

IPA ADRION 1st Monitoring Committee meeting

28 February – 1 March 2023

Meeting in person and online

Bologna (Italy)

Approved Minutes

<p>Item 1</p>	<p>Approval of the draft agenda</p> <p>Chair: Welcomes all participants and gives the floor to the MA and the Regional Minister Paolo Calvano.</p> <p>Minister: Welcomes all participants on behalf of the Government of the Emilia-Romagna Region. He expresses appreciation for the Emilia-Romagna region for the great job done by all participating countries since 2015. The programme is a unique example of multi-level governance, and its impact should not be taken for granted. Cooperation is the tool through which we have been able to support more than 500 organisations and institutions in the Adriatic Ionian region. The programme territory is now extended by including North Macedonia and San Marino. The work done by the JS and its technical support has been important for reaching the programme goals. Several challenges are ahead of us in the following years. We need quality results able to reach a valuable impact. Data show that we must improve certain processes in the future. This is a teamwork that must be done counting on the cooperation of all the involved actors. MA counts on lessons learned; exchange of experiences with participating countries is welcome. The Adriatic Ionian region and Western Balkans offer opportunities for knowledge sharing and mutual learning.</p> <p>Chair: Confirms the quorum and asks if there are comments on the agenda.</p> <p>The quorum is reached. (Participants list: see Annexes A-D)</p> <p>The draft Agenda is approved.</p>
<p>Item 2</p>	<p>Monitoring Committee Rules of Procedure</p> <p>JS: Presents the text of the Monitoring Committee Rules of Procedure discussed during the previous meeting and informs that two comments were</p>

	<p>received in the meantime by the delegations of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and already included in the text.</p> <p>SI: Puts forward several proposals and asks for clarification of some points regarding the Monitoring Committee Rules of Procedure, namely: request for adding the approval of the Technical Assistance (TA) budget manual; asks if the annual TA work plan will include the report for the previous year;; as far as the JS set-up is concerned, in case some changes occur, asks if MC members are part of the selection panel and to be consulted if there will be changes in the JS, as foreseen in the Regulation (setting up of the JS). With regard to the evaluation plan, SI asks if it the MC is supposed to approve also the Terms of Reference for the selection of external experts, and if an evaluation group consisting of the MC members will be set up to follow up the process. In particular, as far as art. 3- Composition - of the Rules of Procedure, SI asks for clarifications related to the advisory role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that concerns Italy only.</p> <p>Related to the Article 4 – Chairmanship – considering the two new participating countries and 2023 as a starting year, three participating countries would be excluded from the chairmanships and proposes to find together a system that allows to all participating countries to be the Chair at least once during the programme implementation period. Thus SI mentions a six-months rotating principle to ensure fair treatment among all participating countries. With regard to art. 5 – Meetings – she proposes to add, in case of sending document through urgent written procedure, that they are sent within the coordination between the chair and co-chair, and agreed in advance with the consensus of all MC members. Finally, related to the conflict of interest, she would like to clarify that where one Ministry has representatives in the MC, but has also other organisational units of the Ministry that cover fields pertinent to the programme topics, they can participate as beneficiaries. As far as the strategic projects under ISO 1 are concerned, SI proposes that this provision does not apply in this case since these are strategic projects falling under exclusive competence of the institutions involved both in strategic projects and in the ADRION Monitoring Committee.</p> <p>The Monitoring Committee approves its Rules for Procedures on 28 February 2023 with amendments included.</p> <p>(see Annex 1 and 2)</p>
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<p>Item 3</p>	<p>Presentation of the 1st call for proposals application package</p> <p>JS: Proposes to discuss the application package focusing on its main topics and to receive minor comments in written form no later than 3 February 2023. She asks for requests for approval starting from the proposed total allocated Interreg budget and its disentanglement according to Specific Objectives, and then moves to the potential beneficiaries’ characteristics, partnership, use of simplified cost options, eligibility and quality criteria. With reference to the request of some participating countries raised during the meeting of 2-3 February 2023 in Sarajevo to increase the minimum Interreg budget up to MEUR 1,5, she informs that the request was already and accepted by the MA and included in the proposed text; according to the revised calculations it will be possible to fund at least 43 projects in the first call.</p>
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Chair: Opens the discussion related to allocation of funds per PO/SO and maximum EU contribution.

