

First call for proposals

**Assessment grid of the project proposal submitted in the framework of
Priority Axis No 2, Specific Objective 2.1**

**No 445 - NATURED – Nature-bAsed soluTions for a jUst Resilience in thE
Adriatic-Ionian cities**

**Summary of the project proposal (as from section A.1 of the application form –
copied and pasted)**

The ADRION region is a hotspot of climate change. The consequences are evident and always more frequent: flooding, droughts, landslides, storms, and wildfires. The impacts of these events on individuals, communities, and regions vary, depending on how vulnerable the people or areas affected are, and their level of exposure. In such a context, the overall objective of NATURED is to enable policymakers/stakeholders to prevent the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions of adaptation of which the most vulnerable groups (those living near the rivers and more exposed to flooding; those affected by heat waves) will be the main beneficiaries. The change expected is the promotion of a just, safe, and inclusive resilience, leaving no one behind when adapting to climate change. It will be achieved through various interlinked activities and outputs consisting of the understanding of interactions between climate and cities, databases and digital maps for climate vulnerability/hazards matrix of different zones of cities, citizens and stakeholders engagement to define action plans for Nature-based Solutions, to be then tested in pilot actions and hence included in the public work plans of cities, up to a plan to replicate at wider scale the most effective tested solutions. The transnational approach is the most appropriate because the climate change effects don't have geopolitical boundaries and the Adriatic-Ionian region, comprising multiple countries and cities, shares common vulnerabilities, that require collective efforts and joint action. NATURED is built on a place-based approach, the only effective adaptation actions to climate change, and its originality consist in the inclusion of Nature-based Solutions into the public work plans of the city, at present dominated by a grey infrastructures approach. NATURED is consistent with the indicative

action (ii) of the Call, SO 2.1, that prioritizes Nature-based Solutions instead of traditional grey infrastructures.

Project initial total eligible budget (in EUR)	<i>Out of which: INTERREG Funds</i>
EUR 1,537,545.68	EUR 1,306,913.78

Partners involved:

Project partner No	Partner name	Abbreviation	Total INTERREG budget	Total budget	Country
1	Romagna Faentina Union	URF	160,303.20	188,592.00	Italia
2	CORILA - Consortium for coordination of Research Activities concerning the Venice Lagoon system	CORILA	124,942.78	146,991.51	Italia
3	Regional Development Agency of Northern Primorska L.t.d. Nova Gorica	RDA Nova Gorica	123,366.60	145,137.18	Slovenija
4	Public institution RERA S.D. for coordination and development of Split-Dalmatia County	PI RERA S.D.	107,521.34	126,495.70	Hrvatska
5	REGION OF THESSALY	REGTHESS	102,316.03	120,371.80	Elláda
6	INTERNACIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO	IUS	112,663.57	132,545.38	Bosnia and Herzegovina
7	Regional Agency for Socio – Economic Development – Banat Ltd	RDA BANAT	114,690.02	134,929.44	Serbia
8	Regional Development Agency South	RDAS	103,772.56	122,085.37	Serbia
9	Old Royal Capital Cetinje	PCT/ORCC	93,441.97	109,931.74	Crna Gora
10	Municipality of Tirana	MoT	96,838.12	113,927.20	Shqipëria
11	Municipality of Gostivar	MoG	87,572.89	103,026.94	Severna Makedonija
12	City of Banja Luka	Banja Luka	79,484.70	93,511.42	Bosnia and Herzegovina

Overview of the overall final score:

		Attributed scores Assessor 1	Attributed scores Assessor 2	Attributed scores Average – Final score
Strategic criteria	Minimum score: 36/60	42/60	42/60	42/60
Operational criteria	Minimum score: 30/50	31/50	31/50	31/50
	TOTAL	73/110	73/110	73/110

Quality assessment grid – Assessor 1

Operational criteria

	STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT	
	Relevance	
1.a	<p>Is the need for the proposed project well justified, reasonable and well explained: does the proposal address a common territorial challenge of the Programme or a joint territorial asset?</p> <p>Is the project proposal relevant in relation to the targeted programme specific objective and the expected result?</p>	
	<p>+ The need for the project arises from ADRION region being a hotspot of climate change. Influences of climate change are evident and more frequent: flooding, droughts, landslides, storms, and wildfires. The proposal aims to enable policymakers/stakeholders to prevent the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions of adaptation of which the most vulnerable groups (those living near the rivers and more exposed to flooding; those affected by heat waves) will be the main beneficiaries. Analysis of the territorial challenges, needs and potentials of the Adriatic-Ionian Region and strategic options for post-2020 ADRION programme are taken into account.</p> <p>+ -Relevance is not clear in context of expected indicators due to unclear project outputs and results.</p> <p>+ With its overall objective, the proposal fits in S.O.2.1 and indicative action of the 1st CfP “Develop and implement transnational joint action plans to coordinate measures addressed to natural and man-made disaster prevention and standardized responses (e.g.: intense rainfalls, floods, landslides, heatwaves, heat islands, draughts, wildfires, oil spill, plastics at sea, river contamination etc.) by prioritizing nature based solutions instead of traditional grey infrastructures.”</p>	3
1.b	<p>Does the project proposal clearly contribute to the relevant policy framework at different levels?</p> <p>Does the project clearly and consistently contribute to specified EUSAIR macro-regional strategy objectives and actions?</p> <p>Is the proposal of relevance to the territory of the programme: will the programme area benefit?</p>	

