



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

INTERREG IPA CROSS-BORDER
COOPERATION PROGRAMME
“GREECE – ALBANIA 2014-2020”

PROGRAMME & PROJECT
MANUAL

Interreg - IPA CBC 
Greece - Albania

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Audit Authority
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-Border cooperation
CP	Cooperation Programme
CoA	Contracting Authority
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FCC	Financial Control Committee
FLC	First Level Control
IPA II	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
LB	Lead Beneficiary
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MIS	Management Information System
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
MCS	Management and Control Systems
NIPAC	National IPA Coordinator
NUTS	Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics
OS	Operating Structure
PA	Priority Axis
PRAG	Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EC External Actions
PB	Project beneficiary

GLOSSARY

Cooperation Programme (CP): Document jointly drawn up and submitted by the participating countries according to Article 7 (1) of Regulation (EU) 231/2015, article 34 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 447/2014, article 5 (1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 and in accordance with article 8 (2) to (4), (7), (9) and (10) of Regulation (EU) 1299/2013 and adopted by the European Commission decision C(2015) 5482 final of 30/07/2015, as in force.

Managing Authority (MA): Body designated by the participating countries, responsible for managing and implementing the cross-border programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, carrying out the functions set out in Articles 36 and 37 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 447/2014, Article 72 and 125 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 and in article 23 of Regulation (EU) 1299/2013. The Managing Authority of the Interreg IPA II CBC “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” Programme is the Managing Authority of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes of the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism.

National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC): Shall be the main counterpart of the commission for the overall process of strategic planning, coordination of programming, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting of IPA II assistance according to Article 4 (2) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014. This function is applicable only for Albania and the role of NIPAC is played by the Minister of European Integration.

Operating Structure (OS): Operating structure(s) shall be established by the IPA II beneficiary country to implement and manage the IPA II assistance. The OS co-operates closely with the Managing Authority in the programming and implementation of the relevant cross-border programmes establishing common co-ordination mechanisms. The OS is responsible for the implementation of the Programme according to Article 10 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014. Currently, the Albanian Ministry of European Integration plays the role of the OS.

Joint Secretariat (JS): The body set up by the MA after consultation with the Participating countries represented in the programme area, according to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, of Article 8 and Article 23 (2) to assist the Managing Authority and Joint Monitoring Committee,

and when appropriate the Audit Authority and Certifying Authority in carrying out their respective duties.

Lead Beneficiary and other Beneficiaries: Where there are two or more beneficiaries for an operation in a cross-border cooperation programme, one of them shall be designated by all the beneficiaries as the lead beneficiary according to article 40 (1) of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and article 13 (1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC): The body set up by the participating countries to ensure the overall effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the cross-border cooperation programme according to Article 38, of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and the Articles 49 and 110, of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Joint Steering Committee (JSC): Is a body set up by the JMC and is responsible for the selection of operations according to Article 39, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and Article 12(1), regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. The JSC operates and reports to the JMC.

Certifying Authority (CA): National, regional or local public authority or body, designated by the Member State for certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment before being sent to the European Commission. In this context, the CA shall carry out the functions envisaged in Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of 11 March 2014, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Article 126, 132) and Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 (Article 24). The Certifying Authority of the Interreg IPA II CBC “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” Programme is the Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund.

Controllers: Each participating country designates the body or person responsible for carrying out verifications in relation to beneficiaries on its territory. The managing authority shall satisfy itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by a designated controller referred to in Article 23(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Article 125 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Audit Authority (AA): The institution responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system for the operational programmes. In this context, the AA shall be responsible for carrying out the functions envisaged in Article 12 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014, Article 25 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2014, Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and shall be assisted by a Group of Auditors (GoA) comprising of a representative from each beneficiary state in the Programming Document. The Audit Authority of the Interreg IPA II CBC “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” Programme is the Financial Control Committee (EDEL) of the Ministry of Finance – General Accounting Office of the State, Greece.

Group of Auditors (GoA): A group of auditors shall assist the Audit Authority of the IPA II cross-border cooperation programme. The group of auditors is comprised of a representative from each participating country in the IPA II cross-border cooperation programme, carrying out the duties provided for in Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. The group of auditors shall be set up within three months of the decision approving the IPA II cross-border cooperation programme. The group shall draw up its own rules of procedure. The group of auditors shall be chaired by the Audit Authority of the IPA II cross-border cooperation programme 25(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2014). Each participating country shall be responsible for audits carried out on its territory.

Operation: A project selected by the Joint Monitoring Committee, according to the selection criteria approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, and implemented by the project beneficiaries. Each project contributes to the achievement of the goals of the priority axis under which it is submitted (Article 26(1_ of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014).

Management Information System (MIS): The management system for recording and storing in computerised form accounting records for each operation under the operational programme.

Union Support: The part of the eligible expenditure of a project which is financed by the European Union.

National Counterpart: The non-Union Support to the programme’s budget provided by either the State budget of each participating country or provided as Own Contribution by the Project Beneficiaries.

Irregularity: Any infringement of a provision of a European Union’s law resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the European Union by charging an unjustified item of expenditure to the general budget.

Financial Correction: The cancellation of all or part of the National and European Union’s contribution to an operation, in the context of its funding by the Cooperation Programme, which is similar to the detected irregularity, according to Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 447/2014.

Amount unduly paid: All expenditure not representing an equal value of delivered products or services, according to the expenditure terms of the Subsidy Contract.

Recovery: The repayment by the beneficiary of amounts unduly paid as a result of no legal cause to the budget of the EU.

1 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANUAL

The purpose of this Programme Manual is to serve as an essential reference document for all bodies interested in:

- a. applying for funding under the IPA II cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” (hereinafter the Programme) and
- b. implementing a project which has been selected for funding.

This manual, together with the Managing Authority’s website www.interreg.gr, programme’s website www.greece-albania.eu, as well as the site of the Operating Structure www.integrimi.gov.al, will provide practical information and assistance to potential applicants, in order to prepare and submit a project proposal or to successfully implement an approved project.

Applicants should therefore **study the entire manual carefully**.

The Manual consists of two parts:

- The Programme guide
- The Project guide

The Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020” PPM is one of the main programme documents and a major component of the Application Pack. The document presents specialized information for calls for proposals and it will be updated whenever necessary. There is an effort the information given in the main programme documents to be supplementary and not duplicated.

2 PROGRAMME GUIDE

2.1 Introduction to the Programme

Cross border cooperation policy is about establishing links across national boundaries to enable joint approaches to common problems and opportunities. The present Programme constitutes a set of proposals for the interventions envisaged under the terms of the cross border cooperation of European Territorial Cooperation for the period 2014-2020 and the IPA II specific objectives on the regional integration and territorial cooperation involving EU Member States and IPA II beneficiary countries. The Interreg IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020” has been approved by the European Commission decision C(2015) 5482 final of 30th July 2015.

As the successor to the IPA Cross-Border Programme “Greece – Albania 2007-2013” it will attempt to capitalize on the experience gained and the lessons learned by the participants and the implementing structures in order to bring cooperation to a new level.

The global objective of the programme is *“to find the balance between sustainable regional development and enhancement of cross-border cooperation among local population & regional institutions, in accordance with EU & national policies, in order to address common challenges through joint interventions”*.

2.2 Regions participating in the Interreg IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020”

The eligible cross-border area spreads from the Ionian Sea to the Prespa lakes, and includes:

- *the Regional Units of Grevena, Kastoria, Florina, Arta, Thesprotia, Ioannina, Preveza, Zakynthos, Kerkyra, Kefallinia and Lefkada in Greece, and*
- *the Region¹ of Vlorë, the Region of Gjirokastër, the Region of Korçë and the Region of Berat in Albania.*

Beneficiaries from the Regional Unit of Kozani in Greece, will also be eligible as per the flexibility rule as stipulated in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014, Art. 44, paragraph 2b, “the total amount allocated under the Cross Border Cooperation Programme to operations located outside the Programme area does not exceed the 20% of the support from the Union at Programme level”.

¹ District

The eligible cross border area is determined in accordance to the IPA II rules set out in Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 where only Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) III regions are eligible for cross-border cooperation programmes referred to in point (a) of Article 27, without prejudice to potential adjustments needed to ensure the coherence and continuity with 2007-2013 programs.

The eligible cross- border area covers an area of 28,526 km² (17.445 km² for Greece cross- border area and 11.081 km² for Albania cross- border area) with a total population of 1,339,804 inhabitants (729.687 inhabitants for Greece cross- border area and 610.117 inhabitants for Albania cross- border area) (census data of 2011).

Table 1: Eligible Area

TABLE 1: ELIGIBLE AREA	
NUTS level III regions (or equivalent regions in the non-MS) covered by the cross-border cooperation programme	<p>11 GREEK REGIONAL UNITS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EL131 (Grevena) • EL132 (Kastoria) • EL134 (Florina) • EL211 (Arta) • EL212 (Thesprotia) • EL213 (Ioannina) • EL214 (Preveza) • EL221 (Zakynthos) • EL222 (Kerkyra) • EL223 (Kefallinia) • EL224 (Lefkada)
	<p>4 ALBANIAN REGIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AL031 (Berat) • AL033 (Gjirokastër) • AL034 (Korçë) • AL035 (Vlorë)

The Programme cross- border eligible area is illustrated on the map below:

Map 1: Greece-Albania 2014 – 2020 eligible area



2.3 Official language of the Programme

The official language of the Programme is English. Additionally, the national languages of the participating countries can also be considered as working languages.

2.4 The wider strategic reference framework

The wider strategic framework, to which Interreg IPA II CBC Programme “Greece-Albania 2014 – 2020” conforms, consists of two over-arching strategies of European importance and two strategic documents of national importance for the two participating countries.

EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region is one of the three EU macro-regional strategies². The proposed strategy – which focuses on areas of (macro) regional mutual interest with high relevance for the Adriatic and Ionian countries – consists of 4 thematic pillars:

- Driving innovative maritime and marine growth
- Connecting the region
- Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment
- Increasing regional attractiveness

The strategy also defines two cross-cutting themes which define each and every pillar:

- Research, innovation and SME development, and
- Capacity Building.

Europe 2020 Strategy

The European Union’s ten-year development strategy 'Europe 2020' is not just a tool for dealing with the recent economic crisis, which still affects many European economies, but aims to address the shortcomings of the EU development model and to create the necessary conditions for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

IPA II CBC Programme “Greece-Albania 2014 – 2020” contributes to the achievement of the key objectives for smart growth, sustainable development and inclusive growth as follows:

- Smart growth: by supporting the construction of key transport & ICT infrastructure, business infrastructure and business services, and tourism development – which is a key sector for all cross-border productive systems.
- Sustainable growth: by supporting the construction of water & waste management infrastructure and by promoting environmental protection, adaptation to climate change and risk prevention, sustainable use of natural resources and use of RES

Inclusive growth is supported only indirectly, as there is no specific objective dealing with social integration, and human resource issues. Instead the programme adopts the approach that these issues will be dealt with through the active promotion of economic growth.

² The other two being the [EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region \(EUSBSR\)](#), and the [EU Strategy for the Danube Region \(EUSDR\)](#)

2.5 Programme Strategy-Selected Thematic Objectives and Specific Objectives

Within this framework, the priorities which constitute the policy outline for the convergence in the area of intervention of the specific Programme are:

- Priority 1: Promotion of the environment sustainable transport & public infrastructure
- Priority 2: Boosting the local economy
- Priority 3: Technical Assistance

Priority Axis 1 will be implemented by two thematic priorities focusing on:

1. Thematic Priority (c): Promoting sustainable transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities
2. Thematic Priority (b): Protecting the environment & promoting climate change adaptation & mitigation, risk prevention & management

Priority Axis 2 will be implemented by two thematic priorities focusing on:

1. Thematic Priority (d): Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage
2. Thematic Priority (g): Enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment through, inter alia, promotion and support to entrepreneurship, in particular small and medium sized enterprises, and development of local cross-border markets and internationalisation

The following Table depicts the Priority Axes, Thematic Priorities and Specific objectives of the Programme.

Table 2: Priority Axes, Thematic Priorities and Specific objectives of the Programme

Priority axis	Thematic priority	Specific objective(s)
1	(c): Promoting sustainable transport, information and communications networks & services and investing in cross-border water, waste & energy systems and facilities	1.1: Increase the capacity of cross border infrastructure in transport, water & waste management
	(b): Protecting the environment & promoting climate change adaptation & mitigation, risk prevention & management	1.2: Increase the effectiveness of environmental protection & sustainable use of natural resources
		1.3: Increase energy-efficiency and the use of RES.
		1.4: Improve the effectiveness of risk prevention and disaster management with a focus on forest fires
2	(d): Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	2.1: Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area.
	(g): Enhancing competitiveness the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), trade and investment	2.2: Improve cross-border capacity to support entrepreneurship, business survival and competitiveness

The programme’s strategy is described in detail in the Interreg IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020”.

2.6 Actions to be supported under the specific objectives (by thematic priority)

A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries.

Thematic priority (c)	Promoting sustainable transport, information and communications networks & services and investing in cross-border water, waste & energy systems and facilities
<p>Specific Objective: 1.1 Increase the capacity of cross border infrastructure in transport, water & waste management.</p> <p>Indicative Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning/construction/rehabilitation of water mgmt/supply infrastructure and drinking water quality monitoring systems • Measures to reduce non-revenue water (NRW), i.e. drinking water produced and lost before it reaches the customer (e.g. advanced water metering, unauthorized consumption controls, CADD & GIS, SCADA systems, flow monitoring, leak detection equipment, etc) • Planning, construction and rehabilitation of border crossings; planning, construction and rehabilitation of road network; • Planning, construction and rehabilitation of maritime port infrastructure, replacement/improvement of port superstructure and construction of multi-modal facilities; • Smart transport systems and ICT applications in the transport and flow of people sector; • Monitoring of the emissions from transport activities, such as shipping and the impact on the port cities and other shore areas; • Planning, construction and rehabilitation of small wastewater management infrastructure and water quality monitoring systems; • Planning, construction and supply activities for sustainable solid waste management infrastructure/actions, including recycling and composting. <p>Main Target Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Local population and visitors; • Enterprises (SMEs) <p>Specific Territories Targeted: the entire cross border area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of beneficiaries: • National, regional and local authorities; • Regional and sector development agencies; • Research and academic institutes; • Non-governmental organizations, non-profit-organizations, and cross-border 	

cooperation networks.

