



4th Call for project proposals

Capitalisation Small-Scale Projects

within the *Mediterranean Multi-Programme Mechanism (MMM)*
framework

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

The call is open for 90 calendar days from the day of publication (until 11:59 AM of the 90th day, including the day of publication). The official publication at [Official Bulletin of Puglia Region n. 75 of 21 September 2026](#) (BURP) [Managing Authority Decree n.198](#) and [Managing Authority Decree 199](#) will be also announced at <https://southadriatic.eu/> as well as in relevant institutional pages of the organisations concerned.

INTRODUCTION

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

The programme adopted by the EU Commission is published on the website <https://southadriatic.eu/programme-library/programme-documents#id-cooperation-programme>

This Call for project proposals is aligned with the Terms of Reference (ToRs) drafted by the Interreg Programmes, who participate in the MEDITERRANEAN MULTI-PROGRAMME MECHANISM (hereafter MMM), setting the strategic and operational framework for a unique coordinated call under the MMM, promoting sustainable tourism, while ensuring that future actions are coherent, evidence-based, and aligned with European cohesion policy and global sustainability goals.

It reflects a shared commitment among the participating Interreg Programmes to transforming tourism into a driver for inclusive growth, climate resilience, and territorial cohesion across the Mediterranean, mitigating environmental degradation and ensuring equitable benefits for local communities.

The coordinated call focuses on sustainable tourism topics. These were identified as a particularly suitable focus, given that it is a cross-cutting field central to many Interreg projects in the Mediterranean. It encompasses environmental protection, economic development, social inclusion, cultural heritage, innovation, and governance, enabling each Programme to contribute according to its specific objectives and territorial scope.

The MMM participating Programmes agreed on a common coordination framework to capitalize and improve the transferability and scalability of already achieved solutions beyond their own area of cooperation, i.e.:

- Common key thematic issues (originating from “Paths That Last” thematic workshops held in Split on 25 and 26 June 2025); - see table A;
- Joint list of outputs, proposed by each MMM participating Programme, to be capitalised and transferred into cooperation areas other than those in which they were originally developed; **see Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base;**
- An indicative minimum overlapping period of ten months for all selected projects financed by the participating MMM Programmes to enable parallel implementation and knowledge exchange on the basis of the SA Programme support;
- A project based on the same partnership, activities, objectives and expected results shall be submitted to one MMM Programme only;
- If the same or similar application has been submitted to several MMM Programmes, it cannot be granted under more than one Programme (**see statement in LP/PP DECLARATION**).

Since the MMM Programmes schedule an indicative minimum overlap of ten months, all projects selected under this call are encouraged to include in their proposal complementary actions and mutual exchanges planned from the beginning of their implementation, in order to enable and support inter-project cooperation and exchanges, to address shared Mediterranean challenges and reinforce synergies. Projects implemented within the eligible territories of the Interreg IPA South Adriatic Programme, shall clearly identify and engage specific target groups, to maximise impact and ensure consistency with the Programme’s mission and objectives.

The core target groups of a Programme consist of all relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors involved in the territorial sustainable tourism development, including national, regional and local public authorities engaged and working together with other relevant bodies responsible for defining and implementing policies.

For your application and acknowledgment, the Annex 2_MMM ToR is available in the Application Pack of this call.

1. CAPITALISATION SMALL-SCALE CALL What should the projects build on

The capitalisation¹ of experiences and results promoting new synergies is a common thread in the MMM Programmes and the core element to amplify results. Projects supported under this coordinated call shall fall within the category of **Capitalisation projects**, which aim at optimising and sharing validated **instruments, policies, strategies, and action plans**, so that they may be re-used, adopted, transferred or

¹ To consolidate knowledge; to share, exploit and reuse knowledge; to have knowledge integrated by other actors and institutions.

upscaled. These projects focus on the re-use, replication and upscaling of existing outputs² within the Programme cooperation areas and, where possible, across the broader Mediterranean region.

For this reason, **project proposals submitted to this coordinated call must be based on at least one output developed under an MMM Programme other than the Interreg IPA South Adriatic Programme, to which the application is submitted under this call. If applicants fail to effectively capitalise on at least one of the MMM outputs, this shall be considered in the quality assessment phase, throughout all relevant criteria.**

In addition to this identified output from the MMM database, project proposals may also valorise and transfer outputs directly achieved by previously implemented projects co-financed in the MMM area, instead of developing entirely new outputs. **However, this additional output capitalization shall complement the MMM output capitalization (i.e. it shall clearly contribute to the MMM capitalization).**

The **Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base**, which includes selected **“GIVERS”** from the Mediterranean Area (i.e. those who produced the output), to be selected by the applicants for their outputs, is **available** in the Application Pack of this Call.