JS: Proposes again background information for the selection of indicative actions for the first call, as well as the actions selected in each SO.

Chair: Asks the countries if there are any comments.

Participating countries do not express any comment about the proposal.

JS: Presents proposal on partnership composition and project duration. As the programme is bigger in terms of number of participating countries, and to encourage the participation of new beneficiaries, it is proposed to set the requirements for the maximum number of participants per project. Additionally, in order to ensure genuine commitment from the potential beneficiaries, it is proposed that their participation is limited to a certain number of project proposals according to the approach already used in 2014-2020.

MN: Proposes to increase the minimum number of participation of the same organization to project proposals without linking it to priority axis. Montenegro has successful partners in certain topics, like, for example, ports, that can participate only in priority axis 3. What proposed would be too restrictive for them. Additionally, this limitation could open the possibility for participation of partners that are not performing well and would decrease the spending at the programme level. Another specific situation is related to the universities which are considered as one institution only without considering their faculties. He proposes a disclaimer to consider faculties from Montenegro as independent units.

BiH: Shares the position of Montenegro as in Bosnia and Herzegovina the situation is the same.

IT: Asks to include a derogation for large public administrations, universities and large research institutions to enable to their units to participate as independent entities; as an alternative, he asks to increase the participation of the same organization to more project proposals.

HR: Agrees with most that was presented, understands the reasons of the proposed restrictions but also shares the concerns of the other delegations, as it is important to ensure that good beneficiaries can participate, or, as an alternative, to find the way to assess them. One proposal would be not to adopt the rule "first come first served", but to assess all of them all and to grant the three best ranked proposals. As far as the request that each beneficiary has to provide both PIC and VAT number, he proposes that only PIC or VAT should be requested. He also asks why Associated Partners should be located in the programme area only.

GR: Having in mind the situation in Greece, she proposes to apply restrictions per SO and not per policy objective/priority axis. Municipalities and regions have a high variety of responsibilities, as well as universities and research centres: therefore, it is not for the sake of the programme to limit their participation to one SO only. She asks for more information with regard to the added value of having PIC, as VAT is considered as enough.

MA: Explains that PIC is not redundant, as it experienced many problems from statistical point of view and with the checking the beneficiaries. For example, in KEEP database, it is impossible to do sound research as the beneficiaries

provide different ways to name themselves. PIC would ensure the coherence and a reliable approach regarding beneficiaries' identification. As a matter of fact, some granted partners of the 2014-2020 had already PIC; the proposal is to insert only the declared PIC, not the approved one.

MN: Reminds that as NCPs have to provide confirmation on the partners' legal status, and they will perform this task using the VAT number and other national documents, PIC would not be relevant at national level. The programme should create a familiar environment for the applicants that are participating in other transnational and cross-border programmes too and finds that it is necessary to keep the procedures as streamlined and as simple as possible.

RS: PIC is only necessary if the proposals are successfully evaluated, as stated on the EC website, and it should not be the condition for eligibility.

IT: Thinks that it is extremely useful and supports this request.

SM: Informs that in San Marino there is no VAT regime and asks if the PIC number would be enough.

JS: Confirms that for those organizations that have already a PIC, it is not necessary to register again. For those that do not have VAT, it is foreseen that another identification number can be provided.

HR: Proposes not to have PIC as eligibility criterion, but to ask the organizations of approved projects to obtain it.

MA: As far as the request for clarifications regarding the geographical limitation of the Associated Partners is concerned, the proposal was based on the outcomes of the previous meeting, where it was understood that the participating countries were in favour of considering Associated Partners located in the IPA ADRION geographical area only.

RS: Asks to widen the participation of Associated Partners both to all EU member states and to non-EU programme countries located in the programme area.

