

Expression for interest of strategic projects – Priority Axis 4

Assessment grid

Project 538 SP4EUSAIR

Summary of the project proposal (as from section A.2 of the application form)

This project, together with other two strategic projects, should jointly tackle the IPA ADRION supported action - Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement the EUSAIR also by supporting its governance mechanisms. It will support and facilitate the functioning of EUSAIR governance structure and increase the impact of EUSAIR actions in the Adriatic and Ionian region and contribute to Adriatic-Ionian cohesion by addressing a wider population, boosting regional policy learning, and encouraging multi-level governance approaches. The overall objective of the project is facilitation and enhancement of strategic project development to support the cooperation and governance of the Adriatic and Ionian region and EUSAIR implementation. This project should provide a quality and efficient organizational and methodological framework for the selection of relevant key strategic ideas based on existing EUSAIR flagships and development of the framework for the implementation formats (IFs). It will also facilitate the preparation of project proposals for each strategic implementation format accompanied by the facilitation of the mapping process. Finally, this project will enable the capitalization and performance assessment of project proposals' development process. The whole EUSAIR territory and its stakeholders will benefit from successful implementation of this project and produced outputs. Its implementation represents a dynamic transnational approach and collaboration in a multistakeholder setting. This new approach shall ensure that the policy-level actors and the ground-level actors meet, discuss, learn from each other, and together create multi-level solutions for the challenges they chose to jointly collaborate on for the sake of the whole Adriatic and Ionian region and its overall enhancement.

Project initial total eligible budget (in EUR)	<i>Out of which INTERREG</i>
2.080.000,00	1.768.000,00

Partners involved:

Project partner No	Partner name	Abbreviation	Total Interreg budget	Total budget	Participating Country
1	Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds	MRDEU	1.043.154,00	1.227.240,00	HR
2	Ministry of European Integration	MEI	724.846,00	852.760,00	RS
			1.768.000,00	2.080.000,00	

Overview of the overall final score:

Operational criteria	Minimum score: 30/50	Attributed scores
	TOTAL	32/50

Quality assessment grid

Operational criteria

		Workplan	Attributed score
Work plan	1a Max 5 points	<p>Is the overall approach suitable to obtain the planned outputs and results?</p> <p>How effective are the proposed measures to support the EUSAIR governance structures (Governing Board, the Thematic Steering Groups) and they ensure the implementation of the European Green Deal?</p> <p>Are the coordination mechanisms with other two projects supporting EUSAIR Governance efficient to ensure the necessary support and is overlapping functions avoided?</p>	
		<p>+The proposed project intends to implement some of the functions defined by EUSAIR Governing Board as relevant for its functioning and support.</p> <p>+The approach adopted by the project is fairly suitable to obtain the planned outputs and results.</p> <p>+The proposed measures fairly intend to support the EUSAIR governance structures through a methodological framework for the selection of relevant key strategic ideas based on existing EUSAIR flagship and other relevant sources, as well as the development of the framework of the implementation format.</p> <p>+Coordination mechanism is fairly described; regular meetings with the other projects shall ensure the absence of future overlapping functions. However, the absence of overlapping activities should be confirmed with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the identification and mapping of the funding resources for project proposals and activities envisaged by project No 2 STEP - D.2.1.2; ○ Activity 2.4 of project No 1 Facility Point (cross-macro-regional cooperation) regarding the exchange knowledge, transfer of good practice and enabling of peer learning and activity 1.5 of the project No 3 (“<i>exchange of knowledge of the best practices within and outside MRS will support capacity building for PPs and TSGs in the development of implementation formats</i>”); ○ Activity 3.1 and 3.2 of project No 1 Facility Point regarding the engagement of pillar thematic experts aimed at observing the situation and trends of the MR and activity of project3 WP 3 aimed at involving and engage EUSAIR stakeholders, which includes, among other, the 	3

