



**IPA Adriatic Cross-border
Cooperation Programme
2007 – 2013**

*1st Call for ordinary project
proposals*

Priority 2

Deadline for submission: 29.10.2009

TABLE OF CONTENT

§. 1. CONTEXT	- 3 -
§. 2. RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROCEDURE	- 3 -
§. 3. PRIORITY, MEASURES AND OBJECTIVES	- 3 -
§. 4. BUDGET OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS	- 4 -
§. 5. THE PROGRAMME ELIGIBLE AREA AND THE LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES.....	- 4 -
§. 6. ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES.....	- 5 -
§. 7. THE PARTNERSHIP	- 6 -
§. 8. PROJECT SIZE AND CO-FINANCING RATES	- 7 -
§. 9. CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSALS	- 8 -
§. 10. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES.....	- 9 -
§. 11. APPLICATION PROCEDURES.....	- 10 -
§. 12. SELECTION PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA	- 11 -
§. 13. CONTRACT SIGNATURE AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.....	- 15 -
§. 14. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	- 15 -
§. 15. DOCUMENTS OF REFERENCE.....	- 16 -
§. 16. ANNEX.....	- 16 -

§. 1. CONTEXT

The IPA is the financial instrument established by the European Union (EC Regulation n. 1085/2006) to assist the Candidate Countries and the Potential Candidate Countries (beneficiary Countries) in their progressive alignment with the standards and policies of the European Union, including where appropriate the *acquis communautaire*, with a view to membership.

The Component II of IPA finances initiatives of cross-border cooperation among Member States and beneficiary Countries, in order to promote good and neighbouring relations, foster stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of all the Countries concerned, and to encourage their harmonious, balanced and sustainable development.

The Adriatic Basin is a very important cooperation area for the European Union, for all coastal Members (Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and Non-Member States (Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia), because of the close historical, geographical, cultural, social and economic linkages.

The IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programme (hereafter, "Programme") aims at *strengthening the sustainable development capacity of the Adriatic Region through an agreed strategy of actions among the partners of the eligible territories*.

This Call for proposals concerns the applications for ordinary projects within the Priority 2 of the Programme: "*Natural and Cultural Resources and Risk Prevention*" and according to rules and procedures established in the Implementation Manual approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

§. 2. RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROCEDURE

According to the IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme, the responsible for the procedures management of this Call for proposals is the Abruzzo Region – Presidency Affairs Directorate – International Activities Service and its representative Mrs. Giovanna Andreola, as Managing Authority of the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme.

§. 3. PRIORITY, MEASURES AND OBJECTIVES

This Call for proposals concerns the Priority 2 of the Programme: "*Natural and Cultural Resources and Risk Prevention*". It aims at promoting, improving and protecting natural and cultural resources through joint management of technological and natural risks. The significant qualitative and quantitative potential of the areas' natural and cultural resources is considered very important and consequently the interventions shall aim to improve, promote and protect these resources through joint maximising use of them.

The Priority 2 is divided in 4 Measures:

- **Measure 2.1 "Protection and enhancement of the marine and coastal environment"**: it aims at improving and protecting the coasts, also through joint management of the sea and coastal environment, and risk prevention.
- **Measure 2.2 "Natural and cultural resources management and prevention of natural and technological risks"**: it aims at strengthening institutional ability to preserve and manage the natural and cultural heritage through regional cooperation.
- **Measure 2.3 "Energy saving and renewable energy resources"**: developing renewable energy sources and energy conservation.
- **Measure 2.4 "Sustainable tourism"**: it aims at increasing international competitiveness of tourist destinations in a sustainable way, by improving the quality of market-oriented tourist packages, particularly emphasising natural and cultural resources.

Applicants must clearly refer only to one Measure of the Priority 2; the missing or the unclear indication of the Measure shall lead to the rejection of the project.

§. 4. BUDGET OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Priority 2 budget allocated for this Call for proposals is EUR 25,000,000.00 (twenty five million EUR) of which EUR 21,250,000.00 (85%) ensured by Community IPA funds and EUR 3,750,000.00 (15%) ensured by the Programme public national co-financing.

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) and the Managing Authority reserve the right not to grant all available funds in this Call, if the number of project proposals that satisfy all selection and evaluation criteria received is insufficient.

§. 5. THE PROGRAMME ELIGIBLE AREA AND THE LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

The Programme eligible area consists of the NUTS 3 territories of the participating EU Member States (Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and the equivalent level territories of the participating Candidate Country (Croatia) and the Potential Candidate Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro) on the Adriatic Sea. Serbia participates in the Programme with the whole territory under a *phasing out* condition: it means that Serbian Beneficiaries shall participate only in the projects that develop institutional cooperation initiatives..