<p>Thematic priority (b)</p>	<p>Protecting the environment & promoting climate change adaptation & mitigation, risk prevention & management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.</p>
<p>Specific Objective 1.2: Increase the effectiveness of environmental protection & sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p>Indicative Types of Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint initiatives for environmental protection (planning and small-scale investment); • Actions for the restoration, protection and efficient management of natural protected areas (e.g. Natura sites), with a focus on marine endangered species; planning for adaptation of ecosystems to climate change;; • Joint initiatives for monitoring and preventing air pollution (including initiatives for monitoring and preventing harmful air pollutants such as PM and NO2 in order to help in reaching or maintaining compliance with current EU air quality legislation), ground pollution, water pollution and usage (as per Directive 2000/60/EC) and marine pollution with a special focus on coordinated maritime plans for prevention of marine pollution and protection of bathing waters; <p>Main Target Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local population • National, regional and local authorities <p>Specific Territories Targeted: the entire cross-border area</p> <p>Types of beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Regional and sector development agencies; • Research and academic institutes; • Non-governmental organizations, non-profit-organizations, and cross-border cooperation networks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Objective 1.3: Increase energy-efficiency and the use of RES. 	

- Indicative Types of Actions:
 - Small scale (pilot) investments in energy efficiency and use of RES in public buildings and public spaces;
 - Joint public awareness initiatives for energy efficiency and the use of RES in residences and businesses.
 - Main Target Groups:
 - Local population
 - National, regional and local authorities
 - Specific Territories Targeted: the entire cross-border area
 - Types of beneficiaries:
 - National, regional and local authorities;
 - **Specific Objective 1.4:** Improve the effectiveness of risk prevention and disaster management with a focus on forest fires.
 - Indicative Types of Actions:
 - Two types of actions are promoted under this priority axis to contribute to the Specific Objective (hard investments in equipment, systems, etc and soft interventions):
 - Investments for increasing disaster resilience/institutional capacity (equipment, vehicles, small infrastructure, etc);
 - Joint early warning and disaster management systems;
 - Small scale construction works for risk prevention and response to natural hazards and the consequences of climate change (including interventions for risk preventions in natural and cultural heritage sites);
 - Joint public awareness initiatives (including risk communication, information sharing training, etc) related to natural and man-made disaster management (civil protection) covering all public groups (including vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, etc);
 - Joint activities for improving the planning, cooperation and response capacity for disaster management (e.g. joint strategies and common civil protection plans, joint risk assessments and mapping, climate adaptation plans, etc) covering all public groups (including vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities);
 - Software for the prediction and management of: pest outbreaks, epidemics, severe natural phenomena (e.g. hail, waterspouts, etc) and protocols for their treatment.
- Main Target Groups:
- Local population and visitors;

- National, regional and local authorities

Specific Territories Targeted: the entire cross border area

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Regional and sector development agencies;
- Research and academic institutes;
- Non-governmental organizations, non-profit-organizations, and cross-border cooperation networks.

Thematic priority (d)	Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage
<p>Specific Objective 2.1: Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area.</p> <p>Indicative Types of Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration schemes between businesses and non-businesses (e.g. museums) in the tourism/culture area such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ formal and informal business schemes between accommodation facilities, convention centers, manufacturing businesses, transport facilities, cultural facilities, etc – in order to introduce integrated tourist destinations in the cross-border area; ○ tourist branding of areas, branding of “green”, and “traditional” products respecting and promoting the cross-border area cultural and natural heritage, etc. 2. Development of business support services such as information and communications technology systems (e.g. web-platforms, information and communications technology applications for accommodations, virtual tours for archaeological sites, mobile apps for hiking, etc), business consulting, etc to support tourist economic activity. 3. Capacity-building actions in the field of cultural preservation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ knowledge transfer and exchange of good practices in the area of preservation of natural and cultural heritage with pilot applications; ○ joint development and pilot testing of innovative techniques in the area of cultural heritage preservation, including training; 	

4. Rehabilitation/protection/promotion of cultural assets of cross-border significance including monuments (such as UNESCO sites), museums and other cultural facilities but mobile assets as well (e.g. art, special collections, etc.); rehabilitation/protection/adaptation/promotion for eco-tourism and tourism-for-all usage of natural assets of cross-border significance.
5. Cross-border area-wide cultural initiatives such as:
 - promotional events of cultural resources and joint actions promoting common cultural identity;
 - actions enhancing the awareness of cross-border area cultural heritage;
 - cross-border exchanges of cultural events (including art and archaeological exhibitions).

Main Target Groups: cross-border area population and visitors, tourists, area businesses

Specific Territories Targeted: the entire cross-border area will be targeted

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with natural and cultural heritage, and regional development planning;
- Protected area management bodies and bodies responsible for environmental protection, cultural asset management bodies, museums, art collections and other cultural organizations;
- Non-governmental organizations, non-profit-organizations and other civil society associations dealing with natural resources, and cultural issues.
- Collective professional organizations of the tourism industry.

<p>Thematic priority (g)</p>	<p>Enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment through, inter alia, promotion and support to entrepreneurship, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, and development of local cross-border markets and internationalisation.</p>
<p>Specific Objective 2.2: Improve cross-border capacity to support entrepreneurship, business survival and competitiveness.</p>	
<p>Indicative Types of Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of new and improvement/modernization of existing business-hosting 	

facilities such as:

- business incubators and
 - business support facilities such as market places, exhibition halls, outlets, depots and logistics centres, laboratories or other technological installations, etc.
2. Development of business support services such as information and communications technology systems (e.g. web-platforms), business consulting, etc to support cross-border economic activity.
 3. Development of services fostering productivity such as:
 - business-specific training programmes for new and existing employees, including on-the-job training and apprenticeships; and
 - actions facilitating the introduction of innovation into the production process (such as transfer of intellectual property rights, and knowledge transfer from research institutes to businesses, introduction of organizational innovation, etc.)
 4. Creation of clusters or other types of “networks” (e.g. “value-chains”) for the achievement of cost-savings, common research and product development, common export promotion, etc. including networking with research institutes.
 5. Joint or common (horizontal) export support services for cross-border businesses and competitiveness facilitation (e.g. product standards, electronic catalogues, e-tendering, e-invoicing, packaging, labeling, transport identification, merchandise tracking, participation to exhibitions, business-promotion events, common web-sites, etc).
 6. Cross-border business-plans with pilot applications of cross-border collaborative schemes between individual businesses and/or sectors/sub-sectors targeting:
 - cross-border trade between area businesses (e.g. trade in locally produced food products);
 - establishment of new cross-border “business organization models” (e.g. contract farming or partnerships between producers and consumers, “modular or chain production networks”, etc)

Priority Sectors:

- agro-food sector, including aquaculture
- ICT development
- Health/wellness-based economy

Main Target Groups: businesses, people intending to exercise entrepreneurial activity in the area (including the currently unemployed)

Specific Territories Targeted: the entire cross-border area will be targeted

Types of beneficiaries:

- National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support;
- Business chambers, non-governmental organizations, non-profit-organizations, cross-border networks and other business associations dealing with business support in the cross-border area;
- Chambers, collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals participating in the agro-food value-chain;
- National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for business support;
- Universities and research institutes in the cross-border area;
- Training institutions in the cross-border area.

2.7 Principles adopted for the formulation and orientation of the GR-AL programme.

2.7.1 Sustainable development

Environmental protection and sustainable development is one of the 2 priority axes of the programme reserving half of the programme’s resources. This strategic orientation is also enhanced by selection priorities in the second priority axis which targets the promotion of entrepreneurship. Even though the second axis refers to all economic activities, it concentrates on a priority basis on two sectors which are very important for the cross-border area economy:

- the agro-food industry; and more importantly
- on sustainable tourism, which is supported through 3 different intervention groups.

Furthermore, sustainable development is promoted through the guiding principles for the selection of operations under the second priority axis which include among others:

- contribution to resource efficiency (e.g. energy efficiency, renewable energy use, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, efficient water supply, waste-water treatment and water reuse, waste avoidance and recycling etc.).

- contribution to a sustainable environment (operations under this IPA programme will not harm the environment)
- major infrastructure initiatives will be accompanied by a solid environmental impact analysis.
- contribution to the compliance with air quality legislation and, in particular, air quality measures under Directive 2008/50/EC (e.g. reductions of PM and NO₂, which, in contrast to carbon dioxide, are directly harmful to the health of citizens, ecosystems, crops and buildings).

2.7.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

There is no specific priority axis dealing with equal opportunities directly in the OP, even though many interventions under the second axis will benefit social groups more at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Equal opportunities are addressed by the programme more on the level of the guiding principles for the selection of operations which include:

- For both priority axis 1& 2:
 - All infrastructure and media (including electronic media) projects shall meet the requirements of the General Regulation 1303/2013, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities.
 - all infrastructure and construction works funded under this programme – new or existing - will be made accessible to people with disabilities (mobility-impaired, hearing-impaired, and blind) unless the activity which the infrastructure and/or construction works serve is not accessible itself to people with disabilities (e.g. climbing range).
 - all information and communications technology systems funded under this programme – new or existing - will be made accessible to people with disabilities (hearing-impaired, and blind).
 - all training actions funded under this programme – new or existing - will be conducted in facilities accessible to people with disabilities (mobility-impaired, hearing-impaired, and blind) unless they are on-the-job trainings and the business/facility where they are conducted is not itself accessible.

- all outreach/publicity activities funded under this programme will be made accessible to people with disabilities (mobility-impaired, hearing-impaired, and blind).
- For priority axis 2:
 - individuals from special groups (for example young, females, ethnic groups etc) more at risk of unemployment, poverty and/or exclusion will be given priority for self-employment actions funded under this programme.
 - business owners from special groups (young, females, ethnic groups) more at risk of unemployment, poverty and/or exclusion will be given priority for business support actions funded under this programme.

2.7.3 Equality between men and women

The programme does not specifically target equality between men and women, even though it does contribute to it indirectly through the promotion of female entrepreneurship in the second priority axis.

It is however sensitive to gender issues in terms of monitoring and evaluation by:

- counting the % of women participating in interventions; and
- calculating the % of support allocated to women – where relevant.

2.8 Programme Management – Implementation

In line with the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014, Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 establishing an instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA II), Regulation (EU, Euratom) No.966/2012, Delegated Regulation (EU) No.1268/2012 and the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the IPA II Cross Border Cooperation Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” is going to be implemented under the shared management.

2.8.1 The management structure of the Programme

This section describes the implementation structure of the Programme and, specifically, bodies acting as Managing Authority (MA), Certifying Authority (CA), Audit Authority (AA) and Joint Secretariat (JS). It also defines the tasks of each of the involved bodies, including the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) and describes the relations between the different bodies in the various processes necessary for the Programme implementation.

The structures of the programme are:

- The **Managing Authority (MA)**, responsible for managing and implementing the Cross-border Programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and for carrying out the functions set out in Articles 72 and 125 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Article 37 of the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and article 23 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. The Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes of the Ministry of Economy, Development, and Tourism, in Thessaloniki, Greece is designated as the Managing Authority of the Interreg IPA II CBC Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020”.
- The **Certifying Authority (CA)**, is responsible for drawing and submitting to the European Commission certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment as well as for receiving payments from the European Commission. The Certifying Authority will be the body responsible for making payments to the lead beneficiaries for the programme according to the provisions of article 21, par.2 of Regulation No.1299/2013 and article 132 of Regulation No 1303/2013. The Paying Authority for the CSF, the Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund at the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism Greece is designated as the Certifying Authority of the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020”.

- The **Audit Authority (AA)**, is responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme, according to Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. The Financial Audit Committee (EDEL) at the Hellenic Republic /Ministry of Economy/General Accounting Office – General Secretariat of Fiscal Policy is designated as the Audit Authority for the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme. The Audit Authority of the programme shall be assisted by a Group of Auditors comprising of a representative from each Country participating in the operational programme.
- The **Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)**, is set up by the programme’s participating countries on an equal basis, in order to oversee the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the cross-border programme according to the provisions set in Articles 49 and 110 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and the Article 38 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 .
- The **Joint Steering Committee (JSC)** shall be set up operating under the responsibility of the Joint Monitoring Committee for selecting the operations to be funded under the cooperation programme. According to Article 12(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. The joint steering committee shall report to the joint monitoring committee.
- The **Joint Secretariat (JS)** assists the Managing Authority, National Authority / Operating Structure, the Joint Monitoring Committee and when appropriate the Audit Authority and Certifying Authority in carrying out their respective duties in line with Article 52 Regulation (EU) No.447/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 [point (a)(iv) of Article 8(4) and 23 (2).

The joint secretariat will have an antenna office in Saranda, in Albania.

2.9 Financial arrangements

2.9.1 Programme funding

Approved on 30/7/2015 by the European Commission Decision C(2015)5482 Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece –Albania 2014-2020” is a cross border cooperation Programme co-financed by the European Union under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) with a total budget of 42.312.029 €. This amount consists of 35.965.222 € Union Support and 6.346.807 € national counterpart.

The national counterpart rates for Greece and for Albania are 15%.

2.9.2 Justification for the financial allocation

The total Union Support of Interreg IPA II cross-border cooperation programme “Greece - Albania 2014-2020” is EUR 35.965.222,00.

The estimated budget allocation corresponds to the importance of each thematic priority for the cross border area, as it was adjusted in order to account for the varying cost of typical interventions under each specific objective. More specifically:

Priority axis 1. Promotion of the environment, sustainable transport and public infrastructure (thematic priority b & c)

50% of the programme total budget is allocated to this priority axis which contributed both to sustainable growth (directly) and to smart growth (indirectly through the development/upgrade of transport and information and communications technology applications): 40% to infrastructure in the fields of transport, information and communications technology and environment (Infrastructure interventions tend to gather a larger share of resources due to the higher unit cost of interventions) and 10% is devoted to environmental protection soft actions.

Priority axis 2. Boosting the local economy (thematic priority d & g)

40% of the programme total budget is allocated to this priority axis which is entirely focused on economic development and smart growth: 25% is concentrated to the promotion of tourism - especially through the preservation/promotion of natural and cultural heritage – as this sector presents a comparative advantage for the cross-border area and 15% is devoted to across-the-board improvements in entrepreneurship (such as hosting facilities, business services, clusters, etc).

Priority axis 3. Technical assistance

10% of the programme total budget is allocated to technical assistance as per regulations.

2.9.3 Financial Plan / Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme

The following table depicts the budget allocation per priority axis and thematic priority.

Table 3: Budget allocation per priority axis and thematic priority

Priority axis	Thematic priorities	Union support (in EUR)	National Public Fund (in EUR)	Total Funding (in EUR)
P.A.1. Promotion of the environment sustainable transport & public infrastructure	Thematic priority (c). Promoting sustainable transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross- border water, waste and energy systems and facilities	14.386.089	2.538.722	16.924.811
	Thematic priority (b). Protecting the environment & promoting climate change adaptation & mitigation, risk prevention & management	3.596.522	634.681	4.231.203
P.A.2. Boosting the local economy	Thematic priority (d). Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	8.991.306	1.586.702	10.578.008
	Thematic priority (g). Enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment through, inter alia, promotion and support to entrepreneurship, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, and development of local cross- border markets and internationalisation	5.394.783	952.021	6.346.804
P.A.3. Technical assistance	Technical assistance	3.596.522	634.681	4.231.203

TOTAL		35.965.222	6.346.807	42.312.029
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3 PROJECT GUIDE

3.1 Introduction - Project application guidelines

The Project guide includes information about:

- ➔ General Eligibility Criteria
- ➔ The development and selection of operations;
- ➔ The development of a project idea/proposal;
- ➔ The submission procedure;
- ➔ Project Partnership;
- ➔ Eligibility of Expenditure and Budget Categories;
- ➔ Contracting by beneficiaries
- ➔ Filling in the Application Form;
- ➔ Evaluation procedure
- ➔ Information and Publicity Requirements
- ➔ Project Implementation Guidelines

It is advised that those interested in submitting a proposal under the Programme, examine carefully – in addition to the present Manual - the Programme Document which is available on the website of the Cooperation Programme at www.greece-albania.eu, www.interreg.gr and www.integrimi.gov.al.