JS: Presents proposed cost categories and simplified costs options.

HR: Thinks that among options for calculation of staff costs, full time and part time with fixed percentage would be enough as it would lead to simplification and asks if there is possibility to remove other options.

JS: Informs that the proposal was elaborated to allow potential beneficiaries to choose the option that better suits their situation.

SI: Asks if the manual was previously discussed with national control units as this is common practices in other programmes.

HR: Informs that Croatia consulted national controllers and its request was based on their comment.

RS: Confirms that, being a National Authority, it is in charge of the control unit and also consulted its national controller; this task is not under the responsibility of the programme.

SI: Points out that the MC members had only a couple of days to comment the documents and national controllers were not happy to make a review and comment in such a short period of time. Additionally, regarding the preparation costs it is not clearly stated in the manual that not only LP can claim costs. For

project closure costs, information on which costs category refer is missing and who can claim them, LP or/and PPs. She also asks if it is possible to include that use of SCOs as recommended.

HR: Agrees that in terms of simplification it would be good to include a recommendation in the supporting documentation stating that all beneficiaries are encouraged to use flat rates.

SI: Informs that the Slovenian delegation is not in the position to approve the documentation either today or tomorrow, since the documents were received too late to organize the national coordination meeting. The solution would be to discuss today and tomorrow, and then to send the revised version of documentation again together with an explanatory note regarding the selected indicative actions and to launch a written procedure of 10 working days as it is necessary to go back with national coordination and national controllers. Slovenia is available to attend another MC meeting after the closure of the written procedure as it is necessary to consolidate the documentation.

IT: Reminds that in case of contradictory comments, new written procedure must be launched, and this may delay the launch of the call.

HR: Asks to organize an online meeting after having launched the written procedure.

Chair: Reminds that in Sarajevo all MC members agreed to receive documents 5 working days before the meeting. It might have been a wrong decision, and it is now clear that 5 days was not enough for revision of the documents sent. Next steps are that all participating countries send their comments on the submitted documents by Friday, 3 March 2023 and then the JS will take the necessary time to elaborate the documents that will be sent through written procedure.

SI: Objects that the documents were sent on 24 February 2023 at 5.00 pm and one more day was used for travelling.

MA: Informs that from now on the objective is to have all participating countries in the position to comment. The written procedure will be launched on 8 March 2023 and closed on 21 March 2023. The online meeting can take place on 24 March 2023, with the goal to approve the documents on the same day at the latest. Then it is necessary to consult the regional authorities on internal procedures to define the date of the launch of the call, which will be communicated tomorrow.

JS: Presents cost categories and proposed simplified cost options. Due to the nature of the programme, the cost category on infrastructure and works will not be included; this proposal is the consequence of early decisions adopted in 2020, when the Task Force decided not to proceed with the full strategic environmental assessment but only with an environmental screening as no infrastructural measures were envisaged to be granted.

The MC does not raise any objections regarding proposed thresholds and the exclusion of the cost category on infrastructure and works.

JS: As far as the project proposals assessment and the use of new ICT tool JEMS, blocks and warnings will be used wherever it will be possible to reduce risk of errors by potential beneficiaries. Checks regarding the legal status of the partners and anti-fraud checks will be performed with the support of NCPs. Support of external experts will be asked to double check the quality of eligible

proposals and to exclude the need to apply state aid measures (*de minimis*). It proposes then overall quality assessment method and the proposal of a mid-term review to encourage higher spending performance compared to 2014-2020. Finally, it is proposed that the call should stay open for 60 days.

MA: Informs that it is exploring the possibility to use the integrated platform developed by Italian presidency of Ministries for Hercules project for preliminary checks on anti-fraud.

BiH: Confirms that the anti-fraud check will be done through the EU delegations, as the National Authority does not have access to any database.

GR: Will continue with the approach as agreed in the period 2014-2020.

RS: As far as the quality assessment is concerned, it is important for beneficiaries to know where to put emphasis on. She suggests either to introduce scores or weight in terms of percentage per each criterion.