This is how it works:

- The applicants submitting project proposals need to be **“TAKER”** of at least 1 output chosen from the Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base, capitalising the experience gained in the relevant programme that co-financed it;
- The applicants cannot choose outputs of the Interreg IPA South Adriatic (SA) programme included in the Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base;
- *As synergies with other Interreg or EU-funded initiatives are encouraged*, each proposal may include other outputs developed by at least one of the involved partners in previously financed projects, including SA ones, only if they are relevant for and complement the valorization and transfer of the chosen output from Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base;
- The involvement of the partner(s) that originally developed the selected output (ie **“GIVER”**) is not mandatory, but may be beneficial and will be positively assessed. This involvement shall be according to the SA Programme’s eligibility rules, especially those related to associate partners, if the partners are located outside of the Programme area (see eligibility rules below).

The MMM coordinated call focuses on the following key thematic issues, better detailed in the table A:

- 1) shared and strategic governance of the tourism offer;
- 2) tourism and green transition;
- 3) social dimension of tourism (employment and upskilling) and inclusive and accessible tourism;
- 4) innovative and smart tourism products.

As the Call is focused only on the Specific Objective of the Programme **“S.O. 5.1 Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders”**, project proposals shall enhance the institutional capacity in one of the key thematic issues identified by the MMM, i.e.:

- 1) Enhance institutional capacity in a shared and strategic governance of the tourism offer;
- 2) Enhance institutional capacity in managing tourism and green transition;
- 3) Enhance institutional capacity in boosting the social dimension of tourism (employment and upskilling) and inclusive and accessible tourism;
- 4) Enhance institutional capacity in supporting innovative and smart tourism products.

Therefore, any Project proposal shall focus on:

² For the purpose of capitalisation, the word “outputs” is understood in a wider sense than the indicators used by the programme and refers to any product of the project, which may be capitalised on. It may be a specific project output, the global project result, but also a key project activity or a deliverable of the same activity.

- the output(s) from Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base, which applicants intend to uptake and use in the South Adriatic area;
- only 1 key thematic issue listed in table A here below;
- one or more capitalization steps to be carried out (ie. transfer, adaptation, testing and/or scaling-up).

REMINDER

It is mandatory to develop your project idea based on at least one specific output presented in the Annex 1_MMM Outputs Data Base, other than the Interreg IPA South Adriatic programme

TABLE A

KEY THEMATIC ISSUES* TO FOCUS ON *All within S.O. 5.1 Enhanced Institutional Capacity for this call	KNOWLEDGE BASE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO DEVELOP IN THIS CALL
1. SHARED AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE OF THE TOURISM OFFER	- Multi-level and cross-sectoral governance models are essential for sustainable tourism; - Digital platforms and observatories foster coordination and integration; - Barriers include fragmented governance, lack of shared vision, and short project timeframes; - Durable governance structures, inclusive vision co-creation, and integration with public policy frameworks are needed; - Capacity-building, peer learning, and youth/citizen engagement are critical.	Permanent Multi-Level Governance Structures: create and institutionalize cross-sectoral steering groups and digital platforms to ensure continuity and integration of tourism governance beyond project lifecycles; Mainstream Project Results towards Policy: develop and co-design policy briefs, toolkits, and position papers with local/regional authorities to embed project outputs into territorial development strategies; Capacity-Building and Peer Learning: implement training modules and peer-learning activities to empower stakeholders, including youth and intergenerational groups, in governance processes; Inclusive and Data-Driven Decision-Making: integrate data monitoring tools and participatory advisory groups to support transparent, evidence-based governance and citizen engagement; Multi-Level Governance and Collaboration: organize multi-level events, boot camps, and matchmaking platforms to foster exchange and strategic alignment across regions and Programmes.
2. TOURISM AND THE GREEN TRANSITION	- Successful green tourism models rely on small-scale, fact-based solutions, citizen engagement, and multi-level governance; - Barriers include short-term vision, lack of infrastructure, competitive mindsets, and technological divides; - Projects should move from isolated interventions to systemic, long-term approaches; - Capitalisation and sustainability require horizontal peer-to-peer exchanges and shared platforms; - Civic engagement and intergenerational participation are vital.	Integrated Green Tourism Models: design and implement projects that link tourism with ecological balance, resource management, and territorial development, prioritizing long-term transformation; Local Institutional Commitment: develop enabling mechanisms and exit strategies from the outset to ensure project sustainability and integration into local governance; Knowledge Management and Exchange: create shared platforms and reinforce/valorise existing networks for collaborative learning, peer reviews, and dissemination of best practices across regions; Civic and Youth Engagement: support participatory governance models where citizens and youth co-create and shape green tourism initiatives.