		inclusion of new flagships (action 3.3).	
	1b Max 5 points	Are the work plan and timing of activities, deliverables and outputs realistic, consistent and transparent? Are the proposed financial and human resources appropriate to implement the project? Is the contribution of each project partner to the project clearly described?	
		+The proposed measures fairly intend to support the EUSAIR governance structures as a follow up of measures already implemented in the previous 2014-2020 programming period. The project proposal intends to streamline the methodological framework aimed at identifying the key strategic project ideas and the development of implementation formats for the further definition of project proposals. ± The proposal envisages, as key deliverables, the development of at least 10 project proposals: considering the overall project budget, the initial minimum number of projects to be developed could have been more ambitious. + The contribution to each project partner to the project is clearly described and responsibilities clearly outlined.	3
	1c Max 5 points	Are project outputs and results that contribute to Programme indicators realistic, i.e.: 1. It is possible to achieve them with the chosen approach; 2. it is possible and realistic to achieve them with the proposed timeframe, budget and partners engagement Does each work package envisage at least one project output? Are the quantified output indicators foreseen in the first three years of project implementation (end of 2026) at least 75% of the output indicators reported in the application form?	
		+ Project outputs and results contribute to the Programme indicators. - Quantification of output indicator RCO81 (8o) seems being characterised by lack of ambition considering that the project intends to collect ideas according to different approaches (top down and bottom up) in the whole Adriatic-Ionian area. The same can be said with regard to the indicator RCO 115 – Public events across borders jointly organized, where only 2 events are envisaged along the project implementation. ±Considering the overall low quantification of output indicators, it is assumed that the target of at least 75% of the output indicators reported in the application form shall likely be reached.	3
	1d	Are the respect of horizontal principles, including the DNSH principle clearly described and adequate	

	Max 5 points	<p>measures ensured?</p> <p>Are compulsory ways of cooperation well mirrored in the proposed activities?</p> <p>Are ownership, durability and transferability properly described?</p>	
		<p>+The project proposal effectively contributes to the horizontal principles.</p> <p>+ The project soundly addressed to all the three compulsory ways of cooperation; joint staffing has also been envisaged and adequately mirrored in the proposed activities.</p> <p>+Considering the support the project will give the macro-regional strategy, the strategy is the highest expression of durability and transferability of the envisaged activities.</p>	4
Management	2a Max 5 points	<p>Does the management approach show good potential to secure a sound project management, coordination, and risk mitigation?</p> <p>Is the proposed project management structure effective? Are the internal communication and the management structure appropriate to ensure smooth and effective co-operation within the partnership?</p> <p>How well the foreseen management structure is proportionate to the partnership, project size and needs and allow partners' involvement in decision-making?</p> <p>How will the involved partners ensure the management and implementation of EUSAIR at national level? How well will the countries that are not involved as PPs will benefit from the project results at national level?</p>	
		<p>+ Coordination of the three work packages is fairly distributed between the two project partners.</p> <p>±The description of the proposed project management structure is very detailed and envisaged several layers of coordination; in addition to the overall coordination ensured by the LP and the presence of WP leaders, the project also envisages coordination groups, thematic working groups, and project steering committee. Coordination with the other two strategic projects is also envisaged, questioning whether this coordination infrastructure risks of distracting the project from its main goals, also considering that the project is composed by only two partners.</p> <p>+The description of the envisaged daily management and coordination is fairly detailed.</p> <p>+ Even if no information is provided with regard to how the management and implementation of EUSAIR shall be ensured at national level, all participating countries, including those not actively participating to the project shall benefit from the project activities.</p> <p>+Regular coordination activities with the other two strategic projects are envisaged.</p>	4

		Communication	Attributed score
Communication	3a Max 5 points	<p>Are communication activities planned in the work plan and are they relevant for achieving communication objectives?</p> <p>Are the communication activities and deliverables appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?</p> <p>Will the target groups, the partners, and the stakeholders benefit from the co-operation?</p> <p>Is the Regulation requirement according to art. 36.4.e) of the Interreg Regulation of organizing a communication event at project partner level respected?</p>	
		<p>± The project states that coordination activities shall be jointly managed by the three strategic projects in accordance with the Communication Strategy drafted by the project No 1 Facility Point. It is assumed that evidence on compliance with obligation set forth in art. 36.4 e) of Interreg Regulation shall be respected along with the organisation of the planned public events.</p> <p>+ All target groups, stakeholders and project partners shall benefit from the cooperation, even if targeted opportunities to get acquainted on the goals and achievements of the project proposals are limited (only two events are envisaged).</p> <p>-Evidence to compliance with obligation set forth in art. 36.4 e) of Interreg Regulation is not provided.</p> <p>- Information on the update of the dedicated web site hosted by IPA ADRION web site is not provided</p>	3
		Budget	Attributed score
Project budget	4a Max 5 points	<p>To which extent the presented budget is transparent and include sufficient details per partner in particular in the period 2023-2026?</p> <p>Is the choice of using simplified cost options (SCOs) appropriate and in line with the programme rules?</p>	
		<p>±The budget is sufficiently transparent and provides the information as requested in the Application Manual.</p> <p>±The project does not envisage the use of SCOs with the exception of the compulsory use related to administrative costs and the lump sum amount devoted to preparation one.</p>	3
	4b Max 5	To which extent resources planned by the project partners are adequate (in terms of quantity and quality) and reflects market prices?	

