actors, and especially indicators to measure sustainable development at destination level
Set up, test and implementation of negotiation, mediation, participation and conflict resolution models in the context of tourism, culture preservation, local needs and economic growth in the context of cultural and natural heritage, especially for land uses in coastal zones.		No matching found.
Organisation of knowledge transfer, exchange of good practice examples, networking and development of innovations concerning also the immaterial cultural heritage and related to the creative industries.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Sustainable tourism R&D platform on new products and services**. This action focuses on joining forces in the Region among university departments, research centres, innovation and technology transfer networks, together with the business community for development and marketing of new products and services, development of clusters and smart specialisation strategies.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage". In order to diversify the Region's profile in the eyes of its visitors and to extend the tourism inflows beyond the summer season, the rich cultural background and assets should be further exploited. This could be achieved by strengthening cultural cooperation. In this way the implementation of the Ljubljana process will be reinforced and there will be increased demand for use of the creative, cultural and natural industries sector. With a critical mass of cultural hotspots at macro-regional level certain areas could be rejuvenated and enjoy increased tourism attention.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Facilitating access to finance for new innovative tourism start-ups**: This action would facilitate access to information on funding possibilities for innovative sustainable tourism start-ups, and for SMEs and university spin-offs capitalising on new research results and bringing new products and services into the sector. Establishment of joint ventures and innovation incubators can also boost the Adriatic- Ionian SMEs at an international level. This could be done through European Structural and Investment Funds, COSME programme for the competitiveness of Enterprises and small-medium-sized enterprises, and other relevant funding programmes.
Development of distinct and diversified tourism products such as transnational thematic tourism clusters and routes (e.g. monasteries routes, ancient heritage, wine routes, Adriatic-Ionian area routes etc.); seasonal variations of tourism offer (e.g.: off season arrivals for spring and autumn tourism for elder groups also in the context of climate change); offers for special interest groups (e.g. sailing, diving, mountaineering, history hobbyists, attracting visitors to inland destinations etc.); use of IT applications to generate interest on the heritage of the region; promotion of transnational nautical routes and of innovative strategies for marinas in terms of services and of their connections to the hinterland.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer**. Although improving quality in tourism offer is a horizontal issue that should touch upon all topics and actions, it is to be treated also as a distinct action. Improving the quality of the existing offer and delivering new services and products of enhanced quality should be at the basis of sustainable tourism offer In this context, a tourism offer addressing specific target of tourists, such as: seniors, youth or people with disabilities, would be of interest. The tourism offer in the Adriatic-Ionian Region could also derive its strength from individual excellences in each country, in particular with regard to quality and visibility. Thanks to a critical mass of interconnected niches of excellence, the overall offer of the Region will be significantly optimised.
		Diversification of the cruise and nautical sectors and enhancement of the yachting sector. While the cruise and nautical sectors are already operating at a macro-regional level with a strong potential for further growth, local coastal and hinterland economies have not tapped into their full potential. Subsequently, local economies have not developed appropriate ways of managing profitably effects of intensive influx of tourists within a relative short period. By exploring alternative routes and/or business model, linking better the cruise offer to local people and products, unsustainable congestion can be better tackled and the full potential could be better exploited, with more lasting economic benefits for local economies. To secure the support of the local population, such developments should be linked to sustainable transport plans.
		"Sustainable and thematic tourist routes''. This action focuses on development and branding of macro-regional tourism routes, through mapping and further promoting existing routes, (i.e. cruise, motor bike, walking/hiking, cycling, sailing). In addition, one should also explore creation of new routes building on the assets and diversity of the Adriatic-Ionian Region. This will include developing strategies for attracting new niche markets, especially for cultural, luxury and business tourism. The action should build on knowledge, skills and heritage assets, which would connect and promote lesser-known destinations of the Region.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage. In order to diversify the Region's profile in the eyes of its visitors and to extend the tourism inflows beyond the summer season, the rich cultural background and assets should be further exploited. This could be achieved by strengthening cultural cooperation. In this way the implementation of the Ljubljana process will be reinforced and there will be increased demand for use of the creative, cultural and natural industries sector. With a critical mass of cultural hotspots at macro-regional level certain areas could be rejuvenated and enjoy increased tourism attention.
		Improving accessibility for Adriatic-Ionian tourism products and services. This action is expected to adjust tourism products and services in the Region to the needs of both residents and visitors with special access needs (i.e. senior groups, young people and schools, disabled people, families with low income). By successfully creating a "critical mass" across the Region of 'year-round' accessible destinations, attractions, sights and tourism-related quality services, more tourists can be expected to be attracted while tourism flows could be maintained also in the low season.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Expanding the tourist season to all year-round:** The Action will seek to alleviate seasonality in the Adriatic Ionian, and expand the tourist season. It will promote off-season tourism (such as culture activities, comfortable transport and accommodation), target markets (such as senior and accessible tourism, business and conference tourism, winter tourism, rural tourism) and design a strategy for setting Adriatic-Ionian as an excellent off-season destination.
Development of an integrated and coordinated approach to heritage and cultural tourism.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Fostering Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage**. In order to diversify the Region's profile in the eyes of its visitors and to extend the tourism inflows beyond the summer season, the rich cultural background and assets should be further exploited. This could be achieved by strengthening cultural cooperation. In this way the implementation of the Ljubljana process will be reinforced and there will be increased demand for use of the creative, cultural and natural industries sector. With a critical mass of cultural hotspots at macro-regional level certain areas could be rejuvenated and enjoy increased tourism attention.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Adriatic-Ionian action for more sustainable and responsible tourism***:* This action would include the establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian Charter to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices in the Region. It would be based on tested ideas and practices to be easily taken up by the sector actors, and especially indicators to measure sustainable development at destination level
Development of sustainable tourism models focusing on low carbon, on air quality improvement and decreasing PM and NO2 emissions, low ecological footprint, “slow food”, involvement of young people and volunteers and other alternative offerings in line with the natural and cultural	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Upgrade of Adriatic-Ionian tourism products**. The Region has a unique variety of products - especially in agriculture and food processing sector - generated through processes that are unique in the world. Investment opportunities may arise from exploration of new ways of entering the global markets. In addition, labelling and upgrading local products at macro-regional level is likely to result in stronger affiliation with the Region. At the same time development of local products could be an effective economic development tool.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
heritage in line with the ADRION brand.	**Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)**	**Adriatic-Ionian action for more sustainable and responsible tourism***:* This action would include the establishment of an Adriatic-Ionian Charter to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices in the Region. It would be based on tested ideas and practices to be easily taken up by the sector actors, and especially indicators to measure sustainable development at destination level.
Small scale investments and demonstration projects for the provision of innovative services and products in the touristic sector, for specific forms of tourism, like cultural tourism, thematic tourism, elder citizens' services, etc.	**Diversified tourism offer (products & services)**	**Initiative to improve quality for sustainable tourism offer**. Although improving quality in tourism offer is a horizontal issue that should touch upon all topics and actions, it is to be treated also as a distinct action. Improving the quality of the existing offer and delivering new services and products of enhanced quality should be at the basis of sustainable tourism offer In this context, a tourism offer addressing specific target of tourists, such as: seniors, youth or people with disabilities, would be of interest. The tourism offer in the Adriatic-Ionian Region could also derive its strength from individual excellences in each country, in particular with regard to quality and visibility. Thanks to a critical mass of interconnected niches of excellence, the overall offer of the Region will be significantly optimised.
		Diversification of the cruise and nautical sectors and enhancement of the yachting sector. While the cruise and nautical sectors are already operating at a macro-regional level with a strong potential for further growth, local coastal and hinterland economies have not tapped into their full potential. Subsequently, local economies have not developed appropriate ways of managing profitably effects of intensive influx of tourists within a relative short period. By exploring alternative routes and/or business model, linking better the cruise offer to local people and products, unsustainable congestion can be better tackled and the full potential could be better exploited, with more lasting economic benefits for local economies. To secure the support of the local population, such developments should be linked to sustainable transport plans.
		Sustainable and thematic tourist routes. This action focuses on development and branding of macro-regional tourism routes, through mapping and further promoting existing routes, (i.e. cruise, motor bike, walking/hiking, cycling, sailing). In addition, one should also explore creation of new routes building on the assets and diversity of the Adriatic-Ionian Region. This will include developing strategies for attracting new niche markets, especially for cultural, luxury and business tourism. The action should build on knowledge, skills and heritage assets, which would connect and promote lesser-known destinations of the Region.
	Sustainable & responsible tourism management (innovation & quality)	**Expanding the tourist season to all year-round:** The Action will seek to alleviate seasonality in the Adriatic Ionian, and expand the tourist season. It will promote off-season tourism (such as culture activities, comfortable transport and accommodation), target markets (such as senior and accessible tourism, business and conference tourism, winter tourism, rural tourism) and design a strategy for setting Adriatic-Ionian as an excellent off-season destination.