	Is the project relevant for the territorial needs in IPA participating countries to ensure the transfer of knowledge and build capacity in the implementation of EU policies and practices?	
	<p>+-The proposal correctly addresses contribution to EUSAIR pillar 3, however, does not go in deep to elaborate it more thoroughly or connect itself with the specific EUSAIR goal.</p> <p>+-Contribution to EU Green Deal is explained through the project deliverables/outputs (through data collection, a vulnerability matrix, a portfolio of implementable solutions to be tested in pilot actions), instead of elaborating sustainability aspect.</p> <p>-Contribution to national strategies not mentioned.</p> <p>+Relevance from the Programme area is clearly presented.</p>	3
1.c	<p>How does the proposal contribute to the respect of horizontal principles?</p> <p>How does the project position itself with regard to the pre-defined environmental topics and the “do not significant harm” principle?</p>	
	<p>+The proposal addresses positive contribution to all 3 horizontal principles, providing concrete measures in the context of PM activities.</p> <p>+ The proposal positions itself as neutral with regard to the pre-defined environmental topics and “do not significant harm” principle.</p>	4
1.d	<p>Does the proposal build on existing practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the proposal demonstrate new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries? - Does the proposal adapt and implement already developed solutions? - Does the proposal introduce a completely approach? <p>Is the proposal making use of synergies with other projects or initiatives?</p>	
	<p>+- Existing practices are named, however with not so much details.</p> <p>+The proposal plans to use the existing sources from European Climate Adaptation Platform “Climate-Adapt”.</p> <p>-It is not clear if the project plan to use concrete existing results from the previous projects.</p> <p>+ Usage of big data sets and digital solutions is envisaged (eg.Creation of databases and digital maps for a climate characterization of the cities).</p>	3

	Intervention logic	
2.a	Is the proposal's intervention logic (i.e., project specific objectives, outputs and expected results) clearly defined and consistent?	
	<p>+ -Project is based on the following activities: collection and elaboration of data; debates with/engagement of stakeholders and citizens; action plans and solutions tested in pilot actions. Intervention logic is not clearly defined and consistent. Each of the 4 WPs consist of one or two activities plus quality assessment.</p> <p>- Sequencing and timing of the activities is not fully logical in terms of contribution to the expected indicators.</p> <p>-Outputs are not clear, especially in terms of contribution to Programme indicators.</p>	3
2.b	<p>Are project outputs and results that contribute to Programme indicators realistic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it possible to achieve them with the given resources – i.e., time, partners, budget -? - Is it possible to reach them with the chosen approach? - Are they realistic based on the quantification provided)? 	
	<p>-Outputs are not clear:</p> <p>Output 1.1 (RCO87_2.1: Organisations cooperating across Borders) does not result from the activities of WP1. Quantification of Output 1.1 is questionable: target value 14, meanwhile 12 PPs and 3 AOs involved. Output 1.1. does not provide indication of collaboration after the project end and it is linked to Period 1 only.</p> <p>Output 2.1 is similar to 1.1. and envisages organizations of PPs collaborating in project activities. However, number of organizations is not clear, same as for Output 1.1. Also linked to Period 2 only.</p> <p>Quantification of the Output 3.1 – 1 jointly developed action plan implemented in 10 or 11 areas – not clear due to different number presented in different sections of AF.</p> <p>Output: 4.1: Pilot actions – description of the output: 1 transnational report on pilot actions.</p> <p>Output 4.2: Replicability plan of the successful tested solutions – really a capitalization activity.</p> <p>- In terms of timing, the Proposal does not offer clear and logical information, as presented above.</p> <p>-Quantification of the outputs/results is not in line with the Programme logic.</p>	3
2.c	Do the project main outputs clearly link to the programme output and results indicators? Do the project main outputs clearly link to programme specific objectives and the project specific objectives?	