According to the Article 97 of IPA Implementing Regulation, the Programme admits derogations to the territorial eligibility rule for adjacent areas to eligible territories, up to the limit of 20% of the amount of the Community contribution to the Programme. It means that the JMC reserves the right not to admit the estimated budget (or part of it) of Beneficiaries in territorial derogation, if the Programme budget exceeds the above-mentioned financial limit.

The detailed list of the eligible territories (*with the territorial derogations*) is the following:

- **Greece:** Kerkyra and Thesprotia.
- **Italy:** Gorizia, Trieste, Udine, Padova, Rovigo, Venezia, Ferrara, Forlì-Cesena, Ravenna, Rimini, Ancona, Ascoli Piceno, Macerata, Pesaro-Urbino, Chieti, Pescara, Teramo, Campobasso, Bari, Brindisi, Foggia, and Lecce. *Territorial derogation: L'Aquila, Pordenone, Isernia, and Taranto.*
- **Slovenia:** Obalno-kraška. *Territorial derogation: Goriška regija and Notranjsko-kraška regija.*
- **Croatia:** Dubrovnik-Neretva, Istra;Lika-Senj; Primorje-Gorski kotar; Šibenik-Knin; Split-Dalmatia, and Zadar. *Territorial derogation: Karlovac County.*
- **Albania:** Fier, Durrës, Lezhë, Shkodër, Tiranë, and Vlorë.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Bileća, Čapljina, Čitluk, Gacko, Grude, Jablanica, Konjic, Kupres, Livno, Ljubinje, Ljubuški, Mostar, Neum, Nevesinje, Posušje, Prozor/Rama, Ravno, Široki Brijeg, Stolac, Berkovići, Tomislavgrad, Trebinje, and Istočni Mostar. *Territorial derogation: Sarajevo Economic Region, North-West Economic Region, and Central Bih Economic Region.*
- **Montenegro:** Bar, Budva, Cetinje, Danilovgrad, Herceg Novi, Kotor, Nikšić, Podgorica, and Ulcinj, Tivat. *Territorial derogation: Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rožaje, Plav, Andrijevica, Kolašin, Mojkovac, Šavnik, Žabljak, and Plužine.*
- **Serbia:** whole territory (*phasing out* condition).

The Beneficiaries must have a registered office in the Programme area.

An exception to this general rule is the case of those national and regional public authorities, or bodies governed by public law, which have administrative competences in the eligible area but are located outside of it (e.g.: ministries, regional offices, etc.): Beneficiaries from participating Countries belonging to these categories are considered as partners located in the Programme area. Universities located outside Programme area can participate as Beneficiaries as well, if they have a relevant faculty on the eligible territories.

As general principle, the operation must be implemented in the Programme cooperation area above described.

At project level, in exceptional cases, expenditure incurred by partners located outside the Programme area as defined above may be eligible, if the project could only achieve its objectives with that

partner's participation and the activities are carried out for the benefit of the Programme area (art. 97.2, Reg. (EC) 718/2007).

In well justified cases, project activities (i.e. organization of transnational meetings, etc.) can be implemented in the cities where the EU institutions are located (i.e. Brussels, Strasbourg, etc.); the relative expenditures are eligible only if they are incurred by eligible Beneficiaries and for activities carried out in the institutional Offices of the States, Regions and other relevant Public Authority involved in the project.

§. 6. ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES

The following categories of Beneficiaries are eligible for project application and funding under this Call for proposals:

- **Public bodies:** national, regional, local authorities and other public bodies, established and governed under public law.
- **Bodies governed by public law:** pursuant to the Article 1.9 of Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004, a *body governed by public law* means any body:
 - a) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character,
 - b) having legal personality and
 - c) financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or subject to management supervision by those bodies; or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.
- **Private organizations, including private companies:** any organization (non profit and profit making) established by private law can be eligible partner and receive IPA funds. Under this Call for proposals, profit making organizations mean only Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), according to the Commission Recommendation C(2003) 1422. SMEs can not act as Lead Beneficiaries. Serbian SMEs are not eligible as project Beneficiaries.

International organizations are eligible neither as Lead Beneficiary nor as *Beneficiaries under this Call for proposals*. Therefore, they can participate in a project as *Associates* (see the next § 7).

Financial assistance to project Beneficiaries constituted under public or private law and acting in the market as an economic operator will be granted by IPA Adriatic CBC Programme under the *de minimis* rule, according to the EC Regulation n. 1998/2006.