Moreover, in preparing their proposal, interested parties may contact the Joint Secretariat (hereinafter JS) hosted in Thessaloniki and/or the Antenna Office in Saranda to get support in planning their proposals in accordance with the strategic aims of the Programme.

3.2 General Eligibility Criteria

The Regulations defining the general eligibility criteria are the following:

Legal Framework:

- Council Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II),
- Council Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II),
- Commission Implementing Regulation No 447/2014 on specific rules for Implementing Regulation 231/2014 on IPA II,
- Regulation No 1299/2013 that lay down the general rules governing the support of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to the European territorial cooperation goal,

- Regulation No 1303/2013 laying down the general provisions for ERDF and other ESIF
- Other Legal Framework documents related to the general rules of eligibility are the following:
- Greek national legislation, as in force
 - Ministerial Decision for the Management and Control Systems of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective Operational Programmes, as in force (concerns Greek beneficiaries, see annex)
 - Albanian national legislation, as in force

All applicants are strongly recommended to consult these documents before submitting a proposal and start building their projects.

3.3 Procedures for call of proposals

The Joint Secretariat prepares the material for the call for proposals and submits it to the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority examines the material and when accepted submits it to the Joint Monitoring Committee for approval.

Then, the Managing Authority shall launch the call for proposals, informing potential beneficiaries about financing, the particular conditions and requirements applicable to their eligibility under the call, the criteria and the procedure for selecting operations, the main obligations to be undertaken by beneficiaries in case that an operation is selected for funding under the cross border cooperation programme etc.

The evaluation criteria aim to maximise the result-oriented approach to be applied by the programme for projects able to deliver concrete and visible outputs and results, in response to well identified challenges affecting the programme area and addressing development needs in an integrated manner.

Potential beneficiaries prepare a proposal in cooperation with the lead beneficiary, who submits it to the Joint Secretariat and receives a reference number.

With respect to the launching of the call for proposals, the joint secretariat shall check the proposals and make certain that:

1. proposals are submitted within the deadline;
2. all standard documents required are completed;
3. beneficiaries are eligible.

It shall then carry out an evaluation of proposals based on the operations selection criteria, approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee and submit all the material to the managing

authority. After the managing authority makes sure that the procedure for evaluating proposals was carried out in accordance with the terms of the call for proposals and the approved operations selection criteria, it submits to the Joint Steering Committee:

- ✓ the project fiches of the submitted project proposals;
- ✓ a ranking list of the evaluated project proposals;
- ✓ all evaluation forms.

In evaluating proposals, the joint secretariat may be assisted by external experts, selected in agreement with the participating countries.

The joint steering committee conduct the procedure for the selection of the operations to be funded, and report to the Joint Monitoring Committee that has the ultimate responsibility for the selection of operations.

Following the selection of the operations by JMC, the Managing Authority shall contract the lead beneficiaries of the selected operations.

All projects receiving funds have to meet the following quality requirements:

- Cross-border relevance;
- Partnership relevance;
- Concrete outputs and measurable results;
- Sustainable outputs and results;
- Coherent approach;
- Sound project communication strategy and tools;
- Effective management;
- Sound budget.

Different types of calls are expected to be launched: thematic calls, targeted calls, ordinary calls, calls for strategic projects, etc. As a general principle, the Interreg IPA II CBC Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” is committed, across all priorities, to sustainable development and promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, which will also be reflected in the evaluation criteria.

3.4 How to develop a project idea/proposal

The following chapter provides potential applicants with the essential information that they need to start developing partnerships, as well as the fundamental requirements which have to form the basis of each project application.

Do you have an idea for a cross border project?

Project development is the phase in which an idea is translated into specific objectives and activities, and is presented as a proposal. The starting point in defining a project idea is to identify the need. At the idea stage, every project developer needs to combine the programme’s priorities with what the regions on both sides really need and should take into account the following stages/documents:

Programme documents - The Programme includes a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme area, as well as the sorts of actions that the programme is willing to finance. Try to assess how the project idea fits into the programme context through a careful study of its priorities and main indicative interventions. Therefore, a careful study of the programme document, as well as other strategic documents (national and/or regional development plans, specific local policies, other field-specific strategies or guidelines, etc) is crucial for the applicants in developing good project ideas.

Needs assessment - A background assessment of needs with particular focus on the target groups, addressing specific problems, will definitely support project design. In this capacity any current situation analysis should offer important insights.

Stakeholders - Involve key stakeholders. Their views – as end users – may contribute to further develop the project idea given that they have a crucial role in using the results of the project. Over time and with the input of beneficiaries, the idea will be developed to include activities and objectives.

What makes a “good beneficiary”?

Finding beneficiaries is not the difficult part in developing a partnership. Finding the right beneficiaries is the main challenge. With the right ones involved in a cross-border partnership, a project idea - documented in a clear and simple way - can be turned into a unified set of actions, well targeted to the identified needs.

The development of a partnership is not an easy task as - before it becomes solid and efficient – it involves a number of stages such as:

1. **Networking actions:** The initial stage is identifying the beneficiaries, meeting them and learning about their interests, needs and skills. Make a choice based on their experience, their knowledge and specialisation of the chosen field, their experience in developing and implementing relevant project ideas, their complementarities, which will support and guarantee exchange of knowhow, their shared needs, their knowledge of the Programme area, their financial capacity (they must also have the capacity to ensure the temporary availability of funds until they are reimbursed by the

Programme, as well as the capacity to ensure their financing for non-eligible expenditures of the project), their relevant institutional status and their commitment even from the very first steps of project generation and development. Face to face meetings prove to be of great benefit. A relevant procedure will be presented during the Info Days for the calls.

2. **Communicating the project idea:** Make a structured presentation to potential beneficiaries and to key stakeholders to help them understand the purpose, objectives, activities and context. Let them assess and decide whether they want to get involved.
3. **Project development:** Challenging them by letting them shape the objectives and the expected results, so as to reflect their own needs. Consultation with beneficiaries is crucial, given that their early involvement in the design of the project will ensure that it will be based on joint/common needs, skills and interests.
4. **Ensure beneficiaries' commitment:** A beneficiary that is not committed to the project creates a serious risk of project failure, not only during the development phase, but also during the implementation phase, in case it is approved. It is important to define actions and allocate responsibilities to meet joint objectives. Beneficiaries should be flexible to negotiate with the other members of the partnership about their roles and responsibilities, in order to achieve common understanding, ownership and commitment. A realistic and achievable project plan increases beneficiaries' commitment. Identify what each beneficiary brings to the project and what expects to get from it.

The right time to involve potential beneficiaries in the development of a project idea is **as soon as possible** given that the project should be a combination of needs and contributions of all the beneficiaries involved. Participating in a cross border cooperation project implies that the project idea reflects the needs of all beneficiaries.

Be careful: check the rules on participation and eligibility before approaching beneficiaries.

How to define the content?

Do not forget that Programme requirements and project idea have to be in line. There is no point in developing a project if it does not fit in the Programme. Projects need to collaborate on cross border activities that directly relate to addressing the priorities and objectives as set out in the operational programme.

Steps to follow:

1. The project needs to strongly demonstrate its cross border focus and show the true spirit of collaboration. **All beneficiaries shall co-operate in:** development and implementation. In addition, they **shall cooperate in at least one of the following ways:** staffing and/or financing. It should be noted, however, that generally projects are encouraged to cooperate closely by fulfilling all four of them. Keep in mind that the aim of cross border cooperation is to integrate areas divided by national borders that face common problems requiring common solutions.
2. The project should take into account one or more horizontal principles of the Programme - promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, promotion of sustainable development, and promotion of equality between men and women.
3. If the project proposal includes infrastructure, it should take into account the Member state’ s risk assessments made in compliance with EU Civil protection legislation (Decision 1313/2013/EC on the Union civil protection mechanism) for the evaluation of the project’s vulnerability to disaster risks, including longer-term expected effects from climate change.
4. All project proposals should meet the requirements of the General Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EAFRD and the, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities.
5. The project should complement and not duplicate other projects being carried out in the Programme area. Follow-on projects, financed from the past INTERREG programme is not enough. Projects need to show how they build on past experiences by bringing something new.
6. The project has to be realistic rather than attractive. Objectives should be as concrete, as quantifiable and as realistic as possible.
7. Map out how objectives could be realised through a detailed action plan. The more precisely the goals are formulated, the more effectively the project runs.
8. Demonstrate common added value. In practice, this means that the issue addressed is of such a nature that it cannot be satisfactorily tackled within one country alone and that cooperation is necessary to improve the quality of results compared to that which would be achieved with one beneficiary working alone. Results can also be of relevance to the wider cooperation area and can potentially be transferred to other parts of the region.

9. Have regular contact with the Programme management structures – Managing Authority / Joint Secretariat and Albanian Operating Structure for clarifications on Programme priorities/objectives/activities.

Keep in mind that a cross border partnership is not enough: ideas and activities must be cross border too.

Attention!

Applicants must pay particular attention to the characteristics of each thematic priority taken into consideration in the formulation of the guiding principles for the selection of operations of the Programme. The project proposals should fulfil completely the obligatory requirements set in the evaluation criteria of the Call for proposal in order to be ranked for funding.

3.5 Submission procedure

In order to submit a project proposal, Applicants must refer to the Applicant’s Package and to all relevant documents of the respective call for proposals. Project Proposals should be submitted according to the guidelines provided in the respective call for Proposals.

3.6 Project Partnership

3.6.1 Eligibility of Beneficiaries

In order to be eligible for co-funding, the beneficiaries must fall under the categories specified in the specific Call for project proposals.

In order to be considered for funding, all beneficiaries should ensure that they are entitled for public funding. The managerial adequacy of beneficiaries will be examined through the Project Selection Criteria.

3.6.2 Beneficiaries’ cooperation

A project should include at least one beneficiary from each participating country (Greece and Albania) and should co-operate in the following ways:

- **Development of the operation**

All beneficiaries should contribute to the development of the project. Beneficiaries should define how the project will operate, i.e. development of objectives and outcomes, budget, timing and responsibilities for work packages and tasks required to achieve the objectives.

Beneficiaries should identify the knowledge and experience that each one of them brings to the project, as well as what each beneficiaries expects to get from the project.

- **Implementation of the operation**

The Lead Beneficiary should bear the overall responsibility for the project. All beneficiaries should undertake responsibilities for different parts of the implementation.

Each beneficiary responsible for a work package should coordinate and ensure that planned activities are carried out, interim targets are met and unexpected challenges to implementation are dealt with.

Several beneficiaries may contribute to each work package.

In addition, the beneficiaries shall cooperate in either one of the following ways or both:

- **Staffing of the operation**

All beneficiaries should have a defined role and allocate staff to fulfil this role. Staff members should coordinate their activities with others involved in the activity or work package, and exchange information regularly.

There should be no unnecessary duplication of functions in different beneficiary organisations.

- **Financing of the operation**

The project should have a budget with funding allocated to beneficiaries according to the activities they are carrying out (the budget split should reflect beneficiary responsibilities).

The budget should include annual spending targets and spending targets per work package.

3.6.3 Responsibilities of the Lead Beneficiary and of Other Beneficiaries.

For each operation, a lead beneficiary shall be appointed by the beneficiaries among themselves (Article 40(1) of the Commission Regulation No 447/2014, Article 13(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013). The Lead Beneficiary:

- (i) shall lay down the arrangements with the other 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 according to Article 27(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

- (i) If the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries, the participating country, on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located, shall reimburse the managing authority any amounts that were unduly paid to that beneficiary;
 - (ii) The arrangements co-signed with the other beneficiaries will include and describe the procedures relating to the receipt of the public support by all beneficiaries. The public support from IPA II should be received as quickly as possible and in full.
- (ii) shall assume responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the entire operation;
 - (iii) shall ensure that the expenditure presented by all beneficiaries participating in the operation has been incurred for the purpose of implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between those beneficiaries and is in accordance with the document provided by the managing authority pursuant to Article 40(6) of the Commission Regulation No 447/2014;
 - (iv) shall verify that the expenditure presented by other beneficiaries participating in the operation has been verified by a controller;

Each beneficiary participating in the operation shall assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure which it has declared.

Indicatively, the beneficiaries' responsibilities entail that they:

- Ensure the implementation of the project activities under their responsibility according to the project plan and the contract signed with the Beneficiary;
- Cooperate with the other project beneficiaries in the implementation of the project, the reporting and the monitoring, as deemed necessary. Key project conclusions, changes to project strategy and other important decisions should be made jointly;
- Prepare and submit to the Lead Beneficiary financial and progress reports, including all supporting documentation, to be used for the verification of expenses per each of the reporting periods established for the project, and ensure full cooperation and assistance, for the timely and accurate performance of verification;
- Assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure they have declared, and repay the Lead Beneficiary the amounts unduly received.

3.7 Project Budget

The projects’ budget range is specified in each call for proposals. No state aid regimes are foreseen.

3.8 Eligible Expenditure Budget Categories of the Programme

3.8.1 Eligible expenditures

As a general rule, expenditures shall be eligible for funding if:

- they have been incurred and paid out within the time frame in which expenditure can take place. Under no circumstances can the final date of eligibility of expenditure exceed the 31st of December 2023.
- they are directly related to the project either for the development or implementation of the project and they are planned in the approved project budget;
- they follow the “real cost” principle; costs which have been actually incurred and paid by the project beneficiaries and they can be supported by original invoices or other accounting documents of equivalent probative value;
- they have been incurred in the programme area of the Interreg IPA II CBC “Greece-Albania 2014-2020”;
- they are in line with national, EU and programme level rules;
- they are in compliance with the principles of efficiency, economy and expediency of all actions. Especially the cost/benefit ratio has to be ensured.

3.8.2 Project Budget Categories

The project expenditures under the Programme are divided into six Budget categories. These Budget categories are:

- A. Staff;
- B. Office and administration;
- C. Travel and accommodation;
- D. External expertise and services;
- E. Equipment;
- F. Infrastructure and Works.

For each Budget category, a description of the expenditure that falls under the Budget category is provided. More concrete guidance about the verification process and the audit trail to verify these expenditures (necessary documents, invoices etc) for each Budget Category will be provided in the **Guidance on Management Verification document**.