	<p>+-The main outputs are clearly linked to the Programme output and result indicators. Quantification of the outputs should be revised.</p> <p>+Link between the outputs and specific objectives of the Programme and project specific objectives is well presented.</p>	4
2.d	Does the project proposal clearly conceptualise the ownership/durability, long lasting effects and transferability of outputs and results? Is financial, institutional, political sustainability ensured?	
	<p>+-No concrete information provided on financial/institutional sustainability. However, as the PPs are public institutions, sustainability is not questionable. Ownership over the outputs/deliverables could be considered in a same way.</p> <p>+-Durability presented in terms of nature of the outputs/deliverables and the possibility of their replicability.</p> <p>+ Activity 4.3: Preparation of a replicability plan at wider scale of the successful tested joint solutions.</p>	3
	Partnership	
3.a	<p>Is the partnership composition, including Associated Partners, relevant and strategic for the proposed project?</p> <p>Is it balanced with respect to the participating countries, the addressed sectors and levels?</p> <p>Is it consistent in size and composition with the proposed activities?</p>	
	<p>+ Partnership is composed of PPs from 9 different countries: 4 ERDF and 5 IPA countries. 5 PPs are from ERDF and 7 from IPA territory. In terms of budget: ERDF:47%-IPA:53%. Due to the data presented, partnership can be considered as balanced.</p> <p>+12 PPs, relevant for the thematic focus of the project: Romagna Faentina Union – LP, CORILA - Consortium for coordination of Research Activities concerning the Venice Lagoon system, 4 regional development agencies, 1 region and 1 university, 4 local public administration (cities/municipalities). AOs: 3.</p>	5
3.b	<p>Does the lead partner have sufficient experience in the thematic field concerned and is it competent enough having the capacity to manage a complex transnational cooperation project under ETC?</p> <p>Do all project partners have competence and proven experience, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.)?</p>	
	+-LP is the association of 6 municipalities. They address their experience and role in civil protection, however, their role in the context of thematic field is not clear, and this is visible also from the budget.	3

	<p>Beside the coordination and PM activities, contribution of the LP is questionable. LP has experience in EU projects, however not in Interreg.</p> <p>+Public institutions – secured financial and institutional capacities. Partnership is combined from local/regional public authorities and regional development agencies, which contribution is in providing data, engaging the citizens and stakeholders and in participation in development of actions plans. Technical support will be provided by PP2 (CORILA) and PP6 (University of Sarajevo).</p>	
	Cooperation character	
4.a	<p>Does the partnership reflect the transnational cooperation approach?</p> <p>Does the transnational co-operation have a significant added value for the partners and the territories involved?</p>	
	<p>+Transnational approach is appropriately addressed, as well as the need and benefits from cooperation. However, it is not clear if and in what form the partnership plans to continue the collaboration after the project end.</p> <p>+Benefits for different target groups are well presented. Benefits of the area could be seen within the proposal: eg. lack of structured data in IPA countries etc.</p>	4
4.b	<p>Do all partners play a defined role in the partnership, in line with the compulsory and optional ways of co-operation described?</p> <p>Are tasks and roles for each project partner clearly defined? Is the distribution of tasks and responsibilities of project partners appropriate?</p>	
	<p>+All four means of cooperation are described.</p> <p>+Tasks and roles of PPs are predefined in line with their experiences and competences.</p>	4

	OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT	
	Workplan	
5.a	<p>Is the overall approach suitable to obtain the planned outputs and results?</p>	
	<p>+Due to unclear description of the outputs and missing clear link between the envisaged activities and project outputs, it is difficult to assess if the planned approach is suitable to reach the envisaged outputs and results.</p>	3

	-Work plan does not provide sufficient details of the project activities. Also, WPs are composed of only one or two activities insufficiently elaborated and technical quality assessment.	
5.b	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?	
	-In terms of time, the proposal fails to demonstrate the certainty of the achievement of the project outputs and results in time given (large number of stakeholders involved, inexperienced LP, significant part of the activities envisaged to be implemented by external expertise etc.) +Financial and human resources seem sufficient.	3
5.c	Will the target groups, the partners, and the stakeholders benefit from the co-operation?	
	+The proposal offers clear presentation of the benefits for both PP and the relevant target groups and stakeholders from the project implementation.	4
Management		
6.a	Does the management approach show good potential to secure a sound project management, coordination and risk mitigation? Is the proposed project management structure effective? Are the internal communication and management structures appropriate to ensure a smooth co-operation within the partnership? To which extent the need for engaging external expertise is justified (with specific reflection on partnership expertise)?	
	+ - The following structures are envisaged: SC, PM, FM, CM, Quality and Risk Manager. Possible overlap of this functions can be noticed. + - Thematic working groups at PP and transnational level, composed by internal staff and external experts are envisaged. Their composition, role, coordination, however, is not clearly defined. + - Financial management provides generic and basic information only. - Significant amount planned on the BL External expertise and services devoted to PM activities. - In general, described management approach does not provide assurance that the partnership is able to implement the project successfully.	3
Communication		

7.a	<p>Are communication activities planned in the work plan and are they relevant for achieving communication objectives? Are the communication activities and deliverables appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?</p> <p>Will the proposed communication activities lead to sufficient visibility of the project among relevant target groups and stakeholders?</p>	
	<p>+The communication activities are planned in the WP. Coordinator of this activities is PP7.</p> <p>+Communication manager is envisaged, and communication referent on the level of each PP.</p> <p>+--Communication strategy is envisaged. Detailed information on communication channels and tools used to target specific groups is not presented.</p>	3
7.b	<p>Are the capitalization activities foreseen in the workplan? If, yes, are these activities ensuring that the project outputs and results are effectively disseminated and used?</p>	
	<p>+Activity 4.3 envisages preparation of a replicability plan at wider scale of the successful tested joint solutions.</p>	4
Budget		
8.a	<p>To which extent the presented budget is transparent and include sufficient details per partner and per cost category?</p> <p>Is the application of simplified cost options (SCOs) appropriate and in line with the programme rules?</p>	
	<p>-The budget provides general description of the costs and descriptions are the same for all PPs.</p> <p>-Amounts planned on the BL Staff costs and External expertise and services seem to be planned for the same activities (eg.project management) and therefore overestimated in planned amounts.</p> <p>-Apart from the Equipment planned in the PP12 budget (air quality monitoring equipment/measurement of flooding risk), other equipment is not mentioned in the AF.</p> <p>+--Different SCOs are used by different PPs and are in line with the Programme rules.</p>	2
8.b	<p>To which extent resources planned by the project partners are adequate (in terms of quantity and quality) and reflects market prices?</p>	
	<p>-Budget cut is proposed for BL Staff costs and External expertise and services.</p>	3
8.c	<p>To which extent project budget is proportionate to the proposed work plan and project outputs?</p> <p>Is distribution of budget per period in line with workplan?</p>	