Priority Axis 2 – Sustainable Region

Specific Objective 2.2 - Enhance the capacity in transnationally tackling environmental vulnerability, fragmentation, and the safeguarding of ecosystem services in the ADRION area

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Enhancement and complement of transnational frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of existing databases, promotion of data availability, observatory functions and the integration of management approaches (hazard and risk assessment, planning methodologies, management plans, sustainability and adaptation assessments etc.) especially in coordination with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and related IPA initiatives on civil protection, floods management, risk management etc..	**Marine environment/threat to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Increasing marine knowledge:** To ensure a sound basis for actions related to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, it is important for the Region to: Make an inventory of marine biodiversity and detailed habitat mapping in coastal and offshore areas; - Agree on a common approach to be applied across the Adriatic and Ionian sea basin for monitoring diversity descriptors on the status of the marine environment the two seas, and for determining Good Environmental Status indicators and targets; - Establish a common infrastructure platform in terms of data collection, marine research, lab analysis through common survey programs, research vessels and laboratories; - Develop a Web-GIS Observatory Network to gather and process geographical and statistical data related to sustainable development and the marine environment.
	Marine environment/ pollution of the sea	**Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan** for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response.
		Identifying hotspots and investing in reducing emissions of pollutants by realising a Hot Spot Inventory and aiming to depollute the sea.
	Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	**Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystem**s, which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change.
		Joint population level management plans for large carnivores and awareness-raising activities, e.g. developing GIS database of large carnivore habitats to underpin transnational planning, monitoring and management of large carnivore populations and their habitats and identifying needs for developing green infrastructure. Alleviating habitat fragmentation, and supporting awareness-raising activities, targeting the rural population, so as to increase awareness of benefits to be reaped from healthy carnivore populations, notably for species preservation and for marketing areas for eco-tourism.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Development of implementation strategies, models and testing of pilot activities and transnational, regional and intercommunity cooperation of risk management (risk assessment, risk communication, risk managing measures and hazard prevention) and climate change adaptation in terrestrial and aquatic environments.	**Marine environment/threat to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Implementing Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management:** By ensuring coordination of different projects/initiatives with the frameworks provided by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Priority Action Plan of UNEP/MAP. The latter plays an important role in supporting ICM by Mediterranean countries and in implementing the ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.
	Marine environment/ pollution of the sea	**Implementing a life cycle approach to marine litter:** - Establishing a coordinated monitoring system and database on marine litter and marine pollution, including sources and types of litter and pollution and a GIS database on the location and sources of marine litter; - Strengthening collaboration between sectors for the development of new possibilities for marine litter recycling including production of packaging waste and fishing gears to enable recycling; - Preparation of a joint strategy for the assessment, prevention and reduction of marine litter, building on the work of MED POL programme and in line with the Mediterranean, including an economic assessment of the costs and benefits of different options for reducing marine litter, as well as actions intervening at different stages of production, sources, transmission and loss; - Supporting the preventative measures to address Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), implementing gear marking and gear registration, marine spatial management, codes of practice for fishermen.
		Supporting clean-up programmes for both floating and sunken litter, integrating these activities with recycling programmes, and investing in necessary infrastructure.
		Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response.
		Identifying hotspots and investing in reducing emissions of pollutants by realising a Hot Spot Inventory and aiming to depollute the sea.
	Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	**Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystem**s, which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Implementation of research and evaluation activities through the development of a common monitoring and assessment reference framework and the deployment of advanced tools for mapping, diagnosing, protecting and managing terrestrial and maritime landscapes and habitats including awareness-raising and environmental education.	**Marine environment/ threat to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Increasing marine knowledge:** To ensure a sound basis for actions related to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, it is important for the Region to: - Make an inventory of marine biodiversity and detailed habitat mapping in coastal and offshore areas - Agree on a common approach to be applied across the Adriatic and Ionian sea basin for monitoring diversity descriptors on the status of the marine environment the two seas, and for determining Good Environmental Status indicators and targets - Establish a common infrastructure platform in terms of data collection, marine research, lab analysis through common survey programs, research vessels and laboratories - Develop a Web-GIS Observatory Network to gather and process geographical and statistical data related to sustainable development and the marine environment.
	Marine environment/ pollution of the sea	**Implementing a life cycle approach to marine litter.** - Establishing a coordinated monitoring system and database on marine litter and marine pollution, including sources and types of litter and pollution and a GIS database on the location and sources of marine litter; - Strengthening collaboration between sectors for the development of new possibilities for marine litter recycling including production of packaging waste and fishing gears to enable recycling; - Preparation of a joint strategy for the assessment, prevention and reduction of marine litter, building on the work of MED POL programme and in line with the Mediterranean, including an economic assessment of the costs and benefits of different options for reducing marine litter, as well as actions intervening at different stages of production, sources, transmission and loss; - Supporting the preventative measures to address Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), implementing gear marking and gear registration, marine spatial management, codes of practice for fishermen.
	Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	**Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystems**, which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change.
		Joint population level management plans for large carnivores and awareness-raising activities, e.g. developing GIS database of large carnivore habitats to underpin transnational planning, monitoring and management of large carnivore populations and their habitats and identifying needs for developing green infrastructure. Alleviating habitat fragmentation, and supporting awareness-raising activities, targeting the rural population, so as to increase awareness of benefits to be reaped from healthy carnivore populations, notably for species preservation and for marketing areas for eco-tourism.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Harmonisation and enforcement of national laws with EU legislation, with respect to length and timing of hunting season, list of species which can be hunted, designation of 'no hunting' areas. Protecting migratory birds and other species through awareness-raising and capacity building, including assessing the impact of laws on species and communities. Improving the ability of nature protection authorities and customs officials to enhance enforcement of hunting laws. Awareness raising activities among local populations on the benefits of species preservation, and activities enabling the capitalisation of species preservation, including marketing of areas for eco-tourism;
		Protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas and karst fields relevant for the Adriatic Flyway: Activities to restore wetland areas including restoration of water flows and vegetation, investments in green infrastructure and removal of grey infrastructure; clean-up of sites and investment in waste water treatment.
		Awareness-raising activities on implementation and financial aspects of environmentally-friendly farming practices (e.g. organic farming, agrienvironmental measures) complementing restoration and preservation of biodiversity. Coordination should be ensured between actions foreseen at national level through use of the existing networking, coordination and cooperation instruments, such as those under the National Rural Networks and the European Network for Rural Development.
Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for increasing capacity and coordination in the fields of biodiversity protection e.g. in connection to the NATURA 2000 and EMERALD networks, joint management actions for large carnivores, harmonization and enforcement of national laws with EU legislation and similar actions.	**Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity**	**Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystem**s, which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change.
		Joint population level management plans for large carnivores and awareness-raising activities, e.g. developing GIS database of large carnivore habitats to underpin transnational planning, monitoring and management of large carnivore populations and their habitats and identifying needs for developing green infrastructure. Alleviating habitat fragmentation, and supporting awareness-raising activities, targeting the rural population, so as to increase awareness of benefits to be reaped from healthy carnivore populations, notably for species preservation and for marketing areas for eco-tourism.
		Harmonisation and enforcement of national laws with EU legislation, with respect to length and timing of hunting season, list of species which can be hunted, designation of 'no hunting' areas. Protecting migratory birds and other species through awareness-raising and capacity building, including assessing the impact of laws on species and communities. Improving the ability of nature protection authorities and customs officials to enhance enforcement of hunting laws. Awareness raising activities among local populations on the benefits of species preservation, and activities enabling the capitalisation of species preservation, including marketing of areas for eco-tourism;