Staff Costs

Staff costs consist of costs for staff members employed by the beneficiary organisation, as listed in the application form and who are working full time or part time on the implementation of the project.

Expenditure on costs of staff members employed by the beneficiary organisation, who are formally engaged to work on the project:

- a. full-time
- b. part-time
 - part-time with a fixed percentage of time dedicated to the beneficiary per month
 - part-time with a flexible number of hours worked on the project per month
- c. contracted on an hourly basis

"Staff costs" includes staff costs of employees in line with the employment/work contract, and costs of natural persons working for the beneficiary organisation under a contract other than an employment/work contract and receiving salary payments.

General principles

- Staff costs **must relate to activities which the beneficiary organisation would not carry out if the project was not undertaken.**
- Overheads and any other office and administration costs cannot be included under this budget category.
- Daily allowances and any other travel and accommodation costs cannot be included under this budget category.

The following options for calculating staff costs are available in this Programme:

1. Staff costs calculated as up to **20 % flat rate of direct costs** other than staff costs
2. Staff costs calculated **on a real cost basis**

Attention!

The option selected applies on a beneficiary level for the entire project period. (i.e. Each beneficiary should select either the flat rate or the real costs calculation option which will remain unchanged through the entire project period). This must be declared in the Application form in the Partnership Section.

- **Option 1: Staff costs calculated as 20 % flat rate of direct costs**

For this option the calculation of staff costs is based on a flat rate of 20% of the direct costs other than the staff costs. The eligible amount for staff cost is equal to 20% of the total eligible amount under all the other Budget categories excluding office and administration expenditure if calculated **also as flat rate and not as real costs.**

Example: Project X – Beneficiary Y calculates staff costs using the 20% flat rate option:

Table 4: Staff costs: Example of flat rate calculation

	Travel and accommodation	10.000€
	External expertise and services	20.000€
	Equipment	30.000€
A	Total Direct Costs	60.000€
B	Flat rate for calculation of Staff Cost	20%
C	Eligible Staff Costs (A*B)	12.000€
D	Total Project budget (A+C)	72.000€

Attention!

When the 20% flat rate option is applied, it has to be proved that the project beneficiary has at least one permanent employee (e.g. by providing a registration at the social insurance agency or other related documents) to be appointed for the project.

Attention!

The flat rate is linked to the eligibility and verification of other direct costs. Should financial corrections be necessary (e.g. due to deficiencies in procurements) or in case of discounts in tenders leading to smaller eligible direct costs on a project level, the basis for calculation of the flat rate will reduce correspondingly and this will result in a **lower** amount of staff costs that can be **verified and co-funded.**

- **Option 2: Staff costs calculated on a real cost basis**

Using this method the beneficiary will claim the actual costs they have incurred from employing staff who work on the project. According to Article 3 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014, expenditure on staff costs shall consist of gross employment costs of staff employed by the beneficiary in one of the following ways:

- a. full time; (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, and working fully on the project;)
- b. part-time with a fixed percentage of time worked per month; (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, working partly for the project on a fixed percentage;)
- c. part-time with a flexible number of hours³ worked per month (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, working partly for the project on a number of hours per month) or
- d. on an hourly basis (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, who does not have a fixed number of hours per month and is paid at an hourly rate).

Staff costs for each Beneficiary cannot exceed 50% of the total Beneficiary’s Budget, regardless of the calculation option selected.

The Audit trail and verification process for each one of the above, mentioned categories will be defined in the Guidance on Management Verification document.

Attention!

1. Staff costs do not cover the expenses of externals; externals should be budgeted under the “External Expertise and services” category.
2. Overheads and any other office and administration costs related to staff costs are included in the Office and administration (O&A) expenditure.
3. Daily allowances and any other travel and accommodation costs related to staff costs are included in the “Travel and Accommodation” budget category.

³The Hourly rate shall be calculated by dividing the latest documented Gross Annual Employment costs by 1720 hours.

Office and Administration expenditure

They cover operating and administrative expenses of the beneficiary organisation that support delivery of project activities. According to regulation 481/2014 the office and administration expenditure shall be limited to the following elements:

- a) office rent
- b) insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g. fire, theft insurances)
- c) utilities (e.g. electricity, heating, water)
- d) office supplies
- e) general accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation
- f) archives
- g) maintenance, cleaning and repairs
- h) security
- i) IT systems
- j) communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards)
- k) bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened
- l) charges for transnational financial transactions

The following options for calculating O&A are available in this **Programme**:

1. Real costs, or
2. Flat rate of (up to) 15% of **staff costs**.

In case the Flat rate calculation method is adopted, the following example provides an overview on the approach.

Example: Project X – Beneficiary Y calculates O&A costs using the 15% flat rate of staff costs option:

Table 5: Office and administration Costs: Example of flat rate calculation

A	Travel and accommodation	10.000€
	External expertise and services	20.000€
	Equipment	30.000€
B	Staff Cost (either on Real Costs basis or Flat Rate)	12.000€
C	Eligible O&A Costs (B*15%)	12.000€*0,15=1.800
D	Total Project budget (A+C)	73.800€

The office and administration expenditure costs for each Beneficiary cannot exceed 4% of the total Beneficiary's Budget, regardless of the calculation option selected. The office and administration expenditure shall be eligible if they are based on the "real cost" principle (related to the implementation of the project), charged to the project proportionately and calculated on a fair and duly justified distribution method.

Attention!

The option selected applies on a beneficiary level for the entire project period. (I.e. Each **beneficiary** should follow either the flat rate or the real costs calculation option which will remain unchanged through the entire project period. This must be declared in the Application form in the **Partnership Section**.

Travel and Accommodation:

This budget category includes all the expenses for each of the project's beneficiary for the travel and accommodation costs of the personnel involved in the project with the condition that they are directly related to the activities of the project. Travel and Accommodation costs involve:

- (a) travel costs (e.g. tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees)
- (b) the costs of meals
- (c) accommodation costs
- (d) visa costs, if necessary
- (e) daily allowances

External Expertise and services

Costs paid on the basis of contracts and against invoices to external service providers, who are sub-contracted to carry out certain tasks of the project.

Pursuant to the Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 Article 6, expenditure on external expertise and service are limited to the following services and expertise provided by an organisation other than the project beneficiary:

- studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);
- training;
- translations;
- IT systems and website development, modifications and updates;

- promotion, communication, publicity or information linked to a project or to a cooperation programme as such;
- financial management;
- services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);
- participation in events (e.g. registration fees);
- verifications under Article 125(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 23(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013;
- certification and audit costs at programme level under Articles 126 and 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013;
- the provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by Union or national law or in a programming document adopted by the monitoring committee;
- travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;
- other specific expertise and services needed for operations

These costs must correspond to current market prices and must be adequately justified.

Equipment expenditure

Costs for the purchasing of equipment are eligible under the condition that equipment is necessary for the project implementation and is foreseen in the approved application form.

There should be an analytical description of the technical specifications and a costing (Specification of Budget Costs).

Infrastructure and Works

Expenditure for Infrastructure and Works are eligible with the condition that the cross-border impact of the investment is demonstrated and the activity is approved in the Application Form.

The contractor cannot be a Beneficiary in the project. The description of the works expenditure should be provided by Bill of Quantities and Cost, submitted together with the Specification of budget cost.

3.8.3 Special Categories of costs and budget limits

Preparation Costs

Costs within the Budget categories "**staff costs, travel and accommodation costs and external expertise and services**", which have been incurred for the preparation of the project, are eligible for funding in accordance to the following conditions:

- If the services or activities were implemented between 1st of January 2014 for the Greek beneficiaries and 22nd of September 2014 for the Albanian beneficiaries and the date of submission of the Application. **The related payments should have been actually made preferably in the first request for verification.**
- If they show direct connection to the approved project and are included in the application form.
- If they **do not exceed the amount of 20.000,00€.**

The following preparation costs are eligible:

- external expertise costs and/ or staff costs for the preparation of the application documents
- joint meetings for the preparation of the project
- travelling expenses directly related to joint meetings, including participation in info days for the call for proposals
- cost analysis and preparatory research reports for the project activities
- external expertise costs for the preparation of technical design studies
- other costs regarding licenses and permits fees, environmental impact assessment studies, technical assessment reports

- Attention!

Office and administration expenditure are not eligible under preparation costs.

Management Costs

Management Deliverables and thus the management costs should be included **only in WP1** of the Application form and concern the cost related to the technical and administrative activities to be implemented for the efficient management and coordination of the project.

- Attention!

The management costs **of each project beneficiary (Work Package 1) should not exceed 10% of the total beneficiary's budget. The following WP1 costs (if applicable) are not calculated in the 10% limit:**

- **Deliverable 1.X.1 "Preparation Activities"** (where X is the number of the beneficiary)
- **Any potential costs for external auditors**

Activities located outside the Programme area and Financing

In principle, all activities of a project should take place **within** the eligible Programme area. If a project plans to finance activities or events outside the eligible Programme area, this is possible in the context of cooperation Programmes and in duly justified cases, provided that Article 44(2b) of Regulation (EU) No.447/2014 is respected. If activities (including travel and accommodation) and/ or events are planned outside the Programme area, the following conditions need to be satisfied:

- a. the activity and/ or event are for the benefit of the Programme area;
- b. the activity and/ or event are essential for the implementation of the project;
- c. the implementation and/ or the relevance of the activity and/ or the event is included in the approved Application Form.

Attention!

All activities implemented outside the Programme area should be described in a single dedicated WP in the Application form.

For the cases of beneficiaries and activities outside the Programme area the Rules applying are summarised in the following table:

Beneficiaries / activities of the Project		Location of Activities	
		Inside Programme Area	Outside Programme Area
Location of Beneficiaries	Inside Programme area	No limit	Maximum limit 20% of the programme's budget
	Outside Programme Area	Maximum limit 20% of the programme's budget	Not Applicable

Attention!

The total budget allocated to beneficiaries outside the Programme area together with the total budget allocated for activities outside the Programme area cannot exceed 20 % of the budget of the Programme.

3.8.4 Period of eligibility of expenditure

The starting date for the eligibility of expenditure of beneficiaries from Greece is the 1st of January 2014, while for beneficiaries from Albania, the starting date for the eligibility of expenditure is the 22nd of September 2014 and payments can only be made after the signature of the Financing Agreement.

The closing date of the eligibility period of the expenditure should be the end date of the subsidy contract in force. Under no circumstances the final date of eligibility of expenditure can exceed the 31st of December 2023.

3.9 Duration of Projects

The duration of projects is specified in each call for proposals.

3.10 Contracting under the Interreg IPA II Cross Border Cooperation Programme "Greece-Albania 2014-2020".

According to article 45 of the "Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 on specific rules for Implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 on IPA II for the award of service, supply and work contracts, by beneficiaries the procurement procedures shall follow the provisions of Chapter 3 of Title IV of Part Two of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and of Chapter 3 of Title II of Part Two of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 which apply in the whole programme area, both on the Member State and on the IPA II beneficiary/ies' territory.

Standard documents and templates from PRAG may be used in order to facilitate the relevant procedures. PRAG rules may be followed regarding procedural steps for contracting.

3.11 How to fill in the Application Form

The present section aims at providing the lead beneficiaries participating in calls for proposals of the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme "Greece – Albania 2014-2020" with a basic information needed in order to fill in the Application Form.

The requirement of submitting an Application Form duly filled in according to the instructions provided is one of the formal criteria used for project evaluation. Applicants, therefore, are strongly recommended to carefully read and follow these instructions.

In addition, applicants are requested NOT to remove the protection of the Application Form or change its structure, since that could result in damaging it.

- Please fill in the Application Form electronically, correctly and completely by using the template included in Project's Applicant package.
- The application form must be completed in English.
- The application form must be duly signed and stamped by the legal representative of the lead Beneficiary in the relevant page.

General information

When you open the "Application Form" you will be informed that it contains macros, which you must activate, in order to obtain the proper data. You should also make sure that the security level of the .xls file is medium (go to tools, macros, security and select medium security level).

The Application form must be properly filled in and signed and stamped by the Lead Beneficiary. The application form consists of a cover page and seven sections describing in detail the project proposal. Information about the proposed project must be accurate and correct.



white Fields are those that must be completed by the Applicant,



fields marked in grey are those filled in by the Managing Authority, or fields in which data is automatically transferred or calculated based on the input provided in other fields

While filling in the application form the applicants should take into account the limits set. If further instructions or clarifications concerning the application form are needed, the applicant may contact the Programme's Joint Secretariat or the Managing Authority.

In case a project proposal is approved, the application form submitted constitutes part of the contract between the Managing Authority and the lead Beneficiary. It is pointed out that compliance with the provisions of the contract is the responsibility of the lead Beneficiary, while non compliance with such provisions may lead to the withdrawal of financing.

Application Form Sections

1. COVER PAGE

This section provides general information, such as details on the Programme in the frame of which the application form is submitted and general information identifying a proposal. Information per part and field is provided as follows:

- **Version of Application Form:** Number filled in by the JS
- **Date of submission:** Date of submission of the respective version of the proposal in the address provided in the Call of Project Proposal, which will be filled in by the JS
- **Date of approval:** Date of the approval of the respective version of the proposal, filled in by the JS
- **MIS Code:** A unique number given by the MIS System filled in by the JS
- **Project title:** Please insert the title of the proposed project
- **Project acronym:** Please insert the acronym of the proposed project

2. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

This section provides general information concerning project identification. Information per part and field is provided below.

- **Project title:** Title of the proposed project. This field is automatically filled in with the relevant information provided in the Cover Page Section.
- **Project acronym:** Acronym of the proposed project. This field is automatically filled in with the relevant information provided in the Cover Page Section.
- **Project duration:**
 - **Start:** This field is automatically filled in with the relevant date, as a start of the project, which is provided in Section B in the “Work Packages” Table (excluding the Action 1.1. preparation activities). Projects should be ready to start their implementation as soon as possible, after the approval decision of the Programme’s Joint Monitoring Committee (that does not apply to projects that include preparation costs or projects that have already started implementation, according to the Call. For these projects the start date should be adjusted

accordingly). For approved projects, dates will be adjusted accordingly, based on the actual dates that the relevant contracts will be signed.