3. SOCIAL DIMENSION OF TOURISM (EMPLOYMENT AND UPSKILLING), INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE TOURISM	• Empowerment of youth, infrastructure for people with disabilities, and digital platforms are key solutions; • Strengthening skills and job quality in tourism is essential to support fair working conditions and long-term employability; • Barriers include limited policy-maker engagement, bureaucracy, lack of incentives, and insufficient user involvement. These challenges also affect the availability of upskilling opportunities and the attractiveness of tourism careers; • Accessibility should be universal, including children, elderly, and underrepresented groups. • Projects should involve end users from the start and promote targeted calls and educational tools; • Dedicated policy support and coordination mechanisms are needed to encourage uptake of social innovation in tourism and workforce development; • Multi-level governance and harmonisation of procedures are needed.	• Universal Accessibility and Inclusion: develop tourism solutions based on universal design principles, ensuring adaptability for all user groups (children, elderly, persons with disabilities). • Co-Participation in Project Design: involve final users and target groups directly in the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects and calls. • Skills and Quality Employment: promote training, reskilling, and new career pathways to improve job quality and match evolving tourism labour market needs, with a focus on youth employment.
4. INNOVATIVE AND SMART TOURISM PRODUCTS	• Digital innovation (AI, VR, e-platforms, payment solutions) is advancing smart tourism; • Barriers include lack of digital skills, limited authority support, data gaps, and complex certification systems; • Future focus should include enhanced person-to-person experiences, capacity building, and scaling eco-tourism; • Networking, data-driven scaling, and embedding results in regional plans are essential; • Youth and citizens should be involved from the start through Living Labs, hackathons, and green start-ups;	• Digital Transformation in Tourism: support the development and deployment of AI-powered services, VR tools, and digital platforms to enhance tourism experiences and operational efficiency; • Capacity for Innovation: provide targeted training and support for SMEs, start-ups, and project teams to adapt to evolving business models, technologies and new opportunities (niche tourism); • Public-Private Partnerships: facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation between local authorities, SMEs, certification bodies, academia, and investors to foster innovation and scalability; • Capitalisation and Internationalisation: use existing networks and joint distribution mechanisms to scale project outputs, monitor impact, and support replication across regions and markets; • Youth and Citizens in Co-Design: implement participatory formats (Living Labs, hackathons) and simplified procedures to encourage youth-led innovation and inclusive project development

Cross-cutting elements to be taken into account when drafting a proposal and to guide project implementation:

1. **Capitalisation & transfer protocol:** proposals must include a clear plan showing which existing results will be transferred, who will adopt them (identify transferability partners) and dedicated budget allocations for scaling and sustaining project results, including follow-up funding and visibility mechanisms;
2. **Synergies & embedding:** demonstrate how the proposal aligns with national/regional tourism strategies, S3, climate adaptation plans, macro-regional strategies and Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD);
3. **Governance & participation:** establish a project steering committee, committed in involving the relevant partnership (public, private, academia, civil society). Include mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue/advisory groups, and youth participation;
4. **Data, monitoring and open tools:** use / strengthen existing Sustainable Tourism Observatories, shared digital platforms for visitor and environmental monitoring, and open datasets to support transfer and policy uptake.

ACTIONS FINANCED

After the selection of relevant outputs in the MMM Outputs DB, applicants shall plan capitalisation actions such as for example:

- Implementation of thematic masterclasses and peer reviews;
- Demonstration and solution-testing activities, live exercises;
- Development of orientation, policy papers;
- Updating platforms data and functionalities produced within the project, implementation of study visits to showcase best practices identified and to raise awareness on the topics addressed;
- Implementation of dedicated actions to engage stakeholders and cluster demonstration activities, etc;
- Adaptation and contextualisation of transferred outputs to different territorial, institutional or policy contexts;
- Development of an initial stakeholder mapping to define target roles and objectives;
- Development and implementation of a targeted public relations strategy;
- Raising awareness among targeted stakeholders through outreach strategies, including training activities;
- Support to institutional uptake, including validation with competent authorities and integration into existing policy or planning frameworks;
- Design, customisation and deployment of modules for transfer of outputs in a step-by-step approach.

Indicative examples of **EXPECTED OUTPUTS** to be produced by the funded projects:

- Policy implementing measures;
- Recommendations or regulatory proposals;
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or cooperation agreements;
- Transfer plans and reports;
- Assessment tools and follow-up mechanisms or procedures;
- Adapted versions of transferred results (e.g. guidelines, toolkits or methodologies adapted to the target territories or institutions);
- Formal adoption or endorsement documents by competent authorities or relevant institutions, where applicable;
- Setting-up of governance structures to capitalise on strategies.