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas and karst fields relevant for the Adriatic Flyway: Activities to restore wetland areas including restoration of water flows and vegetation, investments in green infrastructure and removal of grey infrastructure; clean-up of sites and investment in waste water treatment.
Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for increasing marine knowledge in order to ensure a sound basis for the implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, including Deep Sea Resources Monitoring & Surveillance and Management and Mapping of threats to coastal and marine biodiversity.	**Marine environment/ thread to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Increasing marine knowledge:** To ensure a sound basis for actions related to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, it is important for the Region to: - Make an inventory of marine biodiversity and detailed habitat mapping in coastal and offshore areas; - Agree on a common approach to be applied across the Adriatic and Ionian sea basin for monitoring diversity descriptors on the status of the marine environment the two seas, and for determining Good Environmental Status indicators and targets; - Establish a common infrastructure platform in terms of data collection, marine research, lab analysis through common survey programs, research vessels and laboratories; - Develop a Web-GIS Observatory Network to gather and process geographical and statistical data related to sustainable development and the marine environment.
		Implementing Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management: By ensuring coordination of different projects/initiatives with the frameworks provided by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Priority Action Plan of UNEP/MAP. The latter plays an important role in supporting ICM by Mediterranean countries and in implementing the ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.
	Marine environment/ pollution of the sea	**Implementing a life cycle approach to marine litter.** - Establishing a coordinated monitoring system and database on marine litter and marine pollution, including sources and types of litter and pollution and a GIS database on the location and sources of marine litter; - Strengthening collaboration between sectors for the development of new possibilities for marine litter recycling including production of packaging waste and fishing gears to enable recycling; - Preparation of a joint strategy for the assessment, prevention and reduction of marine litter, building on the work of MED POL programme and in line with the Mediterranean, including an economic assessment of the costs and benefits of different options for reducing marine litter, as well as actions intervening at different stages of production, sources, transmission and loss; - Supporting the preventative measures to address Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), implementing gear marking and gear registration, marine spatial management, codes of practice for fishermen.
		Identifying hotspots and investing in reducing emissions of pollutants by realising a Hot Spot Inventory and aiming to depollute the sea.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Address diffuse sources (e.g. nitrates from agriculture) by decreasing fertiliser use and by enhancing the recycling of nutrients through e.g. awareness raising among farmers on the impacts of excessive use of fertilisers, education and training activities on the implementation and financial aspects of environmentally friendly farming practices.
Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for the development of transnational Special Spatial Plans (e.g. on RES, on tourism, on agriculture and forestry), Maritime Spatial Planning, Multiannual Fishery Management Plans and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans and Procedures.	**Marine environment/thread to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Increasing marine knowledge:** To ensure a sound basis for actions related to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and implementation of the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, it is important for the Region to: - Make an inventory of marine biodiversity and detailed habitat mapping in coastal and offshore areas; Agree on a common approach to be applied across the Adriatic and Ionian sea basin for monitoring diversity descriptors on the status of the marine environment the two seas, and for determining Good Environmental Status indicators and targets; - Establish a common infrastructure platform in terms of data collection, marine research, lab analysis through common survey programs, research vessels and laboratories; - Develop a Web-GIS Observatory Network to gather and process geographical and statistical data related to sustainable development and the marine environment.
		Implementing Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management: By ensuring coordination of different projects/initiatives with the frameworks provided by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Priority Action Plan of UNEP/MAP. The latter plays an important role in supporting ICM by Mediterranean countries and in implementing the ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.
	Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	**Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystems**, which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change.
		Harmonisation and enforcement of national laws with EU legislation, with respect to length and timing of hunting season, list of species which can be hunted, designation of 'no hunting' areas. Protecting migratory birds and other species through awareness-raising and capacity building, including assessing the impact of laws on species and communities. Improving the ability of nature protection authorities and customs officials to enhance enforcement of hunting laws. Awareness raising activities among local populations on the benefits of species preservation, and activities enabling the capitalisation of species preservation, including marketing of areas for eco-tourism.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas and karst fields relevant for the Adriatic Flyway: Activities to restore wetland areas including restoration of water flows and vegetation, investments in green infrastructure and removal of grey infrastructure; clean-up of sites and investment in waste water treatment.
Enhancement and complement of transnational networks and working groups for the development of transnational terrestrial and maritime protected areas and habitats and integration thereof in the tourism product of the ADRION area.	**Marine environment/threat to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Enhancing the network of Marine Protected Areas:** By possible designation of new areas in coordination with the process of designation of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance under United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP MAP); by establishment of Fisheries Restricted Areas under the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), by completing marine NATURA 2000 network under Birds and Habitats Directives; by designating further protected areas to form a coherent and representative network of MPAs according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive; and by ensuring their joint or coordinated management, also in relation to maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management;
		Exchanging best practices among managing authorities of Marine Protected Areas: Aiming to achieve and/or to maintain the Good Ecological Status of marine waters and to preserve biodiversity also by integrating a fishing component in each MPA (e.g. Fishing Protected Areas);
	Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	**Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystems**, which should include a transnational plan to deal with landscape fragmentation through Green Infrastructure investment and to enhance the NATURA 2000 network. It should also enhance the Emerald network of protected areas, launched by the Council of Europe in compliance with Resolution 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and strengthen ecosystem resilience in preparation for potential impacts of climate change;
		Protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas and karst fields relevant for the Adriatic Flyway: Activities to restore wetland areas including restoration of water flows and vegetation, investments in green infrastructure and removal of grey infrastructure; clean-up of sites and investment in waste water treatment.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Development of and integration of existing transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for identifying, managing and preventing localised and diffusing pollution from various sources (oil spills from maritime transport and marine litter in general, coastal industries and discharges, accidents, nitrates from agriculture, organic load from aquaculture, noise, light- and wastewater-pollution from tourism hotspots, landfills, soil contamination etc.).	**Marine environment/ pollution of the sea**	**Implementing a life cycle approach to marine litter.** - Establishing a coordinated monitoring system and database on marine litter and marine pollution, including sources and types of litter and pollution and a GIS database on the location and sources of marine litter. - Strengthening collaboration between sectors for the development of new possibilities for marine litter recycling including production of packaging waste and fishing gears to enable recycling; - Preparation of a joint strategy for the assessment, prevention and reduction of marine litter, building on the work of MED POL programme and in line with the Mediterranean, including an economic assessment of the costs and benefits of different options for reducing marine litter, as well as actions intervening at different stages of production, sources, transmission and loss. - Supporting the preventative measures to address Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), implementing gear marking and gear registration, marine spatial management, codes of practice for fishermen.
		Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response.
		Identifying hotspots and investing in reducing emissions of pollutants by realising a Hot Spot Inventory and aiming to depollute the sea.
		Address diffuse sources (e.g. nitrates from agriculture) by decreasing fertiliser use and by enhancing the recycling of nutrients through e.g. awareness raising among farmers on the impacts of excessive use of fertilisers, education and training activities on the implementation and financial aspects of environmentally friendly farming practices.
		Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Development of and integration of existing of transnational systems, procedures and early warning systems for forecasting, managing and preventing natural and manmade hazards (forest fires, sea and river floods, industrial accidents, droughts, storms, algal blooms, earthquakes erosion and etc.) especially in coordination with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and related IPA initiatives on civil protection, floods management, risk management etc..	**Marine environment/ pollution of the sea**	**Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan** for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response.
Enhancement and complement of transnational frameworks and platforms for the harmonisation and enforcement of national laws and EU legislation (e.g. implementation of the EU Flood directive (2007/60), regional Strategies and international obligations (e.g. the Barcelona Convention), with special attention on coastal urban areas and trans boundary issues, the joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response and interoperability of civil protection mechanisms and organisations.	**Marine environment/threat to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Implementing Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management:** By ensuring coordination of different projects/initiatives with the frameworks provided by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Priority Action Plan of UNEP/MAP. The latter plays an important role in supporting ICM by Mediterranean countries and in implementing the ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.
	Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	**Harmonisation and enforcement of national laws with EU legislation,** with respect to length and timing of hunting season, list of species which can be hunted, designation of 'no hunting' areas. Protecting migratory birds and other species through awareness-raising and capacity building, including assessing the impact of laws on species and communities. Improving the ability of nature protection authorities and customs officials to enhance enforcement of hunting laws. Awareness raising activities among local populations on the benefits of species preservation, and activities enabling the capitalisation of species preservation, including marketing of areas for eco-tourism.
Enhancement and complement of transnational frameworks and platforms for the exchange of best practices especially in coordination with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and related IPA initiatives on civil protection, floods management, risk management etc., the experimentation and piloting with new innovative and integrated approaches (e.g. integrated and sustainable management of protected areas with cultural heritage as a powerful asset for inclusive economic development)	**Marine environment/ threat to coastal and marine biodiversity**	**Enhancing the network of Marine Protected Areas:** By possible designation of new areas in coordination with the process of designation of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance under United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP MAP); by establishment of Fisheries Restricted Areas under the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), by completing marine NATURA 2000 network under Birds and Habitats Directives; By designating further protected areas to form a coherent and representative network of MPAs according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive; and by ensuring their joint or coordinated management, also in relation to maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
approaches and the evaluation of existing and perspective methods and procedures in order to develop an ADRION environmental protection knowledge base and promotion of the topics in the society and especially among the youth.		**Exchanging best practices among managing authorities of Marine Protected Areas**: Aiming to achieve and/or to maintain the Good Ecological Status of marine waters and to preserve biodiversity also by integrating a fishing component in each MPA (e.g. Fishing Protected Areas).
	Marine environment/ pollution of the sea	**Drafting and implementation of a joint contingency plan** for oil spills and other large-scale pollution events, building on the work on the sub-regional contingency plan developed by the Joint Commission for the protection of the Adriatic Sea and coastal areas, and on the forthcoming Action Plan for the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. Implementation of measures to enable joint contingency planning and coordinated emergency response.
Improvement of the interoperability of existing databases.		Not to be considered as a stand-alone activity; already present in several EUSAIR indicative actions