- **End:** This field is automatically filled in with the relevant date, as the end of the project, which is provided in Section B in the “Work Packages” Table.
- **Total Months:** This field is automatically calculated given the values inserted in the two previous fields. For the recommended duration of projects, please refer to the Call for proposals.
- **Priority Axis:** Please insert the title of the priority axis of the Programme in the frame of which the project is proposed (see the Programme description provided in this manual, as well as the Programme Document of the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014 – 2020”). The relevant priority must be selected from the drop-down list.
- **Thematic Priority:** Please insert the title of the thematic priority of the Programme in the frame of which the project is proposed (see the Programme description provided in this manual, as well as the Programme Document of the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014 – 2020”). The relevant priority must be selected from the drop-down list.
- **Specific Objective:** Please specify one of the specific objectives under the Priority Axis chosen, relevant with the project proposal. The specific objectives under each Priority Axis are described in detail in the Programme Document of the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014 – 2020” and must be selected from the drop-down list.
- **Brief Summary of the Project:** Please give a short overview of the project in the style of a press release and describe:
 - The common challenge you are jointly tackling in your project;
 - The overall objective of the project and the expected change your project will make to the current situation;
 - The main outputs you will produce and who will benefit from them;
 - the approach you plan to take and why is Cross-border approach needed;
 - what is new/ original about it;
 - What is the added value.

It is strongly advised that this field is filled in after the entire Application Form has been completed. Should the project be approved, this summary will be published on the programme’s website. Thus, it should be clear, self-explanatory and without references to

other parts of the Application Form or to other documents. This field should not exceed 3.000 characters. [Due to Excel limitations, the relevant text box is split into three parts. Each part should not exceed 1000 characters.]

△ Attention:

The total number of characters is automatically calculated in order to facilitate the applicants in filling in this field. Any text exceeding the word limit cannot be seen or printed and thus cannot be taken into consideration. Please note that spaces are also counted as characters.

- **Beneficiary Information:** This part provides an overview of project partnership. The fields, which are automatically filled in, are the following:
 - **Beneficiary No:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
 - **Beneficiary Institution (Full name):** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
 - **Country:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
 - **NUTS III:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
 - **Legal Status:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
 - **Staff Calculation Method:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
 - **Office and Administration Calculation Method:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **Budget per Beneficiary:** This table provides an overview of beneficiaries' financial contribution to the project and is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership). The fields automatically filled in are the following:
 - **Project Beneficiary No:** The number identifying the specific Beneficiary
 - **Country:** The country of origin of the Beneficiary

- **Union Support:** The Union's contribution corresponding to the specific Beneficiary.
 - **Percentage:** Percentage of Union's contribution to the total budget (fixed to 85%)
 - **National Counterpart Type:** The National counterpart is the sum of **National Public Funding** and **National Private Funding** corresponding to the specific Beneficiary. For all Beneficiaries the National Co-financing equals 15%.
 - **National Public Funding (a):** National Public co-financing corresponding to the specific project
 - **National Private Funding (b):** Funding to the total budget that will be provided by the Beneficiaries' Own Resources. Greek Beneficiaries will not provide any National Private Funding to the project's budget, while Beneficiaries from Albania will provide the 15% of the national counterpart by the beneficiaries' own funds.
 - **Total:** The sum of Union support plus the national Co-financing resulting to the total budget of the specific Beneficiary.
- **Budget per country:** This part provides an overview of the budget per country and is automatically filled in based on the data contained in the previous table. The fields automatically filled in are the following:
 - **Country:** The country of origin of Beneficiaries
 - **Co-financing source:** The financing source for the specific Programme IPA II
 - **Union Support:** The Union contribution corresponding to the specific country
 - **National Counterpart:** The National counterpart is the sum of **National Public Funding** and **National Private Funding** corresponding to the specific Beneficiary.
 - **National Public Funding (a):** The National Public Funding corresponding to the specific country
 - **National Private Funding (b):** The National Private Funding corresponding to the specific country.
 - **Total:** The sum of Union's support plus the Public Counterpart resulting to the total budget of the specific country
 - **Project Budget:** This table provides a summary of the project budget and is automatically filled in. The fields contained in this table are the following:

- **Union Support:** The Union’s Support of the project
- **National Counterpart:** The National counterpart is the sum of **National Public Funding** and **National Private Funding** corresponding to the specific Beneficiary.
- **National Public Funding:** The Public Funding corresponding to the specific country
- **National Private Funding:** The Private Funding corresponding to the specific country.
- **Total Budget:** The sum of Union’s support plus the Public Funding and the Private Funding resulting to the total project budget
- **Project Title:** Title of the proposed project. This field is automatically filled in with the relevant information provided in the Cover Page Section.
- **Lead Beneficiary Confirmation:** In this part the Lead Beneficiaries confirms, by officially signing and stamping the Application Form, that:
 - the project neither in whole nor in part has or will receive any other complementary EU funding (except for the funding indicated in this application form) during the whole duration of the project;
 - the project is in line with the relevant EU and national legislation and policies of the countries involved;
 - all Beneficiaries in the partnership receiving funding from the programme are eligible bodies as defined in the Programme;
 - all Beneficiaries described in Section C of the Application Form are committed to taking part in the project’s activities;
 - the information is accurate and true to the best knowledge of the Lead Beneficiary;
 - the project budget and costs are in line with limits set in the Call for proposals.

All data (Name, Title, Institution and date of signature) must be completed by the signatory (the Legal Representative of the Lead Beneficiary’s Institution).

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

This section provides a detailed description of the project idea, specific problems of the target groups to be addressed and objectives, its structure (activities, deliverables etc), the role of Beneficiaries, the management of the project etc. This section is divided into eight sub-sections:

- B1 Project Identification
- B2 Methodological Approach
- B3 Management
- B4 Information and Publicity
- B5 Maturity of the Project
- B6 Sustainability of Results
- B7 Cross-border co-operation and added-value
- B8 Compatibility with EU and National Policies

B1. Project Identification

This section describes how the project idea was developed and what are its objectives and expected results. This section contains the following fields:

B1.1 Background and history of the project (problems/ challenges to be addressed/ target groups)

Please provide a brief description including the following:

- How the project idea and partnership was developed,
- What are the common cross-border problems and challenges that will be tackled by the project, the relevance of your project for the programme area in terms of common challenges and/or joint assets addressed,
- What is the project’s approach in addressing these common challenges and/or joint assets, what is new about the approach the project takes, the new solutions that will be developed during the project and/or existing solutions that will be adopted and implemented during the project’s lifetime and in what way the approach goes beyond existing practice in the sector/ programme area/participating countries,
- Which are the main target groups, who are benefiting (e.g. Beneficiaries, regions, end-users, etc) from the project and in what way.

In this section please provide a brief description on how the project idea and partnership were developed, if the partnership has relevance with the achievement of project objectives and results, and how the beneficiaries were involved in developing the project proposal. In addition please describe the reasons for which the proposed project is necessary, as well as the specific problem(s) of target groups, and/or opportunities not currently meet that the project will address and challenges that will face. In this section the applicants must describe the target groups and provide clear evidence that there is a sufficient demand for the proposed project to be implemented. This will demonstrate that the project idea is based on

the understanding of what the real benefits for the local population and the real impact on the area. The applicants may refer to the Programme SWOT analysis and Objectives, as well as to the relevant chapters of the Manual, in order to better describe the project’s background. The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 4500.

B1.2 Objectives of the Project

Please describe the overall objective of the project, how it links to the programme’s objective and specify one project main objective of the Programme. Please describe also the overall objective and sub-objectives of the project. The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 2000.

B1.3 Expected Outputs (tangible and visible results or products relating to project activities):

Please describe the project’s main outputs that will be delivered based on the activities carried out in the project. Please provide a short explanation on the defined specific objectives and their link with the project main outputs. Describe your project’s main output and its contribution to the main objective.

Outputs are tangible and visible results or products relating to the project activities and objectives. **Expected project outputs** are the means to achieve the Project’s (as well as the Programme’s) objectives. These results should include the description of the output indicators that will be described and quantified in Section F – Output Indicators. Examples include: networks set up between cities, studies, databases etc. The outputs described here should also be logically connected (be either a logical combination or be identical with) the basic project deliverables listed in Section D – Budget, of the Application Form, in a way that it gets obvious to the reader what are the expected outputs through which the project meets its objectives. The outputs will also have to be connected with the indicators described in the respective section (SECTION F. INDICATORS). The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 2000.

B1.4 Expected Results (direct and immediate effects resulting from the project)

Please describe the project’s results, their contribution and link (if applicable) to the result indicators of the programme (SECTION F. INDICATORS). The direct and immediate effects resulting from the project must also be clearly stated, highlighting the importance of the project for the cross border area. Additionally, the applicant may describe the innovative character of the expected results or clarify the added-value of the results compared to the achievements of previous experience (in case of a project follow-up). The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 2000.

Note: The project should have identifiable and measurable targets so that its progress can be monitored and evaluated in a way that ongoing consistency with the objectives of the Programme may be achieved. In case of failure in meeting the objectives, financing may be suspended; therefore targets presented should be specific, measurable, achievable and time based. A clear link between planned outputs, results and objectives to achieve must be demonstrated.

B.2 Methodological Approach

This section provides an analytical overview of the project’s implementation methodology (activities, their combination and sequence, responsibilities etc.). The methodology must clearly show a common and team-oriented manner of work between beneficiaries. This section contains the following fields:

B2.1 Project Methodology/ Roles – Tasks of Beneficiaries

Please describe the project approach and provide summary description of all work packages of the project and identify activities’ interlinks (sequence, combination, interrelation between activities – deliverables).

The methodology must include information about the project implementation stages and how these will contribute towards the attainment of the targets sought; identification of the tools proposed and their suitability towards the attainment of the proposed targets etc. Explain also the way that the Beneficiaries will be involved in the project (who will do what) and the division of roles- tasks among beneficiaries, (e.g. Beneficiaries responsibilities for administrative and / or financial tasks, participation in the implementation of activities and deliverables, degree of involvement given the competences and strengths of each beneficiary etc.).

This field should not exceed 4500 characters.

B2.2 Work Packages / Actions

Please break down the proposed project into **Work Packages**, that represent logically connected steps of implementation or sets of Deliverables. Having defined the objectives of the project, a more detailed plan of work packages has to be developed to map out how objectives will be achieved. Well defined objectives should make decisions on appropriate work packages relatively easy. The work packages (WPs) identified should follow the logical phases of the implementation of the project and include management and communication activities. The number of work packages used must be relevant to the complexity of the work and objectives of the proposed project.

A project should be divided in at least three (3) and maximum six (6) Work packages.

The three compulsory Work Packages are:

- 1) **"WP1 Management and Coordination"**, describing the sequence of Actions to be analysed in Section D.BUDGET, in order for the project to be coordinated and financially managed (including for example the necessary meetings between the Beneficiaries in order to coordinate the project's implementation, or the activities of the Lead Beneficiary concerning the financial monitoring - reporting of the project etc.). Management and coordination activities and the relevant costs should be duly justified.
- 2) **"WP2 Information & Publicity"**, describing the main elements of the project communication strategy (covering both internal and external communication measures) in line with the Communication strategy Guide of the Programme as well as with the EU Visibility guidelines or Communication & Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions. The project communication plan is a strategic tool with the purpose of raising awareness about the project and to disseminate its results as well as to ensure an efficient communication among the project Beneficiaries. In addition to project specific target groups, the communication activities shall also be addressed, to the media and the general public, in order to disseminate to wider audience interesting information about the project.
- 3) The third compulsory WP is the one of the actual implementation of the Project. The Projects can have a maximum of 4 WPs for the actual implementation of the project, from WP3 to WP6.

Each Work Package contains the following fields:

- **Title:** Please insert the title of the Work Package
- **Start:** Please insert the Start Date of each WP.
- **End:** Please insert the End Date of each WP
- **Cost:** The Cost of WPs summing up to the costs of Work Packages are automatically filled in based on the information inserted in Section D – Budget.

△ **Attention:**

The "Start Date" and "End Date" included in each WP will automatically calculate the overall Project duration in the Section "Project identification" and the Section "Timetable".

The macros need to be enabled

Examples of two (2) **indicative** projects are presented below, being broken down into indicative **Work Packages and Deliverables**.

The first one concerns an “infrastructure project” and the second one a “soft project”.

Table 6: Indicative structure of an Infrastructure project

Lead Beneficiary	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.1.1	Preparation activities
Deliverable 1.1.2	Project Management (Coordination, reporting, meetings)
Deliverable 1.1.3	Evaluation
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.1.1	Production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.1.2	Publicity events and conferences
WP3	Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
Deliverable 3.1.1	Preliminary study
Deliverable 3.1.2	Construction and equipping of Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Ioannina
WP4	Laboratory networking
Deliverable 4.1.1	Networking activities and portal development
Deliverable 4.1.2	Assessment of networking activities and sustainability study
<u>Project Beneficiary 2</u>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.2.2	Project management (reporting to LB, meetings)
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.2.1	Production of communication material and

	tools
Deliverable 2.2.2	Design and operation of an Info desk
WP3	Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
Deliverable 3.2.1	Building renovation in Korca and supervision
Deliverable 3.2.2	Supply of laboratory equipment
WP4	Laboratory networking
Deliverable 4.2.1	Application development
Deliverable 4.2.2	Training of potential users

Table 7: Indicative structure of a Soft project

<i>Lead Beneficiary</i>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.1.1	Preparation Activities
Deliverable 1.1.2	Project Management and meetings
Deliverable 1.1.3	IT platform for administration of the project
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.1.1	Production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.1.2	Open international conference
WP3	Inventory of archaeological sites
Deliverable 3.1.1	Catalogue of monuments in the regions of Berat and Gjirokaster
Deliverable 3.1.2	Creation of a multi-lingual database and integration of selected monuments
WP4	Restoration and conservation of archaeological monuments
Deliverable 4.1.1	Document/ list of selected places and monuments

Deliverable 4.1.2	Sustainability plan
<i>Project Beneficiary 2</i>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.2.2	Project Management and meetings
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.2.1	Production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.2.2	Organization of 4 workshops
WP3	Inventory of archaeological sites
Deliverable 3.2.1	Catalogue of monuments in the Region of Western Macedonia
Deliverable 3.2.2	Archaeological map
WP4	Restoration and conservation of archaeological monuments
Deliverable 4.2.1	Restoration and conservation study

Attention!

All beneficiaries need to elaborate more the content of each deliverable and be more precise about the actions that will take place (e.g. material to be produced, content of the studies, etc) in the Specification of the Budget Costs.

If necessary, the beneficiaries are free to submit any additional supporting descriptions, pictures, studies, or other material for better defining the content and scope of the deliverables.

B2.3 Location of Activities

Please provide a description of the area targeted by the project, the location of Beneficiaries and activities, showing the geographical scope of the longer term effects (results and impacts).

In case of activities outside the programme area, these should be explicitly mentioned. The maximum number of characters allowed is 2000.

B.3 Management

This section provides information on how the project will be administered and financially managed, in order to meet the requirements set. This section contains the following fields:

B3.1 Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiaries' Competence (Experience, Structure, Personnel, Resources, etc):

Please describe the Experience, Structure, Personnel, Resources, Institutional role etc. of the participating Beneficiaries that indicate their relevance in the proposed project. The applicant needs to define:

- Which are the organisation's competences related to the project activities?
- Which is the institutional and financial capacity?
- Which are the experiences relevant to the project?
- Which is the organisation's capacity to directly or indirectly influence local/ regional/ national policies?
- What are the reasons for the selection of Lead Beneficiary?