The *de minimis* rule requirements imply that undertakings (i.e. private organizations, together with public authorities and bodies governed by public law developing economic activities on the market) will only be granted aid if they have not received an amount of *de minimis* aids totalling more than 200.000 EUR over a three-year financial period. This threshold is reduced to 100.000 EUR in the road transport sector, 30.000 EUR in fishery and aquaculture sector, 7.500 EUR in agricultural sector.

The Regulation 1998/2006 applies to aid granted to operators in all sectors, with the **exception** of:

- Aid granted to operators in the fishery and aquaculture (in these cases the Reg. EC 875/2007 is applied).
- Aid granted to operators in the primary production of agricultural products (in these cases the Reg. EC 1535/2007 is applied).
- Aid granted to operators in the processing and marketing of agricultural products.
- Aid to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States.

- Aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods.
- Aid granted to operators active in the coal sector
- Aid for the acquisition of road freight transport vehicles granted to undertakings performing road freight transport for hire or reward.
- Aid granted to undertakings in difficulty.

The public assistance, which is allowed up to the 200.000 EUR ceiling (or up to 100.000 EUR in the road transport sector or up to different ceilings for other fields, as detailed in the Applicants' Manual) includes all aid granted under the *de minimis* framework, includes all aid granted by the national, regional or local authorities, regardless whether the resources are provided from domestic sources or are partly financed by the European Union. The ceilings apply to aid of all kinds, irrespective of the form it takes or the objective pursued.

In accordance with the Article 90.6 of the EC Regulation n. 718/2006, the ceilings on State aid must be observed by Beneficiaries both from the EU Member States and the EU-non Member States participating in the Programme.

The Serbian Beneficiaries' participation is limited to joint projects in the field of institutional cooperation. It means that Serbian Beneficiaries can act as project Lead Beneficiary/Beneficiary only in the project covering the following relevant areas of Priority 2: Culture, Science and Research, Environment, Governance and Public Administration. The Serbian SMEs cannot act as project Beneficiaries.

In case of Serbian Beneficiaries' participation does not cover the above-mentioned sectors, the JMC will reserve the right to reject the whole project or to require the exclusion of the Serbian Beneficiary as financial partner.

All Beneficiaries must belong to one of the above-mentioned categories and have a registered office in the Programme eligible area or being in one of the conditions described in the previous paragraph 5. In case one or more Beneficiaries do not fulfil all these requirements, the project shall be rejected.

§. 7. THE PARTNERSHIP

The minimum partnership established for an IPA Adriatic CBC project must involve at least one Beneficiary from one EU Member State (eligible territories of Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and one Beneficiary from one Candidate or Potential Candidate Countries (eligible territories of Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia).

Projects which include Beneficiaries from Member States only or from (potential) Candidate Countries only are not admissible and will be rejected.

As basic rule, partnership from only territories covered by other CBC programmes financed with EU funds are not allowed. With regards to the participation of Slovenia, Greece, Albania and Croatia in the Programme, the following cross-border partnerships are not eligible:

- the Obalno–kraška region in Slovenia and the Istarska županija and/or the Primorsko–goranska županija counties in Croatia;
- the Thesprotia and/or the Corfu prefectures in Greece and the Vlore region (districts of Vlore and Saranda) in Albania.

In order to be considered eligible under the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme, a project with the above-mentioned partnership must involve also at least a Beneficiary either from another eligible Member State or another Candidate or Potential Candidate Country.

In order to optimize the project management, the JMC suggests to build a partnership of no more of 15 Beneficiaries.

According to the Article 96 of EC Regulation n. 718/2007, the final Beneficiaries of an operation shall appoint a Lead Beneficiary among themselves prior to the submission of the proposal for the operation. The Lead Beneficiary shall assume the following responsibilities:

- it shall lay down the arrangements for its relations with the final Beneficiaries participating in the operation in an agreement comprising, inter alia, provisions guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;
- it shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the entire operation;
- it shall be responsible for transferring the Community contribution to the final Beneficiaries participating in the operation;
- it shall ensure that the expenditure presented by the final Beneficiaries participating in the operation has been paid for the purpose of implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between the final Beneficiaries participating in the operation;
- it shall verify that the expenditure presented by the final Beneficiaries participating in the operation has been validated by the controllers referred to in Article 108 of the EC Regulation n. 718/2007.

All eligible Beneficiaries can act as Lead Beneficiary of a project, with the exception of the SMEs, that are eligible only as final Beneficiaries. If the Lead Beneficiary of a project selected for funding is a private organization (different from SMEs), at the moment of the Subsidy Contract signature, it will be required to provide proof that a financial guarantee is in force (in a form accepted by the Managing Authority). The guarantee shall be issued for the total Programme contribution allocated to the project and be valid until the final reimbursement by the Programme is made. .