Priority Axis 3 - Connected Region
Specific Objective 3.1 - Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
Set up of transnational frameworks, platforms and networks for the identification of existing potentials and obstacles in the fields of integrated transport, mobility services and multimodality (mapping of resources, studies, pilots and strategies, market demand e.g. for freight routes, prerequisites and "soft" factors for implementation and the monitoring of the outcomes of integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality nodes.	**Intermodal connections to hinterland**	**Developing the Western Balkans comprehensive network:** Western Balkans need to prioritise investments on the defined SEETO comprehensive network (railway, inland waterways, nodes and hubs, notably with the motorways of the sea), aimed at promoting sustainable transport in the Region, and to prepare their integration in the Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T) network. This implies elaborating integrated planning for infrastructure developments and defining joint roadmaps for investments.
		Cross-border facilitation: This requires physical and non-physical investments on specific transport axes.
Development of joint approaches and instruments in the field of maritime transport, such as a modern ship reporting system in the Adriatic Sea (Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System ADRIREP), motorways of the sea, and related port infrastructures and ITS (Intelligent Transport System).	**Maritime transport**	**Improving and harmonising traffic monitoring and management:** Strengthening and securing frequent exchange of information between coastal countries through the development of a Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System (by building on existing regional exchange of Automated Identification of Ships data and Ship Mandatory Reporting system, i.e. ADRIREP), will improve safety and security of maritime traffic in the region.
		Developing ports, optimising port interfaces, infrastructures and procedures/operations: Developing the ports and port terminals in order to boost maritime transport, short-sea shipping capacity and cross-border ferry connectivity. Ports should favour development of combined infrastructure (trade, procedures, movement of goods information systems, structures, vehicles and operations), improving links to the mainland and emphasising the supply chain of goods.
	Intermodal connections to hinterland	**Developing motorways of the sea**: Intermodal transport requires integrated management of the whole logistic chain. Essential elements are, inter alia, improved road and rail infrastructure linking ports with the hinterland and improved infrastructure within a port and ITS solutions.
Building up of networks and working groups for the standardisation of legal requirements, technical specifications and capacity building in the field of planning and environmental impact assessment of intermodal transport investments and related operation and logistics services along with related communication activities.	**Maritime transport**	**Developing ports, optimising port interfaces, infrastructures and procedures/operations**: Developing the ports and port terminals in order to boost maritime transport, short-sea shipping capacity and cross-border ferry connectivity. Ports should favour development of combined infrastructure (trade, procedures, movement of goods information systems, structures, vehicles and operations), improving links to the mainland and emphasising the supply chain of goods.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
	Intermodal connections to hinterland	**Developing the Western Balkans comprehensive network:** Western Balkans need to prioritise investments on the defined SEETO comprehensive network (railway, inland waterways, nodes and hubs, notably with the motorways of the sea), aimed at promoting sustainable transport in the Region, and to prepare their integration in the Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T) network. This implies elaborating integrated planning for infrastructure developments and defining joint roadmaps for investments.
		Developing motorways of the sea: Intermodal transport requires integrated management of the whole logistic chain. Essential elements are, inter alia, improved road and rail infrastructure linking ports with the hinterland and improved infrastructure within a port and ITS solutions.
Establishment of networks and working groups on issues related to the design, coordination and operation of integrated environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality structures especially in metropolises, functional urban areas and in areas under land use pressure (e.g. coasts).	**Maritime transport**	**Developing ports, optimising port interfaces, infrastructures and procedures/operations**: Developing the ports and port terminals in order to boost maritime transport, short-sea shipping capacity and cross-border ferry connectivity. Ports should favour development of combined infrastructure (trade, procedures, movement of goods information systems, structures, vehicles and operations), improving links to the mainland and emphasising the supply chain of goods.
	Intermodal connections to hinterland	**Improving the accessibility of the coastal areas and islands**: Coastal area and island accessibility are mostly affected by tourism seasonality and commercial and passenger maritime transport is not sufficiently developed. This needs to be addressed by exploring new coordinated and market-based options, optimising use of freight and passenger routes and involving private and public stakeholders.
		Developing motorways of the sea: Intermodal transport requires integrated management of the whole logistic chain. Essential elements are, inter alia, improved road and rail infrastructure linking ports with the hinterland and improved infrastructure within a port and ITS solutions.
		Railway reform: Taking measures to expedite progress in railway reform, e.g. transparent non-discriminatory access to rail terminals, in particular in sea and inland ports, introducing a concession approach for infrastructure, with direct cost-oriented track access charges, performance schemes and management contracts for authorised applicants.
Support the transfer and uptake of existing local/regional solutions and instruments; capitalisation of on-going technological innovations for a more sustainable organisation of environmental-friendly - low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality nodes, as well as new technologies applications.	**Maritime transport**	**Clustering port activities/services throughout the region**: Following the example of the existing NAPA cooperation agreement, harmonising the ports processes through a common ITS (Intelligent Transport System) would attract traffic that is now avoiding the Region.