ALIGNMENT WITH EACH PROGRAMME'S OBJECTIVES

While aligning with the programme S.O. 5.1 and with the thematic issues specified above, projects should produce transferable and coordinated **solutions, strategies or action plans**, which could also be applied to the territories covered by all the MMM Programmes (across the whole Mediterranean area, whenever possible):

- Solutions are methodologies, tools, technologies, services, or partnership agreements tested in real conditions and easily transferable;
- Strategies are courses of action designed to achieve long-term goals in a specific domain;
- Action plans are the translation of strategies into concrete actions;

RELEVANT POLICY FRAMEWORKS TO CONSIDER

Projects should, in the design of the proposal, consider complementarities with other European and Mediterranean initiatives, strategies and Programmes priorities focusing on similar challenges, among others:

- Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and more specifically the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, along with the “2030 Greener Med” Agenda supporting its implementation and the Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy;
- Communication on Sustainable Blue Economy (DG MARE);
- EUSAIR macro-regional strategy;
- WestMED Initiative (sea-basin strategy);
- BLUEMED Initiative;
- EU strategy for Sustainable Tourism (P9 TA(2021)0109);
- Other Interreg Programmes (not belonging to the MMM) and relevant thematic EU-Programmes (i.e. Horizon Europe, LIFE...);
- Joint Communication on the Pact for the Mediterranean (JOIN(2025) 26 final);
- Communication on the European Ocean Pact (COM (2025) 281 final).

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE MMM PROGRAMMES

In the **implementation** phase, MMM Programme authorities will support funded projects by:

- Facilitating twinning activities and thematic exchanges to reinforce visibility and capitalisation of results;
- Encouraging beneficiaries to exchange information, compare approaches, contribute to milestones and outputs arising from other similar projects working with different territories and partners, within the broader Mediterranean framework.

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

EUSAIR

Additional points are foreseen also for project proposals having objectives and activities, which are explicitly foreseen in the EUSAIR action plan (see <https://www.adriatic-ionician.eu/document-type/official-documents/>). The project partners shall clearly outline how these activities are going to be followed up within the EUSAIR and with the EUSAIR stakeholders, as well as explain how they intend to promote these actions to the EUSAIR actors.

2. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall financial allocation for priority axis 5, specific objective 5.1, is **EUR 853.587,16** of IPA contribution and **EUR 181.315,40** of National Co-financing, for a total of **EUR 1.034.902,40**.

The financial allocation is provisional and as soon as new funds will be available, these will be allocated by the Managing Authority to the budget of the Call.

Co-financing

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

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

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

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

Pre-financing

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

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

Ranking list

The outcome of the project selection shall be an open ranking list, which is going to be published. The projects at the top of the ranking list shall be financed until the resources allocated to the Priority Axis 5 are absorbed. The Monitoring Committee reserves the right to allocate additional resources resulting from savings or any budget reduction, as to finance further projects at the top of the ranking list.

Eligibility rules

Detailed eligibility rules for the expenditures are specified in the programme manual fact sheet, published at <https://southadriatic.eu/programme-library/project-manual-tools#id-project-implementation>

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

1. Lump sum for Preparation cost;
2. Lump sum for Workshop, seminars and conferences;
3. Lump sum for Incoming missions & B2B meetings;
4. Lump sum for Accompanying actions;
5. SSUCs for Targeted Training;
6. SSUCs for Travel&Accommodation;
7. 2% FR for Italian FLC's cost;

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

8. Lump Sum for Joint Action plan/Model/Methods.

See **Guidance for Simplified Cost Options and small-scale Projects** (ie. Factsheet 4.10.1) published at <https://southadriatic.eu/programme-library/project-manual-tools#id-project-implementation>.

In compliance with Article 53 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the calculation methodology of the SCOs may be subject to future audits. In case any SCO has to be revised because of a subsequent qualified opinion by the Audit, the SSP partners shall replace or adapt those activities accordingly, as far as compatible with the revised SCOs, assisted by the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat.

The legal duties and obligations of the beneficiaries of financed projects are set out in the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement, which are included in the Programme Manual (see FactSheet 3.3) in addition to the relevant and applicable regulations.

3. PROJECT PARTNERS

Eligibility of partners according to location

In compliance with article 23 of the ETC Regulation, lead partners and project partners must be established in Italy, Albania and Montenegro, whereas the Programme area covers the two Italian regions Puglia and Molise and the whole territory of Albania and Montenegro. Partners having the headquarter outside the Programme area, but a branch office established in these countries, will be eligible for funding, provided that the branch office has full legal and administrative capacity⁴. Evidence shall be provided by the partners with the application form.

As specified in the Programme, participation of project partners (not lead partners) located in Italian regions outside the programme area is admitted, provided that the actions of these partners are part of the capitalisation objective, e.g. they give or take over outputs selected and they are beneficial for the Programme area.