All project partners are final Beneficiaries of the Programme funds and must have an active role in the project. The Lead Beneficiary or other Beneficiaries cannot act as intermediaries in the project or as a supplier (i.e. contractor or sub-contractor that provides services and products against payment).

The participation of organizations as "Associates" without financial contribution from the Programme is allowed. The Associates do not have to respect the eligibility rules established for the project Beneficiaries and can be located also outside the Programme area. As they are not Programme funds Beneficiaries, the Associates cannot be considered for the fulfilment of the partnership requirements. The Associates have to be clearly identified in the project proposal, and their functions have to be indicated in the project description; they cannot act as supplier in the implementation of the project. Therefore, the Associates participation in a project meeting with the reimbursement of the relative expenditures from the Programme is possible only if these costs are incurred by one project Beneficiary.

§. 8. PROJECT SIZE AND CO-FINANCING RATES

The total project budget for ordinary projects must respect the following thresholds:

- **Minimum total budget:** 500,000.00 EUR.
- **Maximum total budget:** 5,000,000.00 EUR.

Each Beneficiary budget cannot exceed 60% of the total project budget and must have a minimum total budget of 100,000 EUR otherwise the project will be rejected.

Total budget includes the IPA funds, the national public co-financing and Beneficiary's additional funding, if required according to the rules described below.. In case the project does not fulfil the above-mentioned financial limits, it shall be rejected.

The IPA co-financing rate covers up to 85% of the total public cost (Programme contribution). 15% of the total public cost (Programme contribution) shall be ensured by the public national co-financing rate, ensured by each project Beneficiaries, according to the system applied by each participating Country:

- Beneficiaries from Greece and Italy with public and private status and bodies governed by public law will receive public national co-financing by State funds.

- Public bodies and bodies governed by public law Beneficiaries from Slovenia must co-finance a share of 5% of their public national co-financing amount with their own public resources; 10% of public co-financing left over will be guaranteed by the State.
- Private Beneficiaries from Slovenia will receive 15% of public national contribution by the State against their own contribution of 5% of the total budget.
- Beneficiaries with public status and bodies governed by public law Beneficiaries, from Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia must co-finance whole 15% of their public costs from their own funds or other public resources.
- Private Beneficiaries, from Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia must guarantee that their 15% share will be ensured by a public body (at national, regional, local level); they can not contribute with their own funds to 15% of public national co-financing.

On the understanding what states upon, if Beneficiaries' project activities can be considered as State aid relevant, the maximum grant will be calculated in compliance with the *de minimis* regime. In this case, the Beneficiary must ensure 15% of its total budget..

Each Beneficiary must precisely indicate the source of its public co-financing in the Letter of intents, otherwise the project will be rejected.

A maximum Programme contribution awarded for project will be established in the Subsidy Contract. Even if the reported expenditures of the project exceeds the budget stated in the Subsidy Contract, the Programme contribution amount will not be increased.

§. 9. CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSALS

Project proposals must be completed in English in all its sections, using exclusively the specific forms included in the Application Pack provided by the Programme, and attached to this Call for proposals. The total or partial missing of the above-mentioned requirements shall lead to the rejection of the project proposal.

A project must be referred only to one specific Measure of the Priority 2; the missing or the unclear indication of the Measure shall lead to the rejection of the project.

The Application Pack and the Applicants' Manual are available for downloading on the Programme website: www.interregadriatico.it

Beneficiaries should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and it is based on the principles of sound financial management. The estimated budget must be indicated in EUR, also by Beneficiaries from Countries with a different currency.

According to the Article 95.2 of the Regulation (EC) n. 718/2006, project partners must cooperate in at least one of the following ways and justify clearly the choice in the project description:

- o **Joint development:** it means that project must be planned out by the cross-border partnership. Beneficiaries from the different Countries contribute to identify project shared objectives, results, output, activities, budget and timing. The Lead Beneficiary might coordinate this process.
- o **Joint implementation:** it means that project must be carried out throughout a close linkage and collaboration between cross-border Beneficiaries, ensuring the coordination of the respective tasks and activities in terms of contents, planning, timing and quality of outcomes. An efficient shared project management system shall be appointed under the Lead Beneficiaries responsibility.
- o **Joint staffing:** it means that project partners have a defined role and allocate staff to fulfil this role (e.g. one joint project manager, one joint financial manager, etc.). That staff will be responsible for project activities in all Countries involved. Unnecessary duplications of functions in different partner organizations should be avoided.
- o **Joint financing:** it means that the project has a joint budget with funding allocated to partners according to the planned activities. Programme reimbursement will be made to the bank account

of the Lead Beneficiary. The Lead Beneficiary is responsible for administration and distribution of these funds and for reporting on their use.