ADRION Indicative actions	EUSAIR topics	EUSAIR indicative actions
		Improving and harmonising traffic monitoring and management: Strengthening and securing frequent exchange of information between coastal countries through the development of a Common Adriatic-Ionian Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System (by building on existing regional exchange of Automated Identification of Ships data and Ship Mandatory Reporting system, i.e. ADRIREP), will improve safety and security of maritime traffic in the region.
Study, design and testing of operational, technological and funding models for the preparation of infrastructure investments for environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and multimodality.	**Maritime transport**	**Developing ports, optimising port interfaces, infrastructures and procedures/operations**: Developing the ports and port terminals in order to boost maritime transport, short-sea shipping capacity and cross-border ferry connectivity. Ports should favour development of combined infrastructure (trade, procedures, movement of goods information systems, structures, vehicles and operations), improving links to the mainland and emphasising the supply chain of goods.
	Intermodal connections to hinterland	**Developing the Western Balkans comprehensive network:** Western Balkans need to prioritise investments on the defined SEETO comprehensive network (railway, inland waterways, nodes and hubs, notably with the motorways of the sea), aimed at promoting sustainable transport in the Region, and to prepare their integration in the Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T) network. This implies elaborating integrated planning for infrastructure developments and defining joint roadmaps for investments.
		Railway reform: Taking measures to expedite progress in railway reform, e.g. transparent non-discriminatory access to rail terminals, in particular in sea and inland ports, introducing a concession approach for infrastructure, with direct cost-oriented track access charges, performance schemes and management contracts for authorised applicants.
Development of transnational platforms for the coordination of environmental-friendly and low carbon transport and mobility services and infrastructures taking into account the possibilities offered by modern technologies, the environmental and seasonal constraints and the synergies of the demand by tourism, resident population and economic operators.	**Intermodal connections to hinterland**	**Improving the accessibility of the coastal areas and islands**: Coastal area and island accessibility are mostly affected by tourism seasonality and commercial and passenger maritime transport are not sufficiently developed. This needs to be addressed by exploring new coordinated and market-based options, optimising use of freight and passenger routes and involving private and public stakeholders.

Annex 4– Admissibility and Eligibility Criteria

Admissibility criteria

1	Admissibility criteria	Admissibility questions	Consequence on failure
1.1	Use of on-line system	Has the Application Form been submitted via the e-MS? Are the email addresses used for the registration and the one of the lead applicant reported in the section B1 of the Application Form the same?	Rejection of the project proposal
1.2	Timely submission	Has the Application Form be submitted within the set deadline? (25/03/2016; h: 17:00 (CET time)	Rejection of the project proposal
1.3	Completeness of the submitted Application form	Have all the sections of the Application Form been filled in? Has the Application Form been filled in English?	Rejection of the project proposal
1.4	Completeness and correctness of the partners' declarations	Are the Annexes been submitted using the e-MS? Are the declarations (in one document) been submitted by the Lead Applicant? Are the declarations (in one document) been submitted by each of the project partners? In case of involvement of private partner(s), is (are) the self-assessment financial viability been submitted? In case of involvement of associated partner(s), is (are) the declaration(s) of interest been submitted? Have the annexes been filled in using the programme template? Have the annexes been used correctly (i.e.: not altered)? Have the annexes been completely filled-in and in English? Are per each annex (lead partner, project and associated partners declarations and self-assessment financial viability declaration) above the following requirements present? o It has been printed on headed paper; o It has been stamped; o It has been signed by the legal representative or his/her authorised delegated person; o The signature is in blue ink;	Rejection of the project proposal if the declaration of the Lead Applicant is missing or not completely filled in. Exclusion of the project partner if the declaration is missing or not completely filled in. In case the exclusion of such partner(s) leads to non-fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements this will cause the rejection of the project proposal. Exclusion of the associated partner if the declaration is missing or not completely filled-