IT: Points out that a question related to EUSAIR should be included as cross-border cooperation programmes operating in the area did, as the mere ticking to the envisaged box in the application form is not enough. Project beneficiaries must be aware of what is their contribution to the strategy, and this should be highlighted also in the assessment grid. She also asks to include links to EUSAIR and its flagships, as well as to the Stakeholder platform and Action Labs in the manual.

JS: Observes that as IPA ADRION programme, according to the Interreg Regulation, had to align itself with the strategy and a large share of its budget was addressed to EUSAIR flagships, therefore it is assumed that alignment with the strategy is complied *de facto*. As far as the structure of the application form is concerned, ticking of boxes in the application form is compulsory, and justification must be provided.

RS: Asks to include a specific question regarding project contribution to enlargement in the application form.

JS: Informs that JEMS is not very flexible tool for adding new questions, but the Italian request will be complied in the way it is possible.

RS: Supports the proposal for the mid-term review, but the projects must be informed in advance. Sometimes they may have a good reason in not reaching the financial targets, so some exceptions must be envisaged. Advanced payment for IPA partners is also a big incentive of them. She proposes to make it clear that the financial target is related to the budget planned for the first three six-months periods, as the beneficiaries may think that it is referred to total project budget. Proposes to decrease the financial target to be reached to 80%.

JS: As far as the approval of project proposals by MC is concerned, a modular approval per SO is proposed, since each SO has its own budget. This would also answer one of the findings of the programme independent evaluation to allow earlier projects start to the possible maximum extent.

SI: Understands the logic behind and the need for it, but she does not agree with the proposed way to proceed as we have to pay attention to equal treatment of beneficiaries. It is not up to MC to decide which proposals should be assessed first as there will be only one call with the same deadline. Her legal

office discouraged from doing so. If the priorities are split into different calls, this would be acceptable, otherwise she does not support this decision.

HR: Asks in which phase is the development of the new programme web site as participating countries were not involved in the process. He strongly suggests having a partner search tool embedded on the website as it is more efficient than the LinkedIn page proposed in 2014-2020.

SI: As additional national web pages for the programme are concerned, informs that in Slovenia there is one common web page for all cross-border and transnational programmes where Slovenia is involved.

RS: Considers that the proposed time of 60 days for the duration of the call is too short. Even though she completely understands the rush, she suggests either to make available the application package before the opening of the call, or to envisage a longer call opening. She also asks to receive justifications regarding the selection of indicative actions, including their link with EUSAIR flagships.

SI: Asks to include in the application package the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement templates and to send them through written procedure.

MN: Also asks to include guidelines on the use of JEMS.

HR: Asks if JS members will be available to attend national info days as in the past.

MA: Considering proposals of the participating countries, he proposes that dates for the first call launching and closing are 4 April and 30 June respectively.

The MA and JS recapped the main aspects of the application package discussed during this point of the agenda, finding a provisional agreement that will then be reassessed by the MC during the written procedure to be opened.

The MC agrees that:

- **The first call for proposals shall be launched on 4 April 2023 and closed on 30 June 2023;**
- **The first call for proposals launch event shall take place on 19 April 2023 in Sarajevo.**

The MC also decides:

- **To send minor comments regarding the application package within 3 March 2023;**
- **To receive the revised application package of the first call for proposal through written procedure on 8 March 2023; the written procedure shall be closed on 21 March 2023; documentation to be sent shall also include the template of subsidy contract and partnership agreements as well as the rationale for the choice of the specific objectives and indicative actions; including reference to the flagship projects.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have the next Monitoring Committee meeting on 24 March 2023 focused on first call for proposals only. The meeting shall take place online. • The new programme web site shall also include partner search tool and dedicated space for NCPs. • JEMS guidelines is part of the application package but will not be approved by the MC, as it contains technical specificities. <p>(See Annex 3).</p>
<p>Item 4</p>	<p>Methodological approach for the definition of the three strategic projects supporting EUSAIR implementation (ISO1)</p> <p>JS: Proposes to have an exchange of view on the principles guiding the drafting of the call devoted to the three strategic projects under ISO 1, as well as of information on the advancement of their definition, in particular with regard to their overall budget (in relation to the funds to be allocated to the activities other than the support to EUSAIR as reported under the priority axis 4). From a technical point of view, it is proposed to draft a not publicly available expression of interest only addressed to the three projects. MA/JS offers their availability in case their specific support would be requested. Similar to the approach suggested for the design of the first call, it is proposed that main principles are discussed before drafting the whole application package. In this respect, so far proposed simplifications refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the submission of project proposals; • admissibility and eligibility assessment (no rejection of the proposals in case of detected weaknesses); • quality assessment (no rejection of the proposals in case of detected weaknesses); • use of simplified costs options as proposed by CPR and Interreg Regulations. <p>SI: Reminds that in October 2022 the JS was asked to draft a simplified application package. Although she is aware that there will be a different application procedure between standard and strategic projects, the latter are peculiar, as the nature of activities is more resembling technical assistance projects even if they are not considered to be technical assistance. She expected to see proposals going beyond procedures and solutions for standard projects and would appreciate to learn what are additional simplifications that are proposed for strategic projects by the MA.</p> <p>MA: Apologises for not having sent a proposal earlier, but the requested topic was taken into due consideration and included in the agenda of the first meeting of the IPA ADRIION task force in Sarajevo organized after having received the request. This issue was discussed with the EC representative who underlined that projects under ISO1 are strategic projects, and not technical assistance ones. The EC did not provide any new information regarding what already in force and implemented in 2014-2020 programming period and strategic projects treatment; EC envisages a different treatment only with regard to the technical assistance as reported in the regulations.</p>

He asks if it could be easier to have some kind of yearly plans to overcome the difficulty of long duration of the project and related planning of activities.

SI: Thanks for the efforts of MA with the EC, and asks for more transparency and more regular communication in the future from the side of the MA. It is clear that there is a systemic question in the regulations and that nothing has been done about the unequal treatment between Technical Assistance and EUSAIR support projects. Due to its nature and the fact that the decision-making rests with the EUSAIR implementers, not everything can be defined in advance as the activities depend to a great extent on EUSAIR Governing Board and Thematic Steering Groups decisions in the future years. Therefore, she asks for the identification of some mitigation and simplification measures.

IT: As it is not possible to simplify the procedures, a dynamic plan must be prepared, and three projects must be checked and reviewed. With the current Facility Point project there were problems of underspending on one side and not enough resources for some activities on the other. The problem is that a wrong forecast budget was made. He shares the opinion that it is not a good idea to simplify the Application Form as such, but to change the approach in planning, instead.

SI: As we know that in terms of regulations there is no room for simplification, it would be possible to create simplifications in the programme framework. as it can be done in the case of small-scale projects. Existing application forms could be adapted. We need to ensure the necessary flexibility to decision makers; the proposals cannot, therefore, be detailed until a certain extent as they may change during programme implementation. She asks how the content of the application form will be translated into reporting requirements during the implementation because this is essential when speaking about simplifications. As an example of possible simplification in reporting she mentioned the reporting on gender equality, counting male and female participants to meetings and events. The main task of the JS is to create a framework condition for the implementation of the strategic project; the JS should prepare a proposal on a simplified application package and simplified reporting during the project implementation. The strategic projects are under development and at a certain stage they must be adapted to a certain programme framework. At this point we cannot go further as we do not have the framework conditions. The minutes from the meeting held in Brussels in June 2022 reflect some important points. One of key elements that must be clarified is the division of the budget.

JS: Clarifies that the request for providing information on gender was included in the 2014-2020 approved programming document following the outcomes of the *ex-ante* analysis: all projects comply with this programme requirement.

MA: Points out that the comparison with small scale projects may not be relevant, as they are already envisaged in the regulation; their simplified procedures are related to their budget which is smaller compared to standard ones. He invites the MC members to share information on how this was solved in other programmes, and proposes that in case all three projects have specific questions, to send them to the EC or to create a consolidated document to provide set of measures that can be adopted to continue with the preparation of projects.