The maximum number of characters allowed is 4000.

B3.2 Project Management & Coordination (structures, decision making procedures, internal communication, etc)

Please describe how the management on the strategic and operational level will be carried out in the project, specifically:

- Structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and coordination
- Communication within the partnership
- Reporting and evaluation procedures
- Risk and quality management.

This field should not exceed 2000 characters.

B.4 Information and Publicity

B4.1 Information and Publicity Strategy

Please describe:

- The basic structure of the project's Communication Plan (timetable, milestones, etc)
- The information and publicity measures to be carried out (website, events, publicity material, etc)

- The means of communication to be used to disseminate the project's outputs, results and achievements (social media, brochures, promotional material, etc)
- How the anticipated project results are going to be promoted at a national and/ or at a regional level.

This field should not exceed 3000 characters.

B.5 Maturity of the Project

B5.1 Preparatory and administrative activities undertaken

Describe the maturity of the project in terms of completion of the administrative procedures that allow the implementation of the project, i.e. licences, designs, permits, land acquisition, tender documents, etc. This information should be provided for all project activities (services, equipment, infrastructure). This field should not exceed 3000 characters.

B.6 Sustainability of Results

B6.1 Sustainability, durability and transferability of main outputs delivered in the project

Please describe how the project's main outputs will be further used, once the project has been finalised, the concrete measure (including eg institutional structures, financial sources, etc) taken during and after project implementation to ensure the durability of the project main outputs. If relevant, please explain who will be responsible and/ or the owner of the output. Describe, also, how the project will ensure that the project's outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/ regions/ countries outside of the current partnership. This field should not exceed 3000 characters.

B.7 Cross-border cooperation and Added-value

B7.1 Cross-border cooperation

Please explain how the cross-border cooperation is demonstrated, in order to achieve the project's objectives and results, why the project objectives cannot be efficiently reached acting only on a national/ regional/ local level and/or describe what are the benefits for the project Beneficiaries/ target groups/ project area/ programme area from the cross-border approach. This field should not exceed 2000 characters.

B7.2 Intensity of Cross-border Cooperation

According to Art.12 from 1299/2013 par.4 "Beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in the staffing or the financing of operations, or in both". Please mark with an "X" the ways the partnership cooperates and describe how this is achieved.

B7.3 Capitalisation

Please describe in which ways the project capitalises previous cooperation and experience (if applicable), especially in the programme area:

- Capitalisation of Beneficiaries’ know-how experience
- Capitalisation of Beneficiaries’ experience in cross-border cooperation activities
- Capitalisation of previous cooperation among current Beneficiaries
- Capitalisation of previous relevant projects

B.8 Compatibility with EU and National Policies

B8.1 Consistency of the project with EU horizontal principles

Please describe, if applicable, the effect of the project to each one of the horizontal principles. As projects should not produce negative effects upon the horizontal principles, you must identify possible risks and demonstrate - describe in brief specific measures that the project will implement to prevent them.

More specifically while designing their information and publicity actions and strategy and procurement, project partners must specify measures or actions in order to enhance

- Equality between men and women
- equal opportunities and non discrimination
- provision of accessibility of disabled persons
- sustainable development

Projects that do not respect the horizontal principles will not be funded.

Please mark with an “X” and provide the respective justification.

B8.2 Contribution to other EU (incl. macroregional strategies), National, Regional and Local Policies

Please describe the project’s contribution or achieved synergies and complementarities with relevant EU/ regional/ national strategies, instruments and policies; in particular, those concerning the project or programme area. The maximum number of characters allowed is 2000.

4. PARTNERSHIP

This section provides contact and other useful details concerning the Beneficiaries participating in the project implementation, starting with the Lead Beneficiary (that will also act as the Lead Beneficiary). The total number of beneficiaries must not exceed the total number of beneficiaries which are defined in the specific call for project proposals.

Beneficiary Details:

Name of institution in English: Please provide the official translation in English of the name of the beneficiary's institution.

Name of institution in original language: Please provide the name of the beneficiary's institution in the original language.

Distinctive Title/ Abbreviation: Please specify the distinctive title of the beneficiary's institution.

Legal Status: Please specify the legal status of the beneficiary in accordance with national legislation, by selecting a value from the drop-down list.

Legal Representative: Please provide the name of the legal representative of the beneficiary. The legal representative is a natural person authorised to represent and bind the institution. In the case of the Lead beneficiary, the legal representative of the institution must sign the Application Form.

Position of the legal representative in the organisation: Please specify the position of the legal representative in the organisation.

Contact Person for the project: Please specify the name of the person that is nominated as the contact person for the project.

Project Manager: Please provide the details of the person nominated as the Project Manager. The person responsible for the project should be a staff member of the Lead Beneficiary who has an overall picture of the project and who coordinates the preparation of the application form on behalf of the partnership.

Financial Manager: Please provide the name of the person nominated as the Project Financial Manager that will be responsible for monitoring all financial aspects related to the project's implementation.

The same person can be designated as both Project Manager and Financial Manager. If the person designated as Financial Manager is permanent staff of the beneficiary, the designation can be done at the stage of presenting the Application Form. If the Person designated as Financial Manager will be external, the word "external" should be filled in at the stage of presenting the Application Form. For approved projects, the actual name of the person that will result from the public call procedure will be nominated when available.

Address: Please provide the full postal address of the beneficiary's institution.

Country: Please provide the country of origin of the specific beneficiary, by selecting a value from the drop-down list.

NOTE: If the beneficiary in question is established outside the beneficiary countries (Greece and Albania), then the entity shall be listed under the beneficiary country, in which its activities are planned. If the entity is planning activities on both sides of the border, it shall be listed twice. It is noted that Greece and Albania shall not provide national funding to foreign entities. Foreign entities will be expected to provide the 'national' component of their budget from their own resources. The relevant field 'Own contribution' shall be filled in the AF.

NUTS III code: Please provide the NUTS III code of the area where the beneficiary is located, by selecting a value from the drop-down list, after selecting the country. If the beneficiary in question is established outside the eligible area, then the entity shall be listed under the area, in which most of its activities are planned and will take place.

Telephone: Please provide the telephone number of the Contact Person of the Project.

E-mail: Please provide the e-mail of the Contact Person of the Project.

Fax: Please provide the fax number of the Contact Person of the Project.

Website: Please provide the website address of the beneficiary's institution.

Staff Cost Calculation Method: Please select the calculation method of the Staff Costs according to the Call rules

Office and Administration Calculation Method: Please select the calculation method of the Office and Administration Costs according to the Call rules.

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project? Indicate the applicable value – recoverable, non recoverable or partly - in the respective field to clarify the VAT eligibility, by selecting a value from the drop-down list. In case of "partly", provide the respective specification.

Taxation Office: Please specify the Name of the beneficiary's Tax Office

Tax Number: Please specify the Tax number or the Social Security Number of the Beneficiary's Institution.

Budget of Beneficiary:

Total Budget: This field is automatically filled in and concerns the total budget corresponding to the specific beneficiary. The budget is automatically filled in based on the information provided for each beneficiary in the respective Tables of Section D. Budget.

Union Support: This field is automatically calculated and concerns the Union's Support corresponding to the specific beneficiary.

National Contribution: This field is automatically calculated and concerns the national contribution corresponding to the specific beneficiary.

National Counterpart type: Please select from the drop-down menu as appropriate; National Public Funding or National Private Funding.

Bank Details of Beneficiary:

Bank details should be filled in after the approval of the project proposal and is needed only for the Lead Beneficiary.

Bank Name: Please provide the name of the Bank Institution where the specific beneficiary holds an account related to the project payments.

Address: Please provide the address of the Bank Institution.

Postal Code: Please provide the postal code of the Bank Institution.

Town: Please provide the name of the town where the Bank Institution is located.

Country: Please specify the country where the Bank Institution is located.

IBAN: Please specify the International Bank Account Number.

SWIFT code: Please specify the SWIFT Code.

Holder of the account: Please specify the original name of the account holder.

5. BUDGET

This section provides information on the project budget and its analysis. You should keep in mind that all fields marked in grey are automatically filled in, based on the information provided in other parts of the Application Form.

Project Budget:

This table summarizes the project budget information and is automatically filled in. It contains the following fields:

Union Support: The Union's Support corresponding to the specific project.

National Counterpart: The national contribution corresponding to the specific project. It is further analysed to National – Public Funding and National – Private Funding.

Total Budget: the sum of Union Support plus the National Counterpart corresponding to the specific project.

Total Project Budget per WP/ Budget Category:

This table summarizes the total project costs per work package and budget category and is automatically filled in based on the information provided in the following tables that present the costs per beneficiary, deliverable and budget category and that will be further analyzed.

Costs per beneficiary/ Deliverable / Budget Category:

The following tables present the costs per deliverable and budget category for each beneficiary participating in the project, starting with the Lead Beneficiary.

Please fill in with the title of the deliverable implemented by the specific beneficiary. Then provide the analysis of the budget for the specific deliverable per budget category. The Totals per Work Package, Deliverable and Budget category are automatically filled in and marked in grey.

NOTE: Each beneficiary may participate/ implement maximum 5 deliverables in each Work Package. The number of deliverables per beneficiary may not exceed 30 in total for the specific project.

6. TIMETABLE

This section provides information on the Work Packages implementation timetable as well as on the provisional allocation of the project budget per Work Package and reporting period.

Timetable

This table is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section B. "Detailed Description" and displays the duration of each Work Package in months by automatically marking the relevant boxes, representing months of the respective years.

Budget per year

Please specify the provisional allocation of the budget in the yearly reporting periods covering the project's duration. In each field representing a reporting period of a specific year, provide the budget in Euros that corresponds to the part of the budget of the specific WP that will be spent during this period. The Totals per Work Package and per Reporting Period will be filled in automatically.

△ **Attention:**

The "Budget per reporting period" Table should be in line with the "Total Costs per Work Package" table in Section D "Budget". In case of mismatches, the respective cells (Cells CM47:CM83) turn red.

7. INDICATORS

This section provides information on the outputs and results which are expected to be achieved by the project proposed.

- **Priority Axis:** The Priority Axis, under which the specific project is proposed is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.
- **Thematic Priority:** The Thematic Priority, under which the specific project is proposed is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.
- **Specific Objective:** The measure, under which the specific project is proposed, is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.

Type of Indicators:

- **Outputs** are tangible and visible results or products relating to project activities. Outputs are quantified through the use of indicators. Expected project outputs will contribute to the aims of the specific Priority and / or Measure.
- **Results** refer to the immediate impacts derived from the project implementation. Project results must refer to the objectives of the specific Priority Axis and / or Measure. Results are quantified through the use of indicators. At least the indicators set out in the Programme must be used.
- **Indicators:** The output/ result indicators defined in the Programme for the specific Priority Axis are filled in automatically and based on the table below.
- **Unit of Measurement:** Output/ result indicators are measured in physical. The measurement units of the predefined output indicators are automatically filled in based on the information provided above.
- **Target:** Please specify the targeted value of each indicator.

Table 8: Priority Axis, Thematic Priority and Specific Objectives

Priority Axis	Thematic Priority	Specific Objective(s)	Selected Result Indicators	Selected Output Indicators
1	(c) Promoting sustainable transport, information and communications networks & services and investing in cross-border water, waste & energy systems and facilities	1.1 Increase the capacity if CB infrastructure in transport, water & waste management	Volume of urban effluents under secondary treatment	CO204 Additional population served by improved water supply
			Percentage of solid waste managed sustainably	CO21 Additional population served by improved wastewater treatment
			Percentage of cross-border vertical axes to Egnatia motorway either constructed or with sufficient maturity to be constructed or with sufficient maturity to be constructed.	Additional solid waste management capacity created
				Kilometers of CB road network studies
				Number of square meters of border crossing buildings studied or constructed

4 All indicators with a number are Common Indicators (CO) listed in the annex of ETC Regulation

	(b) Protecting the environment & promoting climate change adaptation & mitigation, risk prevention & management	1.2 Increase the effectiveness of environmental protection & sustainable use of natural resources	Level of preservation of the protected natural CB areas	CO25 Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status
		1.3 Increase energy efficiency and the use of RES	Energy efficiency awareness barometer	CO34 Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings People participating in awareness actions
		1.4 Improve the effectiveness of risk prevention and disaster management with a focus on forest fires	Area damaged by forest fires (5-yr rolling annual average in hectares)	CO23 Population benefiting from forest fire protection measures
2	(d) Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage	2.1 Preserve cultural and natural resources as a pre-requisite for	Annual overnight tourist stays of the cross-border area	CO11 Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural

		tourism development of the cross-border area		and natural heritage and attractions
	(g) Enhancing competitiveness the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), trade and investment	2.2 Improve CB capacity to support entrepreneurship, business survival and competitiveness	Active CB enterprises	CO04 Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support

8. CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION

This section provides a checklist of requirements that have to be fulfilled before officially submitting the project proposal. Please make sure that you have fulfilled all of the requirements listed in that section by clicking on each checkbox, before submitting the documents.

Note: In order to submit a project proposal, potential beneficiaries / Applicants must refer to the Applicant’s Pack and all relevant documents annexed to the specific Call for project Proposals. Project Proposals should be submitted in accordance to the guidelines provided in the relevant Call for proposals and the Project Manual.

All documents should be valid at the date of submission of the Project Proposal.

3.12 Evaluation Procedure

After submission, each project proposal will be evaluated based on specific selection criteria and will be subjected to a **two-phase** selection procedure, carried out by the Joint Secretariat (JS) with the support of Operating Structure (OS) and, if necessary, external experts, as referred in the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” (Section: Submission of Proposals and Selection of Operations). The procedure and the criteria for the selection of these experts will be mutually agreed by the participating countries and will be approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). The cost for the engagement of those experts will be covered by the Technical Assistance Budget of the Programme.

The exact criteria of project evaluation and the scoring methodology are described in the ‘**Project Selection Criteria**’, which is a component of the Application Pack. Potential applicants are encouraged to study this document, prior to deciding to submit a project proposal.

The evaluation procedure is described in Annex, “Project Selection Criteria”.

3.13 Information and publicity requirements for projects

The implementation of the Information and Publicity Strategy should start as soon as the project has been approved. The project’s requirements for communication activities are indicated in detail in the Project Beneficiaries Guidebook for Information and Publicity. This

Guidebook is prepared in order to help the beneficiaries, who deal with Projects funded by the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece-Albania 2014-2020” to comply with EU Regulations and Guidelines and stay aligned with their responsibilities concerning information and publicity measures.

3.14 Project implementation guidelines

3.14.1 Contracting of Project Proposals

On the basis of the Joint Monitoring Committee’s decision about selected project proposals, the Managing Authority shall sign a subsidy contract with the Lead Beneficiaries of the approved projects. The subsidy contract shall determine the rights and responsibilities of the aforementioned parties and shall describe the scope of activities to be carried out, the terms of funding, the requirements for reporting and financial controls, etc.