Eligibility of partners according to legal status

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

- Public bodies⁵;
- Bodies governed by public law;
- Private non-profit organisations, established according to the applicable legal framework/law in the respective country, for which the financial capacity shall be demonstrated and assessed based on financial accountability and generally applied principles (see tool provided).

⁴ Full legal capacity to be the centre of rights and obligations related to the operating headquarters in the eligible area is referred to the full power of the office to operate with complete autonomy from the legal office of the same organisation (for instance the local office must have the power to sign all necessary contracts and agreements for project implementation). Additionally, the programme controllers and auditors have to be in the position to check the expenditures of the operating headquarters, which shall be bound to national rules of the country, where it is located and audit trail shall be kept in this location.

⁵ For International Organisations see eligibility rules in the related factsheet of the programme manual, i.e. International organisations acting under the national law of an EU Member State only when the following two conditions are met: (a) Participation in the project through an operative seat located in one of the Programme regions; and (b) Explicit acceptance of all requirements deriving from the EU Treaty and the regulations applicable in the framework of the regions of the Programme; and (c) In the funding decision, the Monitoring Committee delegation of the Country of the organisation does not decline the subsidiary liability set out in article 52 (3) of the ETC Reg. (EU) 2021/1059.

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

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

Financial Capacity of private non-profit project partners

In case of private non-profit Lead Partner the financial capacity will be assessed as eligibility criteria (i.e. the project proposal will be ineligible if the private LP has no financial capacity).

The financial capacity of private non-profit project partners is going to be assessed only for those project proposals, which are recommended for financing and in case the project partner is ineligible, during the negotiations phase, the Lead Partner is required to remove the ineligible partner from the project or to replace it with an eligible partner, with a suitable proposal to safeguard the project objectives and activities, and with assistance by the Joint Secretariat and National Info Points. The financial capacity is going to be assessed through the information included in the Balance sheets, or other equivalent document (such as a statement by an authorised auditor or accountant), of the **last two financial years**, or of the last accounting year in the case of an organization established only in the last 12 months, based on financial accountability and generally applied principles to assess financial capacity of private entities.

Lead Applicants are recommended to check its respect, before submitting the project proposal, according to the tool made available (see Annex 7_SA Tool_Financial Capacity of private non-profit project partners).

In particular, Lead Partners and Project Partners with an IPA budget of € 20,000 or below are exempted from the assessment on financial capacity. Partners with an IPA budget above € 20,000 must satisfy at least one of the following criteria: **a) Subvention Rate** (Net Worth / IPA) > 0.30 or **b) Grant Dependency Ratio** ((IPA / project duration) / Total Annual Income) < 0.50, according to the provided calculation criteria and other requirements as set up in the Annex 7_SA Tool_Financial Capacity of private non-profit project partner.

The Joint Secretariat and Managing Authority shall be supported by the National Info Points and National Authorities in assessing the financial capacity of the respective National private non-profit partners.

Partnerships

Applicants are encouraged to involve institutional partners and established networks, ensuring a balanced and efficient partnership.

In compliance with article 23 (1) of the ETC Regulation and considering the limited project size, the projects shall involve partners from at least two participating countries, at least one of which shall be from Italy.

The total number of partners must not exceed **four (4)** including the Lead Partner.

The involvement of the partner(s) that originally developed the selected output (ie “GIVER”) is not mandatory but may be beneficial and could be carried out according to the SA Programme’s eligibility rules.

Therefore, any partner who has been previously project partner in other MMM Programmes and who is not established in the SA programme area, can be involved as ASSOCIATE PARTNER, taking part in the activities without receiving financing. In this case, participation will be positively assessed with additional points, if the associate partner provides for a clear capitalization benefit, e.g. being giver or taker of a selected output.

The partnership has to appoint a Lead Partner, who is responsible for the preparation and submission of the application form. In case of approval of the project, the Lead Partner takes over the responsibility for management, communication, implementation, and coordination of activities among the involved partners.

In compliance with art. 23 of the ETC Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, partners shall cooperate in the development and implementation of projects, as well as in the staffing or financing, or both, thereof.

Limitations for partners

Building on a consolidated practice, a limitation per organization is set. This limitation refers to an organisation or a legal body, not to its units, unless the single units are legally identified as independent bodies with separate legal personality (to verify it, check e.g. fiscal position, VAT-number, statute, etc.). The organisations, having several separate departments, may apply as Lead partners or project partners in maximum 1 project proposal⁶.

Project proposals including partners exceeding these limits, according to a chronological order of their submission, are going to be automatically excluded in the phase of the eligibility and admissibility assessment.