	points		
		+ The resources planned by the project partners are considered as adequate having regard to their engagement and leadership role within the project, as well as the level of details as requested in the Application Manual.	3
	4c Max 5 points	To which extent project budget is proportionate to the proposed work plan and project outputs? Is distribution of budget per period in line with workplan?	
		+The proposed budget is proportionate to the proposed work plan. However, considering the total amount of budget and the minimum number of project proposals to be elaborated has been quantified in 10, the basis should have been higher. ±The first 2 years of project implementation envisages an allocation of resources/period with a total of 30% out of the total budget. The remaining 5 periods are characterised by the same allocation of resources of 14% each.	3
	4d Max 5 points	Is the financial allocation per cost category in line with the programme rules? Are the partners' budgets coherent with their respective role in project activities for each Work Package?	
		± Financial allocation is in line with the programme rules. Majority of financial resources (70%) are attributed to external expertise cost category. Staff and travel costs covers a residual percentage (19% and 7% respectively) +Lead Partner allocates 59% of the total financial resources' vs 41% of the Partner No 2, in line with their role in project implementation. -Costs attributed to external experts (EUR 600.000,00) in addition to those planned at project level for the development of project proposals and labelling methodology lacks clarifications and should be justified. -Budget line "equipment" does not include the required quantification.	3
TOTAL	Max 50 points		32

State Aid check

The project proposal is State Aid relevant	NO
List of State Aid relevant activities and involved project partner	
Conditions for avoiding State Aid:	

Anti-fraud checks:

No problems detected.

Is the selected operations directly affected by a reasoned opinion by the Commission in respect of an infringement within the scope of Article 258 TFEU?

Not applicable

The project proposal is:

Approved	
Approved under conditions	X
Rejected	

The project proposal answers the requirements approved by the EUSAIR Governing Board and considered as relevant for the sound implementation of the macro-regional strategy.

From a technical point of view, some requests for clarifications would be necessary to help the project in being smoothly implemented:

Conditions for improvement

- Clarify coordination and/or synergies with regard to the following and revise if necessary:
 - the identification and mapping of the funding resources for project proposals and activities envisaged by project No 2 STEP - D.2.1.2.
 - activity 2.4 of project No 1 Facility Point (cross-macro-regional cooperation) regarding the exchange knowledge, transfer of good practice and enabling of peer learning and activity 1.5 of the project No 3 (“*exchange of knowledge of the best practices within and outside MRS will support capacity building for PPs and TSGs in the development of implementation formats*”).
 - Activity 3.1 and 3.2 of project No 1 Facility Point regarding the engagement of pillar thematic experts aimed at observing the situation and trends of the MR and activity of

project3 WP 3 aimed at involving and engage EUSAIR stakeholders, which includes, among other, the inclusion of new flagships (action 3.3).

- Confirm that the proposed timeline has been agreed by the EUSAIR Governing Board.
- Consider include in the methodology for the definition of selection of relevant key strategic ideas also checks as reported in art. Art. 22.4. letter i) of Interreg Regulation.
- Confirm and/or revise the quantification of RCO81 with the envisaged number of target groups to be involved, as well as regarding indicator RCO115.
- Confirm or make the project overall coordination smoother by reducing the number of envisaged intermediate bodies (thematic working groups, coordination groups etc).
- Confirm that the planned events include those compliant with art. 36.4.3) of Interreg Regulation.
- Ensure that the project web site hosted in the IPA ADRION web site will be regularly updated and by which PP.
- Consider the possibility of increasing the minimum number of project proposals also in relation to the forecast allocation of resources (EUR 600.000,00).
- Provide clarification regarding the costs attributed to external experts cost category by lead partner (EUR 600.000,00) in addition to those planned at project level for the development of project proposals and labelling methodology.
- Provide quantification of the number of equipment the project intends to purchase.
- Delete the word “lump sum” in the descriptions of the cost category “external expertise and services”.

Proposed revised budget

Project initial total eligible budget (in EUR)	Project revised eligible budget (in EUR)	<i>Out of which INTERREG</i>	Difference (in EUR and %)
2.080.000,00	2.080.000,00	1.768.000,00	0