The Managing Authority will use a standard template for the subsidy contract approved by the JMC which is developed in compliance with the Programme’s applicable rules and in accordance with the Greek law. The subsidy contract is addressed to the Lead Beneficiary, appointed by the partnership, in accordance to article 40 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and article 13 of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, and is signed by the legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary and by the Managing Authority. The signature of the Partnership Agreement is prerequisite for the subsidy contract. The Partnership Agreement will be signed between the Lead Beneficiary and other beneficiaries of the project. This Agreement shall define the rules of procedure regarding the work to be carried out for the implementation of the specified project activities and their duties and obligation within the Partnership.

After the approval for funding of the project, the JS/MA informs officially the Lead Beneficiary about the result of the evaluation and the next steps. The Lead Beneficiary in cooperation with the project beneficiaries, need to proceed with adjustments of the Application form and prepare all the necessary documentation required by the Call for proposals for the signature of the Subsidy Contract.

In particular, as regards the Application form, the Lead beneficiary needs to:

- Comply with the evaluation indications or funding conditions regarding the physical object, the work breakdown structure, the budget (if applicable), etc

- Adjust the project work plan and time table according to the actual needs, since compared to the initially project proposal submissions there may be changes required

As the finally approved Application form will be the reference document for all Project modifications to follow (if necessary), special emphasis will need to be placed by the project beneficiaries in order to consolidate an effective and realistic working plan. The final Application form and supporting documents will have to be agreed with the JS before the signature of the Subsidy Contract.

The process of consolidating the final Application form and preparing all supporting documents must not exceed the period of two months after the notification of the Lead beneficiary about the approved funding. The JS/MA reserves the right to extend this period for exceptional justified cases.

3.14.2 Setting Start-up milestones

In order to ensure that the project will have a successful start-up, during the process before the signature of the subsidy Contract, along with the other official documents, the project needs to submit to the JS/MA a specific time plan focusing on the first 6-9 months (around the 1/3 of the project duration) in order to set the milestones to be achieved for this period. This specific time plan should be reviewed, approved and monitored during the implementation of the project by the JS/MA and the respective Project officer.

At the end of the start-up period, or earlier if necessary according to the progress, the project shall undergo an internal review with the responsibility of the Lead Beneficiary in order to assess whether the milestones have been met for all beneficiaries. The results of this internal review shall be brought forward to the JS/MA and it shall be assessed whether corrective or any other actions are necessary. In case of major delays and non-achievement of the milestones leading to possible failure of the project scope, the JS/MA reserves the right to propose reduction of the physical object and/or reduction of the budget, given that the project remains operational.

3.15 Reporting procedures

The Lead Beneficiary operates in project level according to article 13 par.1 of Regulation 1299/2013 for the project. It is responsible for the submission to the Joint Secretariat (JS) of progress reports on project implementation activities in accordance with the timetable

referred to in the approved Application Form and the Project Implementation Manual as in force.

Prior to filling in a progress report, the Lead Beneficiary will collect the expenditure made by all project beneficiaries, which must be accompanied by the relevant verifications signed by the competent controller of the respective country. The verified expenditure of all beneficiaries must be attached to the relevant progress reports. The Lead Beneficiary will use the official forms (Progress Reports) as in force, which are provided by the JS/MA. Certificates of Verified expenditures can also be sent to the JS at random intervals as they become available, electronically and in hardcopy and be included in Reimbursement claim to the Commission at any stage. However, these must be always re-submitted along with the Progress report in which they will be reported.

Should the Project Beneficiaries delay in submitting to the Lead Beneficiary their activity and financial reports, the Lead Beneficiary will still abide by the deadlines for submission, updating and sending to the Joint Secretariat the reports when the missing information becomes available. However, if the Project beneficiaries delay in submitting to the Lead Beneficiary their table of verified expenditure, the Lead Beneficiary will add the missing information to the statement of the next reporting period. All reports must be submitted in English, which is the official language of the Programme. Deliverables should be in English at least unless specifically oriented towards a targeted audience where only Greek or Albanian can be used.

The Joint Secretariat receives and processes progress reports, together with the necessary supporting documents. The Managing Authority has the final responsibility of providing its consent to the Certifying Authority in order to enable the last to proceed with payments of claims requested by the Lead Beneficiary.

Considering that payment of IPA II contribution is made by the European Commission in accordance with the Community provisions concerning the budget commitments of the Structural Funds, the Lead Beneficiary will submit a progress report to the JS every six months in accordance with the following schedule:

January- June	30 of July of the respective year
July – December	30 of January of the following year

As indicated in the above table, the deadline for the submission of the Progress Report is 30 days from the end of the Reporting Period. Beneficiaries should send the expenditure of

each month to the designated controller according to the reporting period. In case of delays the verified expenditures of all the beneficiaries will not be included in the subsequent payment claim and respectively the reimbursement of the funds will be delayed.

Interim progress reports may be requested by the Managing Authority / Joint Secretariat of the Programme for financial management reasons at any stage.

The Joint Secretariat, Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, the National Coordinators and the European Commission may at any time ask for supplementary information concerning payment claims or the project itself.

3.15.1 Use of the Euro

Having regard:

- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Article 28;
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Article 133

Any expenditure incurred in a currency other than euro, shall be converted into euro, using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which that expenditure was incurred;

The method chosen shall be applicable to all beneficiaries. The conversion shall be verified by the controller in Albania where the beneficiary is located.

The monthly exchange rates of the Commission are published on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

3.15.2 How to fill in the Progress Report

How to fill in the Progress Report

Before you begin to fill in the Progress Report please take into consideration the following guidelines:



White Fields are those that must be completed by the Lead Beneficiary.



Fields marked in grey are those filled automatically using the data provided in previous tables by the Lead Beneficiary.

If further instructions or clarifications concerning the completion of the progress report are needed, please contact the Programme's Joint Secretariat or the Managing Authority.

COVER PAGE

- **Progress Report No.** Please fill in the field (the progress report number indicating the number 1 for the 1st Progress Report, the number 2 for the 2nd Progress Report etc).
- **Date of submission** Please fill in the field the date of submission in appropriate form (the correct date format must be used: dd/mm/yyyy, eg 20/01/2014).
- **MIS Code:** The Lead Beneficiary will be informed by the JS for the Management Information Code, which will be filled in this field by the Lead Beneficiary.
- **Protocol Number/ Date:** This field concerns the protocol number and the date that the respective Progress Report was received by the JS. This field will be filled in by the JS.
- **Project Title** Please insert the full name of the Project in English, as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Project Acronym** Please insert the Acronym in English, as stated in the approved Application Form.

1. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION5

- **Priority Axis:** Please choose from the drop-down menu the title of the priority axis of the Programme, in the frame of which the project has been approved.
- **Specific Objective:** Please choose from the drop-down menu the relevant specific objective of the project, as described and approved in the Application Form.
- **Project title:** The title of the project is automatically inserted from the cover page.
- **Project acronym:** The acronym of the project is automatically inserted from the cover page.
- **Subsidy Contract Number:** Please insert the Subsidy Contract Number.
- **Lead Beneficiary (LB1):** Please insert the full name of the institution in English, as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Country of Lead Beneficiary (LB1):** Please choose from the drop-down menu the country of origin of the Lead Beneficiary, as stated in the approved Application Form.

⁵ In case of change in the contact details of the Legal representative, the Project manager and the financial manager, please provide the updated information.

- **Beneficiary's institution (full name):** Please insert each beneficiary's institution full name in English.
- **Country:** Please choose from the drop-down menu the country of origin of each beneficiary.
- **Total Approved Budget (according to the AF):** Please insert the total approved budget of each beneficiary as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Legal Representative:** Applicable only to the Lead Beneficiary. Please provide the name, position and the contact details (address, Tel No, E-MAIL, FAX) of the legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary, as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Project Manager:** Applicable only to the Lead Beneficiary. Please provide the name and contact details (address, Tel No, E-MAIL, FAX) of the person nominated as the Project Manager.
- **Financial Manager:** Applicable only to the Lead Beneficiary. Please provide the name and the contact details (address, Tel No, E-MAIL, FAX) of the person nominated in the project scheme as the Project Financial Manager who is responsible for monitoring all financial aspects related to the project's implementation.

Reporting Period (fill in the excel cells (start – end dates) with the following format dd/mm/yyyy):

- **Start:** Please insert the date that the reporting period starts.
- **End:** Please insert the date that the reporting period ends.

Project Duration (fill in the excel cells (start – end dates) with the following format dd/mm/yyyy):

- **Start:** Please insert the date that the project starts according to the approved Application Form.
- **End:** Please insert the date that the project ends according to the approved Application Form.
- **Duration** This field is automatically calculated given the values inserted in the two previous fields.

△ *While filling in the progress report the Lead Beneficiary should take into account the limits set in the specific boxes where text is included. If the limits exceed the amount of characters specified in the box/boxes then they will automatically become red.*

2. PROGRESS ACTIVITY REPORT

2.1 Summary of the project's achievements so far (max. 2000 characters)

Please describe the main achievements from the start of the project until today with reference to the relative work packages, deliverables, outputs and results. This section should include the experience gained and the added-value of cooperation.

2.2 Summary of the project's achievements during this reporting period (max. 1500 characters)

Please describe the main achievements during this reporting period.

2.3 Analytical description of the implemented deliverables, outputs and results during this reporting period with reference per work package and beneficiaries; involvement (max. 4000 characters)

Please describe the implemented deliverables, outputs and results during this reporting period referring to the achievements made in each work package and mention the involvement of the project beneficiaries in the implementation of the actions.

2.4 Next steps to be taken for the project's implementation (max. 1500 characters)

Please describe your work planned for the following implementation period.

2.5 Problems encountered and proposed solutions (max. 1500 characters)

Please refer to any problems encountered in the implementation of the project, mentioning the measures taken to overcome them. In case the problems are not dealt with, please indicate your proposed solution for their resolution.

2.6 Changes in the Implementation (max. 1500 characters)

Please state if you consider making any modifications of the approved Application Form. The project implementation must strictly follow the implementation plan of the approved Application Form. Under no circumstances should any changes be made without the knowledge and approval of the Managing Authority. Additionally, important changes/modifications may require the submission of a revised application form, and/or the approval of the programme's Joint Monitoring Committee. Please follow instructions provided in the Programme and Project Manual as in force.

3. INDICATORS

- **Priority Axis:** Priority Axis field is automatically completed.
- **Specific Objective:** Specific objective field is automatically completed.

3.1 Output Indicators

- **Indicators:** Output indicators for the specific priority axis, thematic priority and measure are automatically filled in.
- **Unit of Measurement:** Units of Measurement for each indicator are automatically filled in.
- **Target Value:** Please specify the target value of each output indicator as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Achieved Value (current reporting period):** Please fill in the value achieved during the particular reporting period.
- **Total cumulative value:** Please fill in the total value of the stated output achieved from the beginning of the project until the end of the current reporting period (Equals the total value inserted in the previous progress report(s) plus the achieved value during the current reporting period)

3.2 Result Indicators

- **Indicator:** Result indicators for the specific priority axis, thematic priority and measure are automatically filled in.
- **Unit of Measurement:** Units of Measurement for each indicator are automatically filled in.
- **Target Value:** Please specify the target value of each output indicator as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Achieved Value (current reporting period):** Please fill in the value achieved during the particular reporting period.
- **Total cumulative value:** Please fill in the total value of the result achieved from the beginning of the project until the end of the current reporting period.

3.3 Impact Indicators

- **Indicator:** Impact indicators for the specific priority axis, thematic priority and measure are automatically filled in.
- **Unit of Measurement:** Units of Measurement for each indicator are automatically filled in.

- **Value:** Please specify the target value of each impact indicator, by selecting a value from the drop-down list (POSITIVE, NEGATIVE, NEUTRAL).

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

4.1 Implementation of actions

Please state the deliverables implemented within the specific reporting period using the table below. Deliverables started in one and finishing in another Reporting Period should be declared in all respective periods.

In case your project deliverables exceed the lines present in this section of the Progress Report, double click in the last completed cell of the specific table and press enter. You will immediately see a new line. You may enter as many lines as you need for the completion of the table.

- **Work Package:** Please insert the number of Work Package as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Deliverable No:** Please insert the Deliverable number as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Deliverable Title:** Please insert the Deliverable title (description) of the specific deliverable as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Beneficiary No:** Please state the beneficiaries responsible for the implementation of the specific deliverable as stated in the approved Application Form.
- **Approved Budget:** Please state the approved budget for the specific deliverable and the specific beneficiary according to the approved Application Form.
- **Contracted Budget:** Please state the contracted budget for specific deliverable and the specific beneficiary (both outsourcing and in-house implementation are included).
- **Expenditure paid out during this reporting period:** Please state the expenditure paid out during this reporting period for the specific deliverable and beneficiary.
- **TOTAL expenditure paid out including this reporting period:** Please state the TOTAL expenditure paid out including this reporting period for the specific deliverable and beneficiary.
- **Verified expenditure during this reporting period:** Please state the verified expenditure during this reporting period for the specific deliverable and beneficiary.

- **TOTAL verified expenditure including this reporting period:** Please state the TOTAL verified expenditure including this reporting period for the specific deliverable and beneficiary.

If expenditures for a specific deliverable are paid out during the current reporting period but there are no verifications yet, all the columns of the table must be completed apart from the columns "Verified expenditure during this reporting period" and "TOTAL Verified expenditure including this reporting period". If expenditures for a specific deliverable are verified during the current reporting period but they were paid out in previous reporting periods, all the columns of the table must be completed apart from the column "Expenditure paid out during this reporting period".

4.2 Verified and Paid Out Expenditure per Beneficiary

This table indicates the verified and paid out expenditures per beneficiary and is filled in automatically by using the information provided in the previous tables.

4.3 Deviations from the original plans

Please explain and justify any financial deviations that occurred in this reporting period such as any over- or under-spending compared with the original budget by budget category. (max. 1500 characters)

5. PUBLICITY

Please state the measures of publicity and/or measures of diffusion of information that have been carried out according to the approved Application Form, as well as any additional ones developed during this reporting period. Have EC requirements on information and publicity measures, acknowledging EC Structural Fund assistance been complied with?

YES: If yes, give details and send proof of publicity along with the Progress Report (e.g. entries in the media, articles, albums, etc.). (max. 1500 characters)

NO: If no, please provide an explanation. (max. 1500 characters)

If applicable check the box at the bottom of the page and attach the First Level Control Verifications of all beneficiaries from Greece.

3.15.3 Final Report and Project Closure

The Final Report of the project will be submitted to the JS/MA for approval at a certain time after the contractual end of the project and given that all verifications have been completed.

The deadline for the submission of the Final Report will be decided by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

A Project Closure Manual will be issued with all the necessary details regarding the Final Report and the Project Closure Procedures.