EC: Asks to get very concrete proposals and then the EC will check if it is possible to implement them or how they could be modified. The time necessary to obtain the reply may take up to one month.

RS: Thinks that there is no common view on what simplification means and asks if JS can prepare an Application Form. She also thinks that it is important to make sure that JS has right information to monitor these projects and also asks project partners involved in strategic projects to support the JS in providing them information on what they considered as simplification.

IT: Invites everyone with proposals on simplification as that would help much in the process; it is not helpful to say that the JS has to prepare the simplified application form and if it is not in line with expectations, it will not be approved. Therefore, he agrees to start with our proposals for simplifications and then to have them checked by the EC. He underlines that it is important to monitor the current project, if there is underspending and, consequently, to know how far from the forecast of the 2024-2020 EUSAIR Facility Point we are in terms of expenditure.

HR: Supports the point of Serbia; the application form for standard project could be the starting point. The application form is very important, but reporting will be even more. He agrees that the first step should be in the hands of JS; all partners that are currently involved in the EUSAIR Facility Point should send comments and make proposals for simplification. It is important to have in mind that we do not have much time, as projects still have to be presented to the EUSAIR Governing Board and IPA ADRION Monitoring Committee.

SI: When the proposal was drafted by the MA it was said that the MA wanted additional activities acting as a buffer in case the strategic projects would have not been able to absorb the ISO1 funds. Therefore, she suggests dedicating all funds to three projects and after the review, if the three projects do not manage to spend the EU funding to a sufficient extent, the funds would be made available for other projects.

RS: Points out that the Monitoring Committee can consider that three projects can have 100% of the budget of the ISO1 only upon condition that the three LPs will present project activities, as it was previously agreed to allocate 80% of the ISO1 budget for three strategic projects supporting EUSAIR Governance.

SI: Proposes that the leading institutions of the three ISO 1 strategic projects present their state of play. For the project led by Slovenia, all countries are on board, only Serbia has not given the name of the institution that will be the part of the Facility Point yet. They already have a concept note with activities and indicators and the budget calculation shows that the whole amount of priority axis 4 should be made available for this project only. Next week all 3 projects will meet to discuss how funding can be distributed and synergies can be made, but it is clear that at the moment around 4 MEUR are missing. If the budget will have to be decreased, it will not be possible to ensure some functions. It would be good to deal with this issue together with simplification proposals, but this obviously will not be possible. She underlines that there should be at least the application form template for the submission of the projects to the Monitoring Committee for discussion. The concept note was already presented and now we need to get the framework to be able to finalise the applications. Considering the deadline of 30 June 2023 as reported in the programming document, there is not that much time to conclude the process.