	<p>-Budget cut is proposed for BL Staff costs and External expertise and services.</p> <p>-Distribution of budget per period does not seem to be in line with the workplan. Eg. Period 1 is devoted to transnational and local seminars, however, has the smallest budget amount planned. Period 4 has only 1 project activity and the largest amount planned.</p>	3
8.d	<p>Is the financial allocation per cost category in line with the programme rules?</p> <p>To which extent the budget allocated to staff and external expertise is in line with the project content and the costs are realistic?</p> <p>To which extent the budget allocated to pilot actions and equipment (if applicable) is realistic and in line with the project content?</p>	
	<p>+Financial allocation per cost category is in line with the programme rules.</p> <p>+FLC costs envisaged for the LP (Italian). Other Italian PP has SCO.</p> <p>-BL Staff costs and External expertise seem overestimated.</p> <p>-Budget for pilot action cannot be assessed, due to the fact that the costs for pilot actions are included in BL Staff costs. Apart from the Equipment planned in the PP12 budget (air quality monitoring equipment/measurement of flooding risk), other equipment is not mentioned in the AF.</p>	3

Quality assessment grid – Assessor 2

Operational criteria

	STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT	
	Relevance	
1.a	<p>Is the need for the proposed project well justified, reasonable and well explained: does the proposal address a common territorial challenge of the Programme or a joint territorial asset?</p> <p>Is the project proposal relevant in relation to the targeted programme specific objective and the expected result?</p>	
	<p>“+” <i>NATURED overall objective is to enable policymakers to prevent the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions of adaptation which the most vulnerable groups (those living near the rivers and more exposed to flooding; those affected by heat waves).</i></p> <p>“±” <i>The project proposal is relevant to the targeted programme specific objective and the expected result, it is reasonable, but is not very well justified, and explained. The common territorial challenge to be addressed by the project are flash floods and heat urban islands.</i></p>	4
1.b	<p>Does the project proposal clearly contribute to the relevant policy framework at different levels?</p> <p>Does the project clearly and consistently contribute to specified EUSAIR macro-regional strategy objectives and actions?</p> <p>Is the proposal of relevance to the territory of the programme: will the programme area benefit?</p> <p>Is the project relevant for the territorial needs in IPA participating countries to ensure the transfer of knowledge and build capacity in the implementation of EU policies and practices?</p>	
	<p>“±” <i>The NATURED project indirect contributes to the implementation of different Strategies, such as EUSAIR, European Green Deal, EUSDR, EUSALP and the territorial agenda 2030, by adopting Nature-based Solutions to deal with flash floods and heat urban islands.</i></p> <p>“+” <i>The programme area and particular the cities of the area will be benefited by the implementation of the NATURED project to prevent better the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions.</i></p>	3

	“+” Pilot actions in each area will take place for the benefit of these areas including IPA countries.	
1.c	How does the proposal contribute to the respect of horizontal principles? How does the project position itself with regard to the pre-defined environmental topics and the “do not significant harm” principle?	
	<p>The project has a positive contribution to Programme horizontal principles.</p> <p>“+”NATURED promotes sustainable development both in its environmental and social dimension, in line with UN SDGs 2030 (Goal 13: Take urgent action to fight climate change and its impacts), Paris Agreement, EU Green Deal and the "do no significant harm" principle.</p> <p>“+”During its planning and then its implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, NATURED will respect the fundamental rights and comply with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. All partners will sign during the Kick-off Meeting (KOM) a “NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT”, setting up principles and rules for project implementation. Additionally a Manual with examples and concrete measures will be prepared by the LP.</p> <p>“+”During the project implementation, equality between men and women will be pursued by the LP and PPs in the composition of the internal and transnational working groups. A specific training session will be provided at the kick-off meeting (integrated with those previously described for the other horizontal principles) to guide the project partners on respecting these criteria.</p>	5
1.d	<p>Does the proposal build on existing practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the proposal demonstrate new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries? - Does the proposal adapt and implement already developed solutions? - Does the proposal introduce a completely approach? <p>Is the proposal making use of synergies with other projects or initiatives?</p>	
	<p>“-” The complementarity and the non double financing of NATURED project with Urban Heat Islands (UHI) to be financed by Interreg Central Europe is not defined and clarified.</p> <p>“+” The STREAM project (Interreg Italy-Croatia) is focused on the development of local tools to cope with coastal and urban flooding. The focus of STREAM is on the forecasting and early warning component. NATURED can capitalise on the experiences, results, and approaches of these tools to increase the resilience of urban areas to effects of climate change.</p> <p>“+” The ADRIACLIM project (Interreg Italy-Croatia) is focused on Climate change information, monitoring and management tools for adaptation strategies in Adriatic coastal areas. NATURED can</p>	2