3.16 Payments / cash flows

The Certifying Authority will transfer the Union's Support of the beneficiaries of Albania to an interest-free bank account indicated by the Lead Beneficiary in the application form. Payments from the Certifying Authority to the Lead Beneficiary will be made in Euro (€). The Lead Beneficiary shall further transfer the respective Union's Support to the PBs from Albania **within one month of its receipt**. The amounts will be paid according to the flow of funds from the European Commission.

To provide a sound financial management all Project beneficiaries must have a dedicated **interest-free bank account** for the purpose of their project implementation.

Payment of the eligible **preparation costs** should be included preferably in the first progress report.

In case that one year after the signing of the subsidy contract and provided that the total verified expenditure reported in progress reports, as regards the previous year, is less than 20% of the total budget for the project, the Managing Authority reserves the right to consider the possibility of reducing the approved budget of the project. In this case immediate communication should be made to the Lead Beneficiary and other beneficiaries.

In case that the IPA II annual contribution (as stated in the Cooperation Programme) is automatically de-committed by the European Commission, in accordance with the EC Regulation 1303/2013, the Managing Authority reserves the right to consider the possibility of reducing the approved IPA II budget of the project with respect to expenditure not carried out in accordance with the stipulated timetable.

In both cases the Joint Monitoring Committee, after the proposal of the Managing Authority, may decide to reduce the budget of the project. If the reduction of the project budget is decided, the subsidy contract and respective annexes will be modified accordingly.

National Counterpart

For Greek Beneficiaries the national counterpart will be granted through the Public Investments Programme. For the Albanian Beneficiaries, in turn, the national counterpart will be covered by the beneficiaries own contribution.

3.17 Project modifications

During the lifetime of a project internal or external causes may bring minor or major changes. These changes are usually evident in the case of innovative actions. Nevertheless, in order to secure success during the implementation phase, beneficiaries need to follow a structured form with a precise timetable and well defined actions and results. The Application Form describes each project in detail providing specific information such as timetables, financial information, budget forecasts etc. The Application Form together with the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement provide the basis for project implementation. The Programme’s Joint Monitoring Committee approves projects based on the information provided in the Project Proposal comprising the Application Form and annexed documents. Therefore, Lead Beneficiary and other beneficiaries have a maximum degree of freedom to develop the projects but are expected to follow the basic agreement of the Subsidy Contract. Changes occurring during the lifetime of a project in general should not affect this basis. Nonetheless, there may be cases for an inevitable exception. The main object of this chapter is to describe the different categories of related project changes. It is important to note that approval of project changes should not be considered as an automatic procedure.

There are three levels of the project changes, considering the effect on the project structure and the body that will provide at each time the decision. These three levels are the following:

1. Adjustments by the Beneficiaries with notification of the Joint Secretariat / Managing Authority
2. Modifications approved by the Managing Authority
3. Modifications approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee

In all cases (except the case 1) the Lead Beneficiary must address to the JS (in accordance with the requirements set out in article 8 of the subsidy contract) any requests for modification of the project. According to the proposed changes the respective JS officer will define the procedure to be followed. In any of the cases, the request for modification must be duly justified and the Lead Beneficiary should ensure the consent of the partnership for its submission.

It should be noted that any discounts on the contracted deliverables cannot be reallocated and any respective savings should be returned to the Programme. Only in exceptional cases and in cases of force majeure, these discounts can be reused or/and can be made available again in the project through a modification approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

The specifications of each level, along with procedure to be followed are the described in the following paragraphs.

1. Adjustments by the Beneficiaries with notification of the Joint Secretariat / Managing Authority

The beneficiaries during the implementation of the project can proceed to the following adjustments:

1. Administrative Information in the Application form such as changes of contact details, addresses and other data of minor significance.
2. Modification of bank accounts
3. Adjustment of the Specification/justification of budget cost that does not affect the scope of the project or any information in the Application form.
4. Adjustment of starting and ending dates of work packages without affecting the overall end date of the project.
5. Reallocation between the respective budget categories, ~~and/or~~ work packages [and/or Deliverables](#) for amounts up to 10% of the total budget of the project [beneficiary](#). The percentage of the requested for reallocation amounts will be calculated compared to the initial Application form as approved with the signature of the Subsidy Contract. This will be applied only in cases where there is no change of the scope of the project.

Procedure for the consent of the above mentioned cases of project adjustments:

The above adjustments should be officially notified to the Lead Beneficiary, who in turn has the responsibility to notify the JS/MA. In case of adjustment No.5, the Lead Beneficiary should submit an official notice to the JS electronically, stating and justifying the proposed adjustments prior to the request for verification of expenditures and in any case prior to the submission of the next progress report.

Together with the official notice, the LB must submit the following documents:

- 1) Request for project modification / notification for adjustment Form (Standard form - word Document) – Signed and stamped by the LB.
- 2) Budget modification sheet (Standard form - excel format) (in case the adjustment concerns budget modification)

The JS/MA reserves the right not to approve adjustments in the following cases:

- a) They affect the objectives and expected results of the project (physical activities)
- b) The reallocation of budget categories, ~~and/or~~ work packages [and/or deliverables](#) is above 10% compared to the initial Application form, [on beneficiary level](#), as approved.

The JS/MA will provide their endorsement via electronic correspondence. This endorsement should be included in the folder for verification of expenditures.

The above adjustments shall be integrated in the Application Form whenever considered necessary by the JS Project Officer, or with the next official version of Application Form, as to be derived by any subsequent modification falling into the levels of the Managing Authority approval or the Joint Monitoring Committee approval.

As regards to bank accounts, the JS/MA reserves the right to object the choice of the type of account opened by the beneficiary. Bank account data of the **interest-free account** of the Lead Beneficiary must be submitted to the JS as soon as it becomes available and whenever it changes.

2. Modifications approved by the Managing Authority

- Reallocation between the respective budget categories, ~~and/or~~ work packages [and/or deliverables](#) for amounts over 10% and up to 20% of the total budget [of the project beneficiary](#). The percentage of the requested for reallocation amounts will be calculated compared to the initial Application form as approved with the signature of the Subsidy Contract.
- Extension of the date set for closing project implementation activities, if not affecting the achievement of the target set by the n+3 rule,
- Reallocation of resources between beneficiaries from the same country, which may result in a change equal to or less than 10% of the project budget (IPA II + National Counterpart). Reallocation of funds between beneficiaries from the same country

may be accepted only if it does not involve an increase in the IPA II contribution of the project.

Procedure for the approval of the above mentioned cases of project modifications:

Prior to the approval of the requested modification by the JS, the Lead Beneficiary should contact the JS and provide a short description of the problem that the project/partnership is facing. After a consultation with the JS and in order to submit a request for modification, the Lead Beneficiary should get the approval of the Project Management Team.

After the approval of the modification by the Project Management Team, an official notice must be submitted by the Lead Beneficiary to the JS, both electronically and in hardcopy stating and justifying the modification proposed. Together with the official notice, the LB must submit the following documents:

- 1) Request for project modification Form / notification for adjustment (Standard form - word Document) – Signed and stamped by the LB.
- 2) Budget modification sheet (Standard form - excel format) (in case the modification request, concerns budget modification)

The Joint Secretariat forwards the request according to its internal rules of procedures to the Managing Authority of the Programme. The Managing Authority decides upon the approval of the request, taking under consideration information provided by the Joint Secretariat. Any relevant claim must be sent to the JS/MA no later than **30 days prior** to the end date of the project (according to the AF).

After the approval of the modification requested by the MA, the LB must submit to the JS/MA the modified AF and the Specification of Budget Costs.

The LB has to report these modifications as changes in the implementation also in the regular progress report.

3. Modifications approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee

- Reallocation between the respective budget categories, ~~and/or~~ work packages and/or deliverables for amounts greater than 20% of the total budget of the project beneficiary. Budget reallocation between budget categories, ~~and/or~~ work packages and/or deliverables over 20% of the total budget of the project beneficiary may occur only if the requested change does not alter the minimum requirements, the planned action, outputs and results and does not endanger the general project

principle of co-operation. In addition to the above it is crucial for a project to keep constant those categories that are of crucial importance for the project implementation and the beneficiaries' cooperation.

- Reallocation of resources between beneficiaries from the same country, which may result in a change greater than 10% of the project budget (IPA II + National Counterpart). Reallocation of funds between beneficiaries may be accepted only if it does not involve an increase in the IPA II contribution of the project.
- Changes to the nature of the project and in particular to the objectives and the expected results. In principle it is not allowed to change the content of the project, especially the objectives and the expected results. However, in some cases modification of the approved project structure might be necessary. These changes must be well justified and described as soon as they become evident.
- Modification to the composition of the partnership: In duly justified cases stemming from beneficiary's incapability or failure to meet the undertaken responsibilities to implement the project's activities a modification of the partnership's composition may be approved. In order to replace a beneficiary from the already established project partnership, or add a new beneficiary, an important precondition is the agreement of all remaining beneficiaries. The Lead Beneficiary of the project should inform the JS in written, by submitting a request for modification in the partnership, providing a sound justification on the need of replacement of the beneficiary in question. In addition, the Lead Beneficiary should submit a written agreement of the partnership on the proposed replacement. The new proposed beneficiary should carry at least the same expertise and preferably be active in the same field of work as the one withdrawing, proving its competency to implement the allocated project activities without changing their nature, nor affecting the described deliverables and results, included in the approved Application Form. The JS will evaluate the new proposed beneficiary, taking into account the implementation of the project and the evaluation criteria set in the Project selection Criteria. Therefore, all necessary documents foreseen for each beneficiary by the Call have to be submitted, as well. The final decision will be made by the Joint Monitoring Committee. The withdrawing beneficiary should return any funds received to the Lead Beneficiary or to the appointed by the Joint Secretariat bank account.
- Budget modifications decided by the Joint Monitoring Committee on the basis of sound financial management of the Programme.

- Reallocation of resources between beneficiaries from different countries: In duly justified cases stemming from certain beneficiaries culpability to meet the undertaken responsibilities for project activities implementation, reallocation of activities and corresponding funds might be approved among beneficiaries even from different countries. Such a transfer of activities and accompanying budgets could be accommodated only within the framework of already approved project budget. In order to reallocate resources between beneficiaries, an important precondition is the agreement of the partnership. The Lead Beneficiary should submit an official request for modification to JS providing a comprehensive justification on the necessity of such activity transfer(s) among beneficiaries. The proposed changes in the project's implementation must not affect the nature of the project, the deliverables and the results as approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee of the Programme. The JS will assess the proposal, taking into account all project parameters and will submit it to the Managing Authority. Should agreement is granted, the request will be submitted for approval to the Joint Monitoring Committee. The beneficiary, whose activities/funds are withdrawn, must return the corresponding national funding. Reallocation of funds among beneficiaries may be accepted only when there is no increase in the IPA II contribution.
- Addition of new activities leading to the increase of the project budget: In case a project under implementation require additional activities that will bring added value to the project and/or will lead to the increase of the budget of the project, the JS/MA will first review these additions of new deliverables before submitting them to the JMC. The increase of the budget may be acceptable only if these new deliverables aim also to the enhancement of the successful implementation of the entire Programme, its expected achievements and capitalize its outcomes.

Procedure for the approval of the above mentioned cases of project modifications:

Prior to the approval of the requested modification by the JS, the Lead Beneficiary should contact the JS and provide a short description of the problem that the project/partnership is facing. After a consultation with the JS and in order to submit a request for modification, the Lead Beneficiary should get the approval of the Project Management Team.

After the approval of the modification by the Project Management Team, an official notice must be submitted by the Lead Beneficiary to the JS, both electronically and in hardcopy

stating and justifying the modification proposed. Together with the official notice, the LB must submit the following documents:

- 1) Request for project modification Form / notification for adjustment (Standard form - word Document) – Signed and stamped by the LB.
- 2) Budget modification sheet (Standard form - excel format) (in case the modification request, concerns budget modification)
- 3) "Letter of withdrawal from the partnership" issued by the partner leaving the project to include the date of withdrawal.

The Joint Secretariat forwards the request according to its internal rules of procedures to the Managing Authority of the Programme. The Managing Authority will take under consideration the information provided by the Joint Secretariat, present its proposal to the Joint Monitoring Committee that will decide on the approval of the request.

Any relevant claim must be sent to the JS/MA no later than 30 days prior to the end date of the project (according to the AF).

After the approval of the modification requested by the JMC, the LB must submit to the JS/MA the modified AF and the Specification of Budget Costs.

The LB has to report these modifications as changes in the implementation also in the regular progress report.

Modifications related to infrastructure works

For any modifications related to infrastructure works' contracts the National Legislation applies to all cases (such as in cases of substitution tables) and the responsibility for approval remain to the legal bodies concerned and set by the legislation and not by the JS/MA. However, the JS/MA shall be informed about the necessary changes that need to be applied in order to assess whether there is a modification to the scope and content of project. In case of objection, the aforementioned respective legal bodies will need to be informed.

Modifications requiring Subsidy Contract and Partnership agreement amendment

The Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement are only modified when a specific article compared to the one in force is modified. Indicatively, these cases are the following:

- Article concerning the partnership composition

- Article concerning the beneficiaries' budget for modifications leading to a beneficiary's overall budget increase or decrease.

No modification of these documents is required for internal budget modifications, given that none of their articles are modified.

In addition, there is no need for a Subsidy Contract modification in case the Application form, as annex of the Subsidy contract, is modified if there is no modification of any of its articles.

3.18 First Level Control

The expenditures of the Greek beneficiaries will be verified by the Unit C of the Managing Authority of "European Territorial Cooperation Programmes".

The expenditures of the Albanian beneficiaries will be verified by the First Level Control (FLC) office at the Ministry of European Integration.

Further information regarding the first level control procedures is available in the Guidance on Management Verifications (see annex).

3.19 De-Commitment of funds on project level

Following the de-commitment of IPA II funds on a Programme level, the JS/MA is faced with the task of rolling this reduction on the projects.

In this sense it is suggested to use both qualitative and quantitative criteria in order to locate which projects will be affected. Therefore the JS/MA should take into consideration the following data for the projects affected:

Qualitative criteria

- The rate of implementation
- The level of implementation
- Problems encountered

Quantitative criteria

These criteria should be based according to the foreseen amount in the AF that will be spent during this period and the amount that will be sent for verification. A serious deviation of the beneficiaries from the payments' and verifications' plan and in case of de-commitment

on Programme level, the Managing Authority will reserve the right to reduce the funds of the beneficiaries concerned.

4 ANNEXES

Application Form

Project Selection Criteria

Subsidy Contract

Partnership Agreement

Progress Report

Specification of the Budget Costs and Instructions

Guidance on Management Verifications, as in force

Ministerial Decision for the Management and Control Systems of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective Operational Programmes, as in force (regards Greek beneficiaries)

Guidelines to Greek beneficiaries of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes on implementation procedures and eligibility of expenditures, as in force

Communication Strategy Guide