4. PROJECT SIZE

The call will finance only small-scale projects i.e.:

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

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

5. PROJECT DURATION AND PREPARATION/CLOSURE LUMP SUM

The project implementation shall **not be longer than 12 months**, starting from the project start date, set during the contracting procedure. A prolongation may be approved by the Managing Authority, if duly justified, considering also an indicative minimum overlap period of 10-months for all selected projects financed by the participating MMM Programmes to enable parallel implementation and knowledge exchange.

Expenditures incurred to develop the project (project preparation) before the project start date will not be reimbursed, but are covered by a lump sum of 5.585,00 EUR (IPA and national co-financing) to the lead partner.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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

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

The project lead applicant shall submit it on behalf of the partnership. All the compulsory documents to be filled in for submitting a project proposal are included in the Application Package available at the Programme official website <https://southadriatic.eu/>.

The Application Package includes the following documents:

- Application Form to be filled in English
- LP/PP Statements duly stamped (if stamp is applicable) and signed by the legal representative of the participating partners (two standard forms provided);
- Power of signature and ID card of the legal representative of all participating partners;
- AP declaration duly stamped (if stamp is applicable) and signed by the legal representative of all associated partners (standard form provided);
- a copy of the Statute and/or legal act which sets up the partner institution/organization, in which its legal representation is specified, for partners participating for the first time, or having substantial changes to their own legal Statute and/or legal Act. These documents can be submitted also in the national language, whilst a translation into English is preferable.
 - In case of partners who succeeded in the eligibility check during previous calls (ie. 14-20 and 21-27), it will be sufficient to tick into LP/PP Statement, the declaration that the legal Statute / or legal acts have not substantially changed, compared to the version previously submitted to the programme, as well as consent that the MA may request and assess the entire documentation and exclude the partner, if ineligible- before the signature of the subsidy contract;
- the balance sheets of the **last two accounting years**, or equivalent document (such as a statement by an authorised auditor or accountant), or of the last accounting year in the case of an organization established only in the last 12 months, issued according to national legislation, for Private partners;
- Filled in Annex 7_SA Tool_Financial Capacity of private non-profit project partner, filled for each private non-profit partner.

E-signatures, made according to specific national law, are admitted.

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

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

7. APPLICATION FORM

The Application Form is structured according to the following chapters:

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

The submitted project proposal needs to :

- **Identify at least 1 output** originating from an MMM Programme other than the SA Programme (MMM output identification code from the code column of the MMM Outputs Data Base to be filled in **AF - section C.2.1**. If more than one output is chosen, please enter all of them using a "," (e.g. "MMM_XY01; MMM_XY02"; etc).
- **Identify the MMM key thematic issue tackled** (as listed in Table A).
- **Define activities**, and **describe how** the output(s) will be **transferred, adapted, tested** and/or **scaled up** (ie. capitalization steps to be carried out).
- **Explain the relevance** of the selected output(s) for the new context.

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

According to the Programme Intervention Logic of the Interreg IPA South Adriatic, in S.O. 5.1 the project global output shall be captured through the Programme indicator "RCO83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed", while considering a maximum target of one RCO83, as well as the total number of project partners, including associate partners, who shall be counted through the Programme indicator "RCO87 Organisations cooperating across borders" (i.e. RCO87 target at least equal to project partners number).

Check the Annex 6_SA_Application_Form_SSP_MMM Call for more explanation and examples.

The submitted project proposal must set out a direct link to the Programme specific objectives. Basically, the project shall select/define:

- **Project overall Objective**, with a clear causal link with the global result expected for the project. Project partners shall select only one programme priority specific objective (ie. SO 5.1), to which the project contributes and describes how it will contribute to it. It is important to ensure consistency between the project objective(s) and the programme priority objectives, as these shall guide the partners to focus the project activities and impacts the project will make.
- **Project Result**, aligned with a selected SA programme result indicator it intends to contribute to, matching with the selected programme priority objective. The measurement unit cannot be selected by the project partners, as it is the same as that of the programme result indicator selected.
- **a number of project-specific objectives** (one or more), supported each by a thematic work package. The project specific objective will be achieved when all activities in each work package are implemented and any outputs delivered. Each project specific objective shall have a direct contribution to the project overall objective. Therefore, building a consistent intervention logic (incl. the causal relationships), Your specific objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Realistic, Time based, to give consistency to the delivery of the project outputs/results. Basically per each project specific objective there is an output
- **Project outputs**, aligned with a selected SA programme output indicator. The measurement unit cannot be selected by the project partners, as it is the same as that of the programme output indicator selected. They in fact need to be aggregated and monitored, to measure the progress and the achievement of output targets set on the programme level. Project-specific output indicators are not allowed. It is mandatory for the project to contribute to at least one programme output indicator, linked to its own programme result indicator.