	<p>capitalise on its results on information, monitoring, and management tools to support adaptation strategies in coastal areas of the Adriatic.</p> <p>“±” The SECAP project (Interreg Italy-Slovenia) is focused on support adaptation planning. Its results can contribute as best practice of procedural experiences, pilot actions and implemented plans for the resilience actions plans, and consequent pilot actions for testing solutions, to develop in NATURED.</p>	
	Intervention logic	
2.a	Is the proposal’s intervention logic (i.e., project specific objectives, outputs and expected results) clearly defined and consistent?	
	<p>The project overall objective is to to enable policymakers to prevent the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions.</p> <p>“±” The intervention logic of the project is not clearly defined and is following the place-based approach and not the result oriented approach of the programme.</p> <p>“+” All project activities are contribute to the development of the project outputs and the achievement of the project specific objectives.</p> <p>“±” The sequence of the project activities is not clearly justified (Transnational and local seminars to understand the interactions between climate and cities, Creation of databases and digital maps for a climate characterization of the cities, Debates with/and citizens and stakeholders’ engagement, Action plans definition for climate change adaptation and urban metabolism, Review of the public works plan at city level, NbS implementation in local contexts through pilot actions, to test effective solutions and finally Preparation of a replicability plan at wider scale of the successful tested joint solutions) and be implemented for the direct benefit of the area/partners involved in the project.</p> <p>“+” Project deliverables contributes to the development of the project's main output. The outcomes of the implementation of project activities are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosted understanding of interactions between climate and cities by organizations cooperating across the borders. • Vulnerability/hazard matrixes at the city level on effects of climate change built by organisations cooperating across the borders • Action plans of implementable Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for urban resilience to climate change • Pilot actions to test Nature-based Solutions to enhance resilience to climate change in urban areas 	3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replicability plan of the successful tested solutions <p>“+” Project outputs are clearly defined and are the logical outcome of the deliverables to be implemented and in accordance the programme output indicators.</p> <p>“+” The project results are in accordance to the programme result indicators and the requirements of the 1st call.</p>	
2.b	<p>Are project outputs and results that contribute to Programme indicators realistic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it possible to achieve them with the given resources – i.e., time, partners, budget -? - Is it possible to reach them with the chosen approach? - Are they realistic based on the quantification provided)? 	
	<p>“±” The foreseen project outputs and results indicators are not correctly quantified (15 organizations cooperating across borders) and clearly described.</p> <p>“+” the achievement of the project outputs and results indicators is possible with the partners participating in the project.</p> <p>“±” The chosen approach and the time foreseen does not secure the achievement of the project outputs and results due to place-based approach. The sequence of activities, the involvement of large numbers of groups (policymakers, civil servants, professionals, and groups of citizens) and the extended use of external expertises, raises questions about the achievement of the targets set.</p> <p>“±” The budget allocated for the achievement of the indicators and the justification of it can be considered sufficient.</p>	3
2.c	<p>Do the project main outputs clearly link to the programme output and results indicators? Do the project main outputs clearly link to programme specific objectives and the project specific objectives?</p>	
	<p>“±”The project main outputs are clearly linked to the the four (4) programme output indicators that are mentioning in the project proposal (one is not correctly quantified).</p> <p>“±”The project main outputs are clearly linked to the the three (3) programme result indicators that are mentioning in the project proposal (one is not correctly quantified).</p> <p>“+” The project main outputs are clearly linked to the programme specific objectives as specialized in the 1st call, regarding the development and implementation of transnational joint action plans to coordinate measures addressed to natural and man-made disaster prevention and standardized responses to flash floods and heat urban islands.</p>	4

	<p>“+” The project main outputs are also clearly linked to the main project specific objective which is to enable policymakers to prevent the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions.</p> <p>“+” the project prioritize nature based solutions instead of traditional grey infrastructures</p>	
2.d	<p>Does the project proposal clearly conceptualise the ownership/durability, long lasting effects and transferability of outputs and results? Is financial, institutional, political sustainability ensured?</p>	
	<p>“+” The main target groups of the project are the national/regional/local public authorities, Sectoral agency, Infrastructure and (public) service providers, NGOs, Higher education and research organisations, Business support organisation, general public.</p> <p>“±” Financial and Institutional sustainability: The institutional competencies in the field of adaptation to climate change at local and regional level, all public authorities involved as territorial partners in the project (URF, RDA Nova Gorica itself, PI RERA S.D., RDA Banat, RDAS, PCT/ORCC, MoT, MoG, REGTHESS, Banja Luka and IUS for the city of Sarajevo) it can to an extent ensure the financial and institutional support for the outputs/deliverables developed by the project and their integration in the work of institutions.</p> <p>“±” Durability will be ensured in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 3 transnational training webinars will be filmed, and posted on YouTube • the matrix of vulnerability/hazards of the cities (WP2) will be a permanent and open tool, continuously usable and up-datable, both by internal departments of the public authorities involved in NATURED’s partnership as well as by other public authorities (not described how) • the action plans of implementable NbS (WP3) will be a sort of container from which whoever (both personnel of project partners and of other public authorities) can take the most suitable solutions to face the specific urban challenges on resilience to climate change (very weak argument) • the NbS, tested through the pilot actions (WP4), will become case studies and showcases, inspiring a replication at a wider scale in other cities of the same region or country <p>“+” Transferability: It will be ensured through the replicability plan foreseen within the WP3. It will also be supported by the vibrant communication activity described in the sections 7,3, consisting of targeted social media activities, short videos, web content creation within the IPA-ADRION platform, dissemination events, participation of cross-fertilization and/or thematic events organized at programme level</p>	3
	Partnership	