1	Admissibility criteria	Admissibility questions	Consequence on failure
		Is each declaration accompanied by a document attesting that the signatory/delegated person holds the power of signature and representation and by a valid identity document (e.g. identity card, passport)? (*Whenever the same person signs more than one declaration, only one document attesting that the signatory holds the signatory power has to be provided*).	in. In case the document attesting the power of signature is missing, rules described above for Lead Applicant and project partners apply

Eligibility criteria

2	Eligibility criteria	Eligibility questions	Consequence on failure
2.1	The project fulfils the minimum requirements for transnational partnerships	Does the project proposal have a minimum of three financing partners (ERDF/IPA) located within the ADRION eligible area? Are the project financing partners from at least three Partner States? Is at least one of them located in a ERDF Partner State? In case an EGTC applies as sole beneficiary of an operation, is its partnership composed by at least 2 bodies from ERDF Partner States located in the Programme area?	Rejection of the project proposal
2.2	The Lead Applicant is eligible	Is the Lead Applicant located in one of the NUTS 2 region of an ERDF Partner State of the programme (exception: Italian assimilated partners, see below)? Does it belong to one of the following categories as reported in the Programme Manual? ○ Public body (national, regional or local level), including associations formed by one or several regional or local authorities governed by public law; ○ Body governed by public law, including associations formed by one or several bodies governed by public law; ○ EGTC; ○ Public body or body governed by public law competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area but which are located outside of it (assimilated partner - for Italian partners only); ○ International organization acting under national law;	Rejection of the project proposal

2	Eligibility criteria	Eligibility questions	Consequence on failure
		▪ In case of international organization acting under national law, has it been constituted by at least 2 fiscal years?	
2.3	Project financing partners are eligible	Does the project partner belong to one of the following categories as reported in the Programme Manual? ○ Public body (national, regional or local level), including associations formed by one or several regional or local authorities governed by public law; ○ Body governed by public law, including associations formed by one or several bodies governed by public law; ○ EGTC; ○ Public body or body governed by public law competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area but which are located outside of it (assimilated partner - for Italian partners only); ○ International organization acting under national law; ▪ In case of international organization acting under national law, has it been constituted by at least 2 fiscal years? ○ Private body, including private companies, having legal personality; ▪ In case of private body, has it been constituted by at least 2 fiscal years?	Exclusion of the project partner if it declares being a public body and it reveals being a private body In case the exclusion of such partner(s) leads to non-fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements, this will cause the rejection of the project proposal.
2.4	Secured national co-financing	○ Is the amount of the national co-financing indicated in the Lead Applicant declaration equal or higher the amount of the national co-financing corresponding to the ERDF requested in the Application Form? ○ Is the amount of the national co-financing indicated in the project partners' declaration equal or higher the amount of the national co-financing corresponding to the ERDF/IPA requested in the Application Form?	Rejection of the project proposal or rejection of partner(s) according to the rules described in criterion 2.2 and 2.3
2.5	Requested EU co-financing within the fixed thresholds	Is the requested EU co-financing within the minimum/maximum threshold (EUR 800.000-1.500.000) or within a tolerance of ±5%?	Rejection of the project proposal
2.6	Project partners jointly cooperate	Do the partners cooperate in all the following ways: joint development, joint implementation and joint financing?	Rejection of the project proposal

2	Eligibility criteria	Eligibility questions	Consequence on failure
2.7	Project proposal complies with the specifications included the *Call for Proposals announcement*	Does the project proposal clearly address to one Priority Axis and its/one of its Specific Objectives?	Rejection of the project proposal
2.8	Project duration is within the time limits set in the call announcement ad/or Programme Manual	Does the project proposal end within the time limit set in the call announcement and/or Programme Manual (i.e.: up to 24 months?)	Rejection of the project proposal
2.9	Financial capacity of the private project partner	Are the data reported in the declaration on the financial capacity of the private partner in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Programme Manual?	The project private partner is rejected. In case the exclusion of such partner(s) leads to non-fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements, this will cause the rejection of the project proposal.

Annex 5 – Quality Criteria and awarding score criteria

Strategic criteria

Criterion and sub-criterion numbering	Criterion name	Sub-criterion	
3.1	**Project's context**		**MAX 20 points**
3.1.a		How relevant is the project proposal in terms of common challenges and/or joint assets addressed for the programme area?	Max 5 points
3.1.b		How well does the project make use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices in the thematic domain addressed? Whenever applicable, reference shall be made to previous project experiences under ETC or any other financing instruments.	Max 5 points
3.1.c		How well do project expected results contribute to EU/national/regional policies and/or strategies other than EUSAIR in the thematic domain(s) addressed by the project?	Max 5 points
3.1.d		How well does the project contribute to the programme horizontal principles: equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development, environmental issues? How does the project position itself with regard to the pre-defined environmental topics	Max 5 points
3.2	**Cooperation character**		**MAX 20 points**
3.2.a		How well is the need of a transnational approach addressed to the topic? Can the results (or only to some extent) be achieved without transnational cooperation and/or does the transnational cooperation have a significant added value for the partners and territories involved, going beyond the scope of both cross-border cooperation and local initiatives?	Max 5 points
3.2.b		How well 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?	Max 5 points
3.2.c		Are the compulsory and optional ways of cooperation clearly described and consistent with the distribution of tasks and budget between partners? Have they been adequately mirrored in the Work Packages?	Max 5 points