The project duration must not exceed 36 months. This limit applies for the operative phase of the project and does not comprise the preparation phase.

The Applicant should foresee at least an allocation of 30% of the total project budget by the 31 October 2010.

§. 10. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

As general rule, expenditures are eligible for Beneficiaries from Greece, Italy and Slovenia if incurred on or after the 1st January 2007, and for Beneficiaries from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia if incurred after the signature of the Financing Agreement between each of these Countries and the European Commission.

To be considered eligible by the Programme, the costs must be incurred in compliance with the rules about the Programme eligible area and the location of activities, as established in the § 5 of this Call for proposals and in the Applicants' Manual.

In the framework of this Call for proposals, expenditures are eligible as follow:

- **Project preparation costs:** they can only be eligible for those projects finally approved for funding. These costs must relate exclusively to preparation activities carried out:
 - by Beneficiaries from EU eligible Countries, from the 1st January 2007 to the day of submission of the project application;
 - by Beneficiaries from extra-EU States, from the date of the signature of the financing agreement between each of these Countries and the European Commission to the day of submission of the project proposal.

The Beneficiaries must include the preparation costs in the Application Form, pay these expenditures before the submission of the first progress report and show the direct connection to the approved project. To be eligible, the preparation costs cannot exceed 2% of the approved total budget.

The preparation costs must be incurred only for the following activities:

- finalization of the application documents (staff costs and external expertise);
- joint meetings for the preparation of the project (travels, accommodation, meeting and events costs);
- preparatory studies, analysis and researches for activities to be carried on within the project (staff costs, external expertise).

The above-mentioned activities must respect the eligibility rules of expenditures defined per budget lines and described in the Applicants' Manual. For the preparation activities overheads are not eligible.

It is highlighted that in case of Beneficiaries fall into the *de minimis* regime, the preparation costs are not eligible.

- **Project implementation costs:** they are eligible from the date of approval of the project by the JMC to its closing date, as defined in the approved Application Form. At the earliest, costs are eligible from the day of publication of the Call for proposals, provided that this day is the official start of the project. In this case, Beneficiaries may decide at their own risk to start the implementation activities before the project is finally selected for granting. It is highlighted that in case of Beneficiaries fall into the *de minimis* regime, the implementation costs shall be eligible at earliest from the closing date of the Call for proposals.

The eligible costs categories are the following:

- Staff costs.
- Overheads.
- Travel and accommodation.
- External expertise.
- Meeting and events.
- Promotion costs.
- Equipment.
- Investments.
- Financial charges and guarantee costs.

A detailed description of the eligible expenditures is included in the Applicants' Manual, considered as a part of this Call for proposals.

All the costs of the project budget must be expressed in EUR. The indication of expenditures with other currencies will lead to the rejection of the project.

In any case, expenditures incurred by a Beneficiary from non-EU State cannot be considered eligible before the date of signature of the Financing Agreement between the relevant Country and the European Commission.

§. 11. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Project proposals must be completed in English, using the Application Form and the templates provided by the Programme available from the official Programme website www.interregadriatico.it.

Applicants must not modify the templates provided by the Programme; any diversity between the standard format of documents and the proposal applied will lead to the rejection of the project.

Only the Lead Applicant (that will be Lead Beneficiary, in case of approval) can submit the project proposal: it means that the Lead Applicant has to collect the required documents from all involved partners.

The project application must be submitted to the IPA-Adriatic Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) at the latest by: **29.10.2009**, by 06.00 p.m. Italian time.

The Lead Applicants and all partners must fill in the following documents included in the Application Pack:

- The Application Form.
- The Letter of intent.
- The *de minimis* Declaration.

The Lead Applicants must submit the Application Form **in both electronic and paper version and** send the hard copy of the following documents, in a unique sealed envelope:

- **Application Form: duly dated and signed in original handwriting** by the Legal representative (or authorized delegate) of the Lead Applicant. In case of signature by a delegate, please attach the original of the delegation. The project will be rejected if the signature is not handwritten clearly in original.

- **The Letter of intent:** the Lead Applicant and each Beneficiary must fill in single Letter of intent duly dated and signed in original handwriting by the legal representative (or authorised delegate). All Letters of intents can be sent only by the Lead Applicant in original or in fax copies. In case of signature by a delegate, please attach the delegation, in original or in fax copy. All Beneficiaries listed in the Application Form must provide a Letter of intent; if missing the project will be rejected.
- **De minimis Declarations:** the Lead Applicant and each Beneficiary must fill in the Declarations in order to define its condition about the possible application of the *de minimis* rules. All Declarations can be sent only by the Lead Applicant, in original or in fax copies. In case of signature by a delegate, the delegation must be attached, in original or in fax copy.