3.a	<p>Is the partnership composition, including Associated Partners, relevant and strategic for the proposed project?</p> <p>Is it balanced with respect to the participating countries, the addressed sectors and levels?</p> <p>Is it consistent in size and composition with the proposed activities?</p>	
	<p>“+” The partnership composition is relevant to the proposed project activities. Regional and local authorities, development agencies having the respective responsibility to prevent the effects of climate change, and universities are participating in the project.</p> <p>“+” The participation of the associated partners is meaningful (three local authorities) and is relevant to the proposed project activities and can contribute to the sustainability of the project outcomes and results.</p> <p>“+” Twelve (12) partners, five (5) ERDF from four (4) member states and seven (7) IPA from five (5) IPA countries are participating in the relevant sector and level.</p> <p>“+” The size and the composition of the partnership can be consider consistent with the proposed activities to be implemented.</p>	5
3.b	<p>Does the lead partner have sufficient experience in the thematic field concerned and is it competent enough having the capacity to manage a complex transnational cooperation project under ETC?</p> <p>Do all project partners have competence and proven experience, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.)?</p>	
	<p>“±” The Lead partner is an association of six municipalities created in 2012 and has a European project office with a staff dedicated to the planning and implementation of European and integrated projects. It has participated in some EU projects (mostly ERASMUS) gaining experience on how to implement EU funded projects but the capacity to manage a complex transnational cooperation project under ETC is not proven.</p> <p>“±” The project partners have the competence to implement the project activities but the experience to implement transnational cooperation project under ETC is not a fact for some of them. As far as the capacity to implement the project activities most of the partners seems to have the necessary financial and human resources.</p>	3
	Cooperation character	
4.a	<p>Does the partnership reflect the transnational cooperation approach?</p> <p>Does the transnational co-operation have a significant added value for the partners and the territories involved?</p>	

	<p>“+” The transnational cooperation in order to achieve the project’s objectives and results is sufficient evidenced and demonstrated. The transnational approach is the most appropriate because the climate change effects don’t have geopolitical boundaries and the Adriatic-Ionian region, comprising multiple countries and cities, shares common vulnerabilities, that require collective efforts and joint action. Transnational cooperation is needed due to existing shared vulnerabilities and interconnectedness between cities, Knowledge sharing /learning, Policy alignment and enhanced resilience.</p> <p>“±” The transnational co-operation is expected to have added value for the territories involved but over a long period.</p> <p>“+” The transnational co-operation is expected to have added value for the partners involved since the implementation of the activities will give them also additional experience in working in transnational environment and to deal with common challenges.</p>	4
4.b	<p>Do all partners play a defined role in the partnership, in line with the compulsory and optional ways of co-operation described?</p> <p>Are tasks and roles for each project partner clearly defined? Is the distribution of tasks and responsibilities of project partners appropriate?</p>	
	<p>“±” The role of the partners is not clearly defined in the partnership. The coordination of parallel activities is not clear. Their activities are predefined according to their experience and their capacities.</p> <p>“+”the compulsory and optional ways of co-operation are fulfilled.</p> <p>“+” The partners have commonly prepared the project's scope and activities through discussions that have been held during the preparation phase through video calls, e-mails and phone conversations. According to their roles (institutional, operational, scientific, technical), competences, and experiences, all PPs, and their APs, have a clear and transparent task in the project joint implementation, mirrored in the balanced distribution of responsibilities assigned in the workplan in order for the project goals to be achieved (Joint development and implementation)</p> <p>“±” The project is designed in a way that each partner has the opportunity to implement activities locally and in parallel with the other partners according to the work plan.</p>	3

	OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT	
	Workplan	
5.a	Is the overall approach suitable to obtain the planned outputs and results?	