- **Work packages** include the description of the project work plan explaining what needs to be done to deliver project outputs and results, as well as project Overall objective and any specific Project objectives. This logical link gives consistency to the project contribution to the Programme targets.
 - Each work package is further broken down into activities, deliverables, timeplan, target etc. A side-product of the project that contributes to the development of a project output can be listed as a deliverable of an activity. Even if not every activity must have deliverables, since they are not a part of the intervention logic, in case of SSP each chosen SCO must be filled in the AF as dedicated DELIVERABLE of its related activity;
 - **Communication activities** are embedded in each work package, considering it is not a work package anymore. Therefore, think about changes in a target audience's behaviour, knowledge or belief, contributing to the achievement of the specific objective and specify Number and typo of targets to be reached and in which way
 - **Management activities** need to be explained in the C.7.1 section of the AF, since there is not a dedicated workpackage anymore. Be efficient and effective and if you foresee relevant deliverables, list them in this section
 - **SSP features:** Considering the nature and purposes of this call, totally based on SCOs, emphasis must be given to the project output to be achieved and not to the SCO-outputs used. Therefore, fill in the project output in accordance with the “EXPECTED OUTPUTS” as listed in this Call, whilst each chosen lumpsum/SCO must be filled in the AF as dedicated DELIVERABLE to be reached in the development of its related activity. Regarding Communication activities, avoid any kind of overlapping, since they could coincide with the the activities linked to the SCO outputs chosen by the applicant.

REMINDERS

- Compulsory project work packages: description of objectives, actions, relevant deliverables and output to reach the foreseen goals, in particular how they intend to capitalize the chosen MMM output(s) (capitalisation objective).
- Not required work packages: Preparation WP for the Lead Partner only (covering all costs before the project duration on a lump sum basis); Management WP; Communication WP.

Considering the small-scale dimension of the projects to be financed, it is strongly suggested to foresee only one work package linked to 1 project output and 1 related result for each project submitted

8. SELECTION PROCEDURE

Following the submission of the project proposals, each of them will be subject to a formal assessment of eligibility and quality requirements.

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

FULL ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY AND QUALITY CHECK

8.1 Admissibility and eligibility check

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

- Correct statement signed by the legal representative of the Lead Applicant and accompanying act attesting the legal power, or a duly delegated person, who confirms the willingness of the organisation to be lead partner, to assume all legal rights and obligations and that confirms the compliance with the eligibility and admissibility rules for all other partners;
- Correct statement signed by the legal representative of the project partners;
- Obligatory annexes correct and submitted, as declared in the statement, such as Statute and/or legal act which sets up the partner institution/organization, in which its legal representation is specified, for partners participating for the first time;
- Eligibility of Lead Partner, as declared in the statement;
- Eligibility of Project Partners, as declared in the statement;
- Requirements regarding the minimum and maximum number of partners, including maximum numbers of applications per partners;
- “Non-profit organizations” partners, who shall be registered at least in the last 12 months, as declared in the statement;
- Balance sheets of the last **two accounting years**, or equivalent document, or of the last accounting year in case of organization established only in the last 12 months, issued according to national legislation, for Private partners;
- Correct Annex 7_SA Tool_Financial Capacity of private non-profit project partner, filled in both for Private non-profit Lead Partner and Partners to demonstrate their financial capacity.

E-signatures, made according to specific national law, are admitted.

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

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

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

Partners may be requested to provide minor integrations or to correct minor clerical errors in the documents, upon approval by the Managing Authority and within a fixed deadline.

Besides these cases, following errors lead to an automatic rejection, without possibility to amend or correct these:

- 1) Delayed submission or submission not through the Jems (automatic application to all proposals sent outside the Jems);
- 2) Missing statements, or not duly signed, or not in compliance with official format provided per LP or PP, and stamped (if stamp is applicable), or with severe deviations, e.g. compulsory/essential parts crossed-out or deleted in the text of the statement;
- 3) Missing accompanying act attesting the legal power of the signatory;
- 4) Partners not having legal seat in Italy, Albania or Montenegro;

5) Number of applications exceeds the rule on maximum number of applications per partner⁷.