Where fax copy is allowed, it must clearly show the date and the origin of the fax and a readable signature.

The Lead Applicant must include in the project envelope an electronic version of the Application Form (in the excel form), using an electronic devise (CDs Rom, DVDs, USB pen-drive, etc.). The missing of the electronic version shall lead to the rejection of the project proposal.

The complete project proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked as following:

*“IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme - 1st Call for Proposals
Project application for Priority 2 – Measure XX
Lead Applicant: (denomination and address)
Acronym of the project proposal
Do not open”,*

and sent to the following address:

**IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme
Joint Technical Secretariat
Via Leonardo Da Vinci, n. 6 – Palazzo Silone
I-67100, L’Aquila
ITALY**

by one of the following modalities:

- by registered mail by 29.10.2009: in this case the post office stamp will constitute proof of compliance with the deadline given above.
- by express courier services: in this case, the envelop must arrive by 29.10.2009, 06.00 p.m. Italian local time to the JTS’s premises. The date of receipt will be noted by the JTS and communicated to the Lead Applicant by e-mail.

If the project proposal hard copy includes one or more documents in fax copies, the Lead Applicant must collect the original of these documents and send them to the JTS with the same modalities and rules described above (by registered mail or express courier). The documents must arrive to the JTS’s premises by within 20 calendar days from the call deadline. Any delay will cause the project rejection.

Faxed documents must be identical to the originals. If the copies and the original versions are clearly not the same documents (i.e. different signatures, date, etc.) the project will be rejected.

All the rules established for the project application under this paragraph 11 are relevant for the formal eligibility check, as described in the following paragraph.

§. 12. SELECTION PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) is responsible for the project evaluation and approval. The JMC is supported by the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), and carries out its functions with the assistance of the National/regional authorities and, if necessary, of external experts.

Project proposals evaluation procedure consists of 2 steps:

- o **Formal assessment:** the formal assessment is made by the Joint Technical Secretariat, under the responsibility of the Joint Monitoring Committee. This procedure foresees 2 levels of control: the formal eligibility check and the admissibility check.
- A** *Formal eligibility check:* at first, the JTS will check the applications against a set of **formal eligibility criteria**, as following:

Eligibility criteria	§§ of the Call
A) The Application Form and its Annexes were submitted in due time both in original and electronic version according to the deadline set in the Call for proposals	§ 11
B) The Application Form hard copy version is dated and signed in original by the legal representative of the Lead Applicant or by a duly authorised person	§ 11
C) All the documents required for the Lead Applicant and the project Beneficiaries have been provided in the duly forms	§ 11
D) The project proposal clearly indicates the Measure to which it is referred	§ 9
E) The project proposal is in English language in all its parts and sections	§ 11
F) The project proposal is fully compliant with all other rules of the application procedure of the Call	§ 11

Only applications fulfilling **all** the above-mentioned formal eligibility criteria will pass to the next admissibility check.

- B** *Admissibility check:* the formal eligible projects will be checked by the JTS against a set of **admissibility criteria**, as following:

Admissibility criteria	§§ of the Call/documents
A) Project fulfils the minimum cross-border partnership required by the Programme	§ 7
B) The project budget is within the financial thresholds established by the Call	§ 8
C) Beneficiaries have secured the public co-financing share, according to the national co-financing system, and the additional funding (where required).	§ 8 - Letter of intent
D) The Lead Beneficiaries and all Beneficiaries are eligible, according to the rules of this Call for proposals	§§ 5-6
E) Beneficiaries acting under a State aid regime respect the relevant disciplines and financial limits (<i>de minimis</i> regime).	§ 8 – The <i>de minimis</i> Declaration
F) Activities are located in eligible areas, according to the rule foreseen in this Call for proposals	§ 5
G) Project partners cooperate in at least one of the ways foreseen in the Art. 95.2, Reg. (EC) n. 718/200	§ 9
H) The project does not duplicate already financed project	Letter of intent
I) The project excludes double financing	Letter of intent

Only applications that fulfil **all** the above-mentioned admissibility criteria will pass to the next quality assessment. Lead Applicants will be informed about the reasons of rejection at the end of the formal assessment phase.

If necessary to better achieve the formal assessment, the JTS can require documents and integrations from Applicants in order to verify the fulfilment of the formal assessment criteria.

Once the check is finished, the JTS communicates the results to the JMC, with a Report on formal assessment of all the project proposals. The JMC approves the report and the Managing Authority with the support of the JTS communicates to the Lead Applicants the admissibility to the quality assessment or the rejection of the project proposals. The communication must indicate the reasons of the rejection.