	<p>“±” The overall approach of the project is not in line with the result-oriented approach of the programme (place-based approach). The NATURED project starts with the Understanding the interactions between climate and cities, then with the creation of Climate vulnerability/hazards matrix of different zones of the cities, following with the Citizens and stakeholders’ engagement and finally with the Review of cities’ public works plan and implementation of pilot actions to test joint solutions.</p> <p>“-” The achievement of the programme output and result indicators is questionable to be reached with the chosen approach due to the chosen sequence of the activities and the low experience of the LP and some PPs involved.</p>	3
5.b	<p>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?</p>	
	<p>“±” The implementation of all deliverables according to the work plan is questionable with regard to the overall project concept.</p> <p>“±” The implementation of all deliverables according to the work plan shall be logically implemented with regard to the partnership (contribution of each partner to the project deliverables according to their experience and their institutional defined role).</p> <p>“±” The timeline of the activities is very tight in regard to the foreseen activities to be implemented in order for the project goals to be achieved.</p> <p>“±” The sequence of the project activities is in a logical order (but not clearly justified) and can guide to the achievement of the targets set.</p> <p>“+” The project objectives and outputs are logical and can guide to the achievement of the target set for the specific programme output indicators (the target value of one indicator is not correctly quantified).</p> <p>“+” The proposed human resources are appropriate in quantity and field of expertise for the implementation of the project activities.</p> <p>“-” The proposed financial resources are considered overestimated for the implementation of the project activities.</p>	3
5.c	<p>Will the target groups, the partners, and the stakeholders benefit from the co-operation?</p>	
	<p>“+” The adaptation of Nature-based Solutions in order flash floods and heat urban islands to be dealt, will mostly benefit the most vulnerable groups which are the people living near the rivers and are more exposed to flooding and those affected by heat waves.</p> <p>“+” PPs will benefit from participating in NATURED NbS project in terms of: (i) data acquiring about climate vulnerability and hazards of Adriatic-Ionian are and increasing knowledge and skills to define NbS implementation in urban areas; (ii) enhancement of the techniques for citizens and stakeholders</p>	5

	<p>engagement; (iii) understanding the interaction between climate and cities; (iv) strengthening of the Adriatic-Ionian transnational networks; (v) replicability of the methodologies and tools developed in the project; (vi) possibility to test in the NATURED NbS case studies' action plans.</p> <p>“+” The main target groups of the project are the local/regional/national public authorities, general public, sectoral agencies, Infrastructure and (public) service providers, interested groups including NGOs, Higher education and research organisations. They will be benefited since the project is expected to have positive effects on dealing with the phenomena of flash floods and heat urban islands.</p>	
	Management	
6.a	<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 management structures appropriate to ensure a smooth co-operation within the partnership?</p> <p>To which extent the need for engaging external expertise is justified (with specific reflection on partnership expertise)?</p>	
	<p>“-” A Project Steering Committee will be established at the kick off meeting and it will composed of one representative for each PP. The PSC will monitor and validate project contents, validate the quality of main outputs and progress, monitor the project financial advancements, review adequacy of the management ways and performances, review quality of the progress reports, take strategic decisions regarding project modifications. Decisions will be taken in a transparent way, applying the majority principle. <i>The functioning of the PSC is to bureaucratic and the decision making process is not by consent.</i></p> <p>“±” LP will nominate a Project Manager, a Financial manager, a Communication manager, a Quality manager and a Risk manager. <i>There is a risk of responsibilities overlapping (eg. between project manager and risk manager)</i></p> <p>“±” Thematic working groups at PP and transnational level, composed by internal staff and external experts, will be set up. <i>How, for what themes, when?</i></p> <p>“-” The coordination of the actions of these structures is not mentioned.</p> <p>“±” A Quality Project Management Plan will be drafted and approved by the PSC. It will set the guidelines to measure the quality of processing of deliverables as defined in the Application Form, will be a digital dynamic document, updatable during the project lifetime.</p>	2

	“±” Additionally will be created, Standard TEMPLATES for key deliverables, CHECKLISTS, FORM for Risks identification, AUDIT TRAILS, STANDARDS for document file naming and storing, a Quality Team.	
	Communication	
7.a	<p>Are communication activities planned in the work plan and are they relevant for achieving communication objectives? Are the communication activities and deliverables appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?</p> <p>Will the proposed communication activities lead to sufficient visibility of the project among relevant target groups and stakeholders?</p>	
	<p>“+” The communication activities, included in each WP, will be coordinated by RDA Banat. It will appoint communication manager. At partner level, a communication referent will be nominated by each PP as responsible for the implementation of the local communication activities</p> <p>“+” The communication strategy will ensure a strategic, integrated, and consistent approach to the various communication and dissemination activities. It will provide all PPs with guidelines on how to successfully communicate project deliverables, outputs, goals, activities and considers visibility actions, deadlines, PPs responsibilities, tools (logo, info graph, template, website, social media, leaflet, newsletter, etc).</p> <p>“-” No reference is made about the communication between the communication manager and referents with the other managers and bodies to be established.</p>	3
7.b	Are the capitalization activities foreseen in the workplan? If, yes, are these activities ensuring that the project outputs and results are effectively disseminated and used?	
	<p>“+” The project partners will jointly assess and compare the results of the solutions tested through the pilot actions in the different cities involved. A joint plan will define how to replicate at a wider scale (in other parts of the cities involved and/or in other cities/regions of the IPA-ADRION macro-region) the successfully tested solutions, also by recurring to Cohesion Funds or other financial instruments. It will include a co-analysis, carried out by the project partners, of the potential and feasibility at the wider scale of the solutions tested through the pilot actions (e.g. anti-flooding measures; extension of green infrastructures and/or use of new materials reflecting the solar rays to tackle heatwaves, etc.). The co-analysis will be necessarily partial because the effects of the adopted solutions should be assessed over a longer period</p>	4
	Budget	