3.2.d		Is there a clear benefit from cooperating for the project partners / target groups / project area / programme area / Partner States? Are types of territories/regions/countries represented by the partners relevant in respect to the project topic?	Max 5 points
3.3	**Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs**		**MAX 20 points**
3.3.a		Do project's results and main outputs clearly link to programme priority and its indicators? - The project overall objective clearly links to a programme specific objective; - The project results clearly link to a programme result indicator; - The project specific objectives clearly link to the project overall objective; - The project main outputs clearly link to the project specific objectives; - The project main outputs clearly link to programme output indicators.	Max 5 points
3.3.b		Are results and main outputs in accordance with the selected target groups' needs which will use/benefit from them?	Max 5 points
3.3.c		Are results and main outputs specific and realistic? Does the project proposal intend to contribute to the realization of at least 2 outputs as described in the Cooperation Programme?	Max 5 points
3.3.d		Are project main outputs durable (i.e.: the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted)? If not, they are justified. To which extent are project main outputs replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability)? If not, they are justified.	Max 5 points
3.4	**Partnership relevance**		**MAX 20 points**
3.4.a		Does the project involve the relevant actors as project partners to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified? Are further key actors involved in a meaningful way even if not involved as financing partners (reference to associated partners)?	Max 5 points
3.4.b		With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership:	Max 5 points

		- Is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory? - Does it consist of partners that complement each other?	
3.4.c		Does the partnership as a whole and does each partner have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned to achieve the envisaged outputs and expected results? Do they have the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.; i.e.: none of the partners has managing tasks only)?	Max 5 points
3.4.d		Do all involved partners play a defined role in the partnership and get a real benefit from it?	Max 5 points
			MAX 80 points

Strategic awarding score

Criterion and sub-criterion numbering	**Criterion name**	**Sub-criterion**	
4	**Project's context relevance to the EUSAIR topics:**	**Compliance with EUSAIR**	**MAX 5 points**
4.1		Is the project main topic of intervention related to one of the following EUSAIR topics? Blue Growth Topic 1 - Blue technologies Topic 2 - Fisheries and aquaculture Topic 3 - Maritime and marine governance and services Sustainable tourism Topic 1 - Diversified tourism offer (products and services) Topic 2 – Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation and quality) Environmental quality Topic 1 – The marine environment Topic 2 – Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity Connecting the region Topic 1 - Maritime transport Topic 2 - Intermodal connections to the hinterland.	

		Are links with the other pillars detected?	
4.2		Does the project contribute to one or more indicative actions reported under each of the EUSAIR topics? ○ Blue technologies: all indicative actions; ○ Fisheries and aquaculture: all indicative actions with the exception of *Sustainable management of fisheries*; ○ Maritime and marine governance and services: all indicative actions with the exception of *Citizen and business awareness and involvement*; ○ Diversified tourism offer (products and services: all indicative actions; ○ Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation and quality): all indicative actions with the exception of *Adriatic Ionian cooperation for facilitating tourist circulation;* ○ The marine environment*:* all indicative actions with the exception of *Ensure prioritisation of investments to reflect the contribution to reducing pollution of the sea;* ○ Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity: all indicative actions; ○ Maritime transport: all indicative actions; ○ Intermodal connections to the hinterland: all indicative actions with the exception of *Development of air transport.* **THE DETAILED LIST IS PROVIDED IN ANNEX 2**	
			MAX 5 points

Operational criteria

Criterion and sub-criterion numbering	Criterion name	Sub-criterion	
5.1	**Management**		**MAX 20 points**
5.1.a		Is the Lead Partner experienced in complex project management and capable of coordinating the transnational partnership? Can it ensure adequate measures for management support?	Max 5 points
5.1.b		How well the foreseen management structures (e.g.: project steering committee, project coordination unit) are proportionate to the partnership and project size and needs and allow partners' involvement in decision-making?	Max 5 points
5.1.c		How well project management risks have been identified and mitigation measures foreseen?	Max 5 points
5.1.d		How well have the management procedures (such as reporting and evaluation procedures in the area of finance, project content, communication) been defined in a clear, transparent, efficient and effective way? Does project management include regular contacts between project partners and ensures transfer of expertise across the partnership (internal communication within the partnership)?	Max 5 points
5.2	**Communication**		**MAX 20 points**
5.2.a		Are the communication objectives clearly linked to the project specific objectives? How well the communication activities are coherently integrated in the overall project strategy?	Max 5 points
5.2.b		Are the approach/tactics chosen appropriate to reach communication objectives?	Max 5 points
5.2.c		To which extent are the proposed information and dissemination activities able to achieve visibility among relevant target groups and stakeholders (e.g. the relevant target groups are clearly defined and cover the entire project area? The general approach towards each group is described through relevant channels, tailored activities, etc.)?	Max 5 points
5.2.d		How well does the project make provisions for feedback mechanisms and evaluation measures for the communication activities?	Max 5 points
5.3	**Work plan**		**MAX 20 points**

5.3.a		Are the work plan and timing of activities, deliverables and outputs realistic, consistent and transparent? Is the overall project duration realistic to achieve the foreseen outputs? Do activities outside (the Union part of) the programme area clearly benefit the programme area?	Max 5 points
5.3.b		How well are activities, deliverables and outputs in a logical time-sequence?	Max 5 points
5.3.c		How well is the distribution of tasks among partners appropriate to their respective expertise (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.)?	Max 5 points
5.3.d		Is the time plan realistic and have any potential difficulties (contingencies) been correctly assessed?	Max 5 points
5.4	**Budget**		**MAX 20 points**
5.4.a	*To what extent does the project budget demonstrate value for money?*	Are planned resources reasonable and sufficient to ensure project implementation?	Max 5 points
5.4.b		Is the project budget proportionate to the proposed work plan, main outputs and results aimed for?	
5.4.c	*To what extent does the project budget demonstrate value for money?*	Are the partners' budgets coherent with their respective role in project activities for each Work Package?	Max 5 points
5.4.d	*To what extent is the budget coherent and proportionate?*	Is the budget clear and realistic? To which extent are in line: ▪ The financial allocation per budget line is with the work plan? ▪ The distribution of the budget per period with the work plan? ▪ The distribution of the budget per Work Package with the work plan? To which extent is justified the foreseen expenditure per budget line? Is the foreseen expenditure in line with the rules and recommendations reported in the Programme Manual (e.g.: communication gadget)?	Max 5 points
			MAX 80 points