- o **Quality assessment:** the JMC is responsible for the quality assessment of the project proposals, on the base of the following evaluation grid:

Sections/ criteria n.	Criteria	Max value
A	Consistency with the Programme Strategy	24
a.1	Is the project in compliance with the Programme strategy, objectives and Priorities?	9
a.2	Are the project objectives in compliance with the relevant EU policies and the horizontal issues of the Programme, and are the activities and results in accordance with the relevant EU rules (regulations, directives, etc.)?	5
a.3	Are the project objectives coherent with the national policies of the Countries participating in the operation?	4
a.4	Are the project objectives coherent with the sub-national public policies relevant for the involved territories?	6
B	Cross-border character of the intervention	20
b.1	How many Adriatic Countries are present in the project?	5
b.2	What are the project impacts on the Adriatic cooperation area?	7
b.3	What is the joint cooperation level of the project, according to the cross-border cooperation criteria (joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing)?	8
C	Financial and management capacity	16
c.1	Does the Lead Beneficiary have experience in cross-border or other international project management and sufficient capacities (human resources, equipment, etc.) to ensure the good functioning of the project and coordination of a cross-border partnership?	6
c.2	Do the project Beneficiaries have technical capacities and expertise in the field of action of the project?	6
c.3	Do the Beneficiaries have the experience and the capacity to manage the allocated budget for the implementation of their activities?	4
D	Quality of intervention	28
d.1	Are the objectives and expected results of the project clearly defined and addressed to solve specific problems of the area?	6
d.2	Are the activities, the work plan and the timetable clear, realistic and appropriate to achieve the expected results and the objectives of the project?	5
d.3	Are all Beneficiaries adequate for achieving the foreseen objectives and are tasks and activities clearly and appropriately distributed among the Lead Beneficiary and the partners?	6
d.4	Does the project establish an organized and operational management system, able to ensure the adequate coordination of the partnership, the monitoring and evaluation of the activities progress, and the communication and publicity of the operation?	3
d.5	Is the project innovatory and what added value does it develop?	3
d.6	Do the project activities and results have the concrete and realistic possibility to have a follow up after the end of the Programme contribution?	2
d.7	Does the project represent a capitalization of previous cross-border cooperation experiences?	3

E	Budget of the project	12
e.1	Does the project budget represent value for money?	7
e.2	Are the estimated expenditures rationally quantified for the full and satisfactory implementation of the foreseen activities?	5
Total score		100

For this Call for proposals, no specific criteria per Measure are established. All the project proposals will be assessed on the base of the general criteria above described. The JMC carries out the quality assessment, with the support of the JTS and the collaboration of the National/regional Authorities of the Programme and, if necessary, of external experts.

The maximum score is 100, resulting from the sum of the points assigned for each section of the evaluation grid.

A project proposal will not be eligible for funding if:

- it achieves a score lower than 70 points;
- it does not achieve at least half the points foreseen in each section of the evaluation grid.

Projects that do not fulfil both the above-mentioned minimum scores cannot be financed by the Programme.

In case 2 or more projects have the same scores, priority will be given to projects that enhance the higher score under the Section D "*Quality of the intervention*" of the evaluation grid. In case of further equality, the priority will be given to projects with the higher score under the other Sections of the evaluation grid, taking into account the following order of precedence: Section A "*Consistency with the programme strategy*"; Section B "*Cross border character of the intervention*"; Section C "*Financial and management capacity*"; Section E "*Budget of the project*".

At the end of the evaluation procedure, the JMC elaborates and approves a single ranking list of all the formal eligible projects for the Priority 2. The projects are financed according to the available budget of this Call for proposals and under the conditions set by the JMC.

After the quality assessment of the project, the JTS will require to the Lead Applicant of projects selected for funding to provide the following documents, in order to verify the eligibility of the project Beneficiaries:

- Certified copy of Statute or its relevant articles of the project Beneficiaries, proving the eligibility of each partner (public bodies will not be required to provide this document).
- Certified copy of the final budget of the last 3 years. If the organization is less than 3 years funded, the final budget of the last 1 or 2 years must be provided (Public bodies and Bodies governed by public law will not be required to provide this document).
- (in case) Certified copy of the national/regional/local official act which ensured the public national co-financing where it is not automatically allocated by the State and it is not guaranteed by public own resources,

These additional documents must be in English language. In case the original of the document is not in English, the relevant Beneficiary must send a translated version in English accompanied with a declaration (signed in original by the legal representative or an authorized substitute) of compliance with the original.