8.a	<p>To which extent the presented budget is transparent and include sufficient details per partner and per cost category?</p> <p>Is the application of simplified cost options (SCOs) appropriate and in line with the programme rules?</p>	
	<p>“±” The proposed budget of the project is not justified. It includes details per partner and per cost category and the SCO is used according to the programme rules. Eight (8) PPs are using flat rate for T&A (10 or 15% of the eligible staff costs), nine (9) PPs are using flat rate for O&A (15% of the eligible staff costs), three (3) PPs are using flat rate for other costs (40% of the direct staff costs) and five (5) PPs are using flat rate for staff costs (20% of the direct costs other than staff costs).</p> <p>“-” 35,26% of the project budget is allocated to real cost for staff cost. Excessive amount of work time is foreseen for each staff member of the partners. 20% reduction is proposed.</p> <p>“-” 32,85% of the project budget is allocated to external expertise costs and are considered overestimated. 20% reduction is proposed.</p> <p>“-” 11,52% of the project budget is allocated to equipment which is not specified in the AF.</p>	2
8.b	<p>To which extent resources planned by the project partners are adequate (in terms of quantity and quality) and reflects market prices?</p>	
	<p>“±” The ratio between the partners’ budget and the activities they are in charge to implement, are reflecting partner’s responsibility. The budget is equal distributed to all partners.</p> <p>“-” External expertise costs and staff costs (real cost) are considered overestimated.</p>	3
8.c	<p>To which extent project budget is proportionate to the proposed work plan and project outputs?</p> <p>Is distribution of budget per period in line with workplan?</p>	
	<p>“-” The project budget is not fully proportionate to the work plan and project outputs, since there are overestimated staff costs and external expertise costs for all PPs. There are also significant amounts on other costs flat rate, as a consequence of the overestimated staff costs.</p> <p>“±” the distribution of budget per period is not following the workplan. The the largest amount is allocated to period 4 while in the 4th period only one activity is foreseen to take place.</p>	3
8.d	<p>Is the financial allocation per cost category in line with the programme rules?</p> <p>To which extent the budget allocated to staff and external expertise is in line with the project content and the costs are realistic?</p> <p>To which extent the budget allocated to pilot actions and equipment (if applicable) is realistic and in line with the project content?</p>	

	<p>“+” The financial allocation per cost category is in accordance with the foreseen project activities and in line with the programme rules.</p> <p>“-” External Expertise costs, Staff costs and other costs flat rate are very high, and they are considered overestimated. More specifically, more than 1/3 of the budget is allocated in staff costs real cost, and almost the 1/3 is allocated to external expertise costs.</p> <p>“±” The budget allocated for pilot actions cannot be calculated since it is included in all staff costs.</p>	<p>3</p>
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State Aid check

The project proposal is State Aid relevant	NA
List of State Aid relevant activities and involved project partner	

Anti-fraud checks:

NA

Double funding checks:

NA

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?

NA

The project proposal is:

Approved	
Approved under conditions	X
Rejected	

Conditions for improvement

The partnership consists of twelve (12) partners from 4 ERDF and 5 IPA countries. It consists also by three (3) associated partner.

The overall objective of NATURED is to enable policymakers/stakeholders to prevent the effects of climate change on different zones of urban areas, especially of flash floods and heat urban islands, by adopting Nature-based Solutions of adaptation of which the most vulnerable groups (those living near the rivers and more exposed to flooding; those affected by heat waves) will be the main beneficiaries.

Conditions for improvement are the following:

- Outputs and results need to be revised according to Programme logic.

- Clarification is needed to explain how and in what form the partnership plans to continue the collaboration after the project end, taking into account compulsory Programme indicators.
- Clear link between the envisaged activities and project outputs should be presented, activities need to be elaborated in more details.
- Budget should be presented more transparently and include more details per partner and per cost category.
- Budget amounts per periods need to be adjusted according to dynamic of the planned activities.
- Equipment planned within the budget should be specified both in the Budget and the content part of the Application Form.
- Budget cut is required due to the non-proportionality to the work plan and project outputs. Due to overestimated staff costs and external expertise costs for all PPs, revision is needed according to the following:
 - *Budget line staff costs real costs reduced by 20%. Total proposed decrease of 108,451.26€.*
 - *Budget line other costs flat rate reduced by 20%. Total proposed decrease of 22,906.98€.*
 - *Budget line external expertise costs reduced by 20%. Total proposed decrease of 101,026.80€.*
 - *Reduced flat rate costs accordingly.*

Proposed revised budget

Project initial total eligible budget (in EUR)	Project revised eligible budget (in EUR)	<i>Out of which: INTERREG (in EUR)</i>	Difference (in EUR and %)
1,537,545.68	1.269.938,54	1.079.447,76	267.607,14 eur; 17,40%

Date: 25/11/2023