8.2 Quality check

The project proposals are checked against following set of quality criteria⁸ approved by the MC

STRATEGIC CRITERIA	Max. score
A.1. The project selected at least one output from another MMM programme as listed in the MMM Outputs Data Base, to be capitalised on with coherent and effective activities. (AF C.2.1)	10
A.2 The project objective and forecasted achievements are suitable and effective to capitalise on the output(s) selected from the MMM Outputs Data Base and any other complementary output (AF A.2 and C).	10
A.3. The project activities include relevant capitalization actions, i.e. it demonstrates to aiming at transferring or adapt, or test and/or scale-up achieved results, which were clearly identified, through suitable and coherent actions (AF C.4)	5
A.4. Project outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted through the capitalization on the output selected). How far are the project outputs going to be further used and the sustainability ensured once the project has been finalised? If applicable, how far the project envisages durability of relevant project outputs? (AF C.8)	5
A.5. The communication objectives are relevant and are expected to contribute to project specific objectives, connected to the capitalisation on the selected output. (AF C 2.4 & C.4 Com Objectives and targets reached in WPs)	5
A.6. The project capitalisation activities clearly and consistently contributes to specified EUSAIR macroregional Strategy objectives and actions and other policy frameworks (AF C 2.5, C 2.6)	3
A.7. The project output and the capitalisation activities may effectively contribute to the achievement of the Programme Priority Specific objective selected, they clearly link to programme output indicators and their contribution to programme targets is sufficient (AF C.1)	5
A.8. The output may not be effectively capitalised on without cooperation, i.e. the cross-border dimension is essential to reach the capitalisation objectives (AF C.3 & C.7.5)	3
A.9. Partnership includes suitable partner or associate partner, effectively acting as TAKERS of the MMM output selected (AF C.3)	10
A.10. Partners may efficiently capitalise on the selected output and effectively benefit from this capitalisation (ie. GIVERS are included as partner or Associated partner) (AF C.3 & C 7.1)	3
TOTAL STRATEGIC CRITERIA	59
OPERATIONAL CRITERIA	
B.1. Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.) (AF B)	5

⁷ According to the chronological order of submission, the applications exceeding the maximum admissible number per organisation shall be excluded.

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

B.2 The project involves a suitable partnership, with sufficient capacity and experience for implementing the actions in the same sector and of a comparable scale to the one, for which a grant is being requested (AF project partners) (AF B)	5
B.3 Each partner can count on a team with sufficient competences and/or on a dedicated unit inside the organization (i.e. integration unit for IPA countries) (AF B)	3
C.1. Project specific objectives/outputs/results are specific, measurable, achievable and time based (in accordance to the workplan it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget and they have been quantified), they are target addressed and aligned/coherent with the selected SCOs and related outcomes (AF C.4)	10
D.1. The available information in the budget is transparent and sufficient. On that basis, the project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan, project outputs and project's contribution to programme indicators aimed for, and the application of lump sums, flat rate and unit costs is appropriate and in line with the programme rules (AF B & D)	3
TOTAL Operational Criteria	26
STEERING COMMITTEE CRITERIA	
SC.2 criteria: Globally, the project complies with national and regional policies, its actions and outputs precisely address concrete needs of the territories, and it involves a suitable partnership, capable to reach the expected impacts	10
TOTAL Strategic & Operational Criteria & Steering Committee	95

Scoring system:

POINTS for scales 10 / 5 / 3 max	ASSESSMENT OF THE CRITERION
7,1 to 10 4,1 to 5 2,1 to 3	The proposal fulfils the given criterion to an excellent level and the provided information is exhaustive, clear and coherent for assessing the criterion
5,1 to 7 3,1 to 4 1,1 to 2	The proposal fulfils the given criterion to a sufficient level, however, some aspects of the given criterion have not been met fully or not explained in full clarity or detail
2,1 to 5 1,1 to 3 0,1 to 1	The proposal has serious shortcomings in fulfilling the given criterion and/or the provided information is of low quality
0 to 2 0 to 1 0	The proposal does not fulfil the given criterion or insufficient information is provided to assess the given criterion

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

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

S.O/Acronym/No.	Amount requested	JS/NIPs Score	SC Score	Total Score approved by MC
Project proposals approved for financing:				

Project proposals exceeding financial allocation, eligible for future financing upon decision by the MC:				
Project proposals rejected for non-fulfilling the minimum eligibility and admissibility criteria:				
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Based on the outcomes of the quality assessment and any specific conditions, which the MC may decide to apply to any project, after the funding decision a negotiation phase is open, where the JS/MA and the LP optimize project planning, activities and budgets.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information about the content of the CP, the specific conditions for the submission of the project proposals, the assessment and selection procedure, the application package as well as other relevant information are available at <https://southadriatic.eu/>

11. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROCEDURE

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

12. ENCLOSURES

Annexes:

- Annex_1_MMM_Output_DataBase
- Annex_2_MMM_common_ToR_capitalization
(for acknowledgement)
- Annex_3_LP_declaration_template
- Annex_4_PP_declaration_template
- Annex_5_AP_declaration_template
- Annex_6_SA_Application_Form_SSP_MMM_Call_offline
- Annex_7_SA_Tool_Financial_Capacity_private_non_profit_organisations
- Annex_8_SA_Budget_Tool_SSP_Call