In case the Lead Applicants do not provide the required documents in the duly form and in time, or if the content of the documents reveals the ineligibility of one or more Beneficiaries, the project will be rejected and cancelled from the ranking list approved by the JMC. The immediate following eligible project in the ranking list will be funded.

The final ranking list will be published by the Managing Authority according to the national and regional regulations; it will be published also in the Programme website, according to the Article 62 of the Regulation (EC) n. 718/2008. The Managing Authority, throughout the JTS, informs the Lead Beneficiaries about the project evaluation result.

§. 13. CONTRACT SIGNATURE AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

After the conclusion of the evaluation procedure, the Lead Beneficiaries of the projects selected for funding will sign the Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority of the Programme.

The Subsidy Contract shall determine the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Beneficiary and the Managing Authority, the reference to the activities to be carried out, terms of funding, requirements for reporting and financial controls, etc. The Lead Beneficiary will conclude a Partnership Agreement with all other projects Beneficiaries. The payment of public co-financing shares will follow the rules and procedures established by each Programme participating Countries.

In case of approval of a project with a private Lead Beneficiary, the Lead Beneficiary will be asked to provide, before the signature of the Subsidy Contract, proof that a financial guarantee is in force. The guarantee shall be issued for the total Programme contribution allocated to the project and be valid until the final reimbursement by the Programme. Other details about the guarantee will be described in the Applicants' Manual.

The contracting and implementing rules are described in the Applicants' Manual.

As general rule, the grant payments are made on a reimbursement basis. Payment claims are transmitted by the Lead Beneficiary to the Managing Authority on behalf of the partners. Payments will be made as soon as possible to the Lead Beneficiary's account by the Certifying Authority of the Programme. Payments are made in Euros only. It is the responsibility of the Lead Beneficiary to distribute the funding among the partners according to the expenses presented by each partner.

The Managing Authority will assign an advance payment to the Lead Beneficiary for the project start up, up to the limit of 15% of Community contribution allocated to the project, taking into account that the expenditures incurred by Beneficiaries from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia would be eligible only if that Countries signed the Financing Agreement with EU Commission (see § 10). The advance payment is granted to Lead Beneficiaries under the condition that the Managing Authority has yet received by the European Commission the Programme pre-financing, according to the Article 128 of EC Regulation 718/2007.

The JMC will reserve the right to reduce the Programme contribution to projects with a level of accounted expenditures below 30% of the total budget, by the 31st October 2010.

According to the Article 121 of EC Regulation n.718/2007, for the award of service, supply and work contracts, all Beneficiaries (public as well private) of the approved and funded projects must apply the procurement procedures for the "External aid rules" established in the Chapter 3 of Part 2, Title IV of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 and Chapter 3 of Part 2, Title III of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002, as well as Commission Decision C (2007) 2034 of 24 May 2007 on the rules and procedures applicable to service, supply and work contracts financed by the general budget of the European Communities for the purposes of cooperation with third countries. These procedures will be available on the Programme website www.interregadriatico.it.

Those provisions shall apply in the whole area of the CBC Programme, both on the Member States' and on the Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries' territory. In case of missing or wrong application of the above-mentioned procurement rules, the Managing Authority will reserve the right to reduce or cancel the funds assigned to the project.

All other information concerning the grant payment and other project implementing aspects are described in the Applicants' Manual that is to be considered part of this Call for proposals.

§. 14. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information, please visit the Programme website www.interregadriatico.it or contact the Joint Technical Secretariat at the following addresses:

*Joint Technical Secretariat
IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme
Via Leonardo Da Vinci, n. 6 – Palazzo Silone
67100 L'Aquila – Italy
E-mail: info@adriaticoipa.com*

§. 15. DOCUMENTS OF REFERENCE

Before the submission of any project, it is important to refer to the following documents:

- Council Regulation (EC) n. 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA Regulation).
- Commission Regulation (EC) n. 718/2007 of 12 June 2007 implementing Council Regulation (EC) no. 1085/2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA Implementing Regulation).
- IPA Adriatic CBC Operational Programme 2007-2013, approved on 25th March, 2008.
- IPA Adriatic CBC Implementation Manual.
- Applicants' Manual – 1st Calls for proposals.
- External aid rules for the award of service, supply and work contracts, established by the European Commission and indicated in the Chapter 3 of Part 2, Title IV of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 and Chapter 3 of Part 2, Title III of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002, as well as Commission Decision C (2007) 2034 of 24 May 2007..

These documents can be downloaded on the Programme website at the following address: www.interregadriatico.it.

§. 16. ANNEX

- Applicants' Manual
- Application Form.
- Template of Letter of intent.
- Template of The *de minimis* Declaration.