	<p>IT: Informs that is currently working with partners. A tentative fiche was prepared and circulated among the Task Force members. Currently it has been working on finding synergies with the other two projects and the next task is to come to an agreement on the budget distribution. He is convinced that all three Lead Partners will work together effectively as now it is obvious that time constraints must be taken into consideration and that is necessary to speed up the process.</p> <p>HR: Croatia as a Lead Partner covers only one function and the number of project proposals developed will depend on the available budget, so the situation is less complicated compared to the other two projects. He is confident that all three projects have developed good content and that will reach an agreement on budget distribution.</p> <p>MA: Informs that from the technical point of view there are no problems to use the whole budget under ISO1 for supporting EUSAIR governance. The problem would be to redistribute the budget allocated from other POs to ISO1. A technical proposal shall be prepared with the inputs received from the three lead partners. As he was informed on a meeting among the lead partners that shall take place in Venice on the following days, he proposes that the meeting is also used to collect inputs. He is also of the opinion that if the proposal must come from the JS only, we might not be able to meet the deadline and apologises for not having promptly replied to the request from Slovenia.</p> <p>Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA/JS will send a first draft of application package starting from the previous programming period, taking into consideration JEMS and proposing some simplifications – in 15 working days – deadline: 23 March 2023; • The MC members will send to the MA/JS some inputs, comments and proposals on simplifications for ISO1 projects based on the draft Application Package received from the JS. • MC is open to consider the use of the whole resources of PA 4 to fund the three strategic projects in support of EUSAIR governance, if it will have a clear proposal on activities to be funded through these projects; • All the three projects commit themselves to send to the MA/JS some inputs, comments and proposals on them; • The expenditure of the three projects will be eligible from the date of submission of the AF. <p>(see Annex 4)</p>
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<p>Item 5</p>	<p>Information on the state of play of signature of the financing agreement by IPA participating countries</p> <p>EC: Informs that the legal departments are working on the template of the financing agreement and will send it next week.</p> <p>BiH: Asks if the section related to the entering into force can be modified.</p> <p>EC: Explains that some countries must ratify the financing agreement and some must not. She also informs that if the financing agreement is signed by the</p>
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	<p>country hosting the MA, it might not cover all aspects of cooperation with IPA countries, as it is possible to sign bilateral memorandum of understanding.</p> <p>MA: Confirms the willingness of Emilia-Romagna region in signing the financing agreement; compared to the document signed by the region in relation to the 2014-2020 programming period, the 2021-2027 draft document includes elements that do not fall under the regional institutional competences. He asks the Italian delegation to provide assistance on answering who is in charge for signing it.</p> <p>IT: Informs that Italian delegation has not seen the agreement, as it was agreed that the MAs would have signed it.</p> <p>EC: Proposes assistance if necessary to sort out who will sign it.</p> <p>MN: Reminds that the first call in 2014-2020 was launched before the financing agreements were signed, with a disclaimer according to which payments to IPA beneficiaries would have been done after the signature of the agreement and suggests using the same approach also for the first call of IPA ADRION. He hopes that by the end of June it will be possible to have the agreements signed.</p> <p>The MC acknowledges the provided information.</p>
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<p>Item 6</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>ART-ER: Informs that the deadline for the submission of candidatures regarding the JS vacant positions for two project and one finance officers was 10 February 2023. ART-ER is currently in the process of checking the eligibility of received applications. As far as the selection panel is concerned, it would be composed of one person from ART-ER, one from the MA, one representing MC and two JS members – head of JS and a project or finance officer. She asks those MC members who are interested to being part of the panel to inform ART-ER in 10 days. To ensure consistency, in case more than one expression of interest from the MC is received, the method of drawing lots among the received expressions of interest received will be used.</p> <p>SI: As this is the first MC, she asks if the new staff will be paid from technical assistance. She reminds that JS staff is hired by the MA but paid by all participating countries; therefore, she would like to see in advance the requirements and approve them.</p> <p>ARTER: Informs that the hiring was decided by the MC on 16 December 2021 and the used job descriptions were those already approved in the past.</p> <p>HR: Informs the MC, MA and JS about the event organized in Dubrovnik in cooperation with INTERACT involving all programmes working in Mediterranean to establish synergies and invites all to attend it. Study visits to some projects will be organised, and ADRION project CREATURE will be one of them.</p> <p>MN: Asks from which date the new technical assistance will be eligible and the deadline for submission of technical assistance reports related to 2014-2020 and incurred from the 1 March to 31 December 2023.</p> <p>JS: Informs that the remaining budget of national technical assistance can be used until the end of 2023 and that it will be reimbursed in 2024 at the latest.</p>
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	<p>She also informs that as expenditure incurred by IPA NCPs is relevant to minimize the risk of decommitment in 2023, it could be that two reports will be asked the NCPs in relation to the 2023 work plan to ensure that incurred expenditure will contribute in reaching the programme financial performance. MA will send a letter in this respect.</p> <p>MA: Adds that as far as the 2021-27 technical assistance is concerned, its eligibility starts as from 1 January 2024.</p> <p>The MC acknowledges provision of information by ART-ER.</p>
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h: 17:00 end of meeting