



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Interreg - IPA CBC 
Greece - Albania

**Managing Authority of European Territorial
Cooperation Programmes
Joint Secretariat**
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1ST CALL FOR STRATEGIC PROJECT PROPOSALS
INTERREG IPA II CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME
“GREECE–ALBANIA 2014-2020”

1. Context

The Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece –Albania 2014-2020” is a cross border co-operation Programme co-financed by the European Union under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II (IPA II).

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for the period from 2014 to 2020 (‘IPA II’) shall support the beneficiaries listed in Annex I of the Regulation (EU) No.231/2014 in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by those beneficiaries in order to comply with the Union's values and to progressively align to the Union's rules, standards, policies and practices, with a view to Union membership. Through such support, IPA II shall contribute to stability, security and prosperity in the beneficiaries listed in Annex I of the Regulation (EU) No.231/2014.

Within this framework, the Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020” consists of three Priority Axes and four Thematic Priorities, which are:

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

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

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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 via 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 overall strategy of Interreg IPA II cross-border cooperation programme "Greece - Albania 2014-2020" 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"

The Programme's budget allocated for the period 2014-2020 is 42.312.029,00€. This amount consists of **35.965.222,00€** EU contribution and **6.346.807,00€** national contributions. The national counterpart rate for both Greece and Albania is 15%. For the 1st Call for Strategic Projects proposals, for the project beneficiaries from Albania, the 15% of the national counterpart will be covered by the beneficiaries own contribution.

Suspension clause

This Call for proposals is subject to the signing of the Multiannual Financing Agreement between the European Commission, Managing Authority and Albania (for Albanian beneficiaries) and to the signing of the Ministerial Decision on Management and Control System (for Greek beneficiaries).

2. Documents of reference

Before submitting any project proposal, applicants are invited to consult the Cooperation Programme approved by the European Commission (Decision C(2015) 5482 of 30-07-2015), Regulation (EU) No.231/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No.447/2014 (implementing Regulation (EU) No.231/2014). Applicants are also invited to study carefully the Programme and Project Manual.

These documents are available on the Managing Authority's website at <http://www.interreg.gr>, on the Programme's website at <http://www.greece-albania.eu> and on the website of the Ministry of European Integration of Albania www.integrimi.gov.al.

3. Strategic Projects

A Strategic Project aims to achieve a significant and long lasting change and improvement on the whole or large parts of the eligible Programme area. Strategic Projects will set the groundwork upon which common territorial structures for sustainable development can be created, resulting to new innovative employment activities.

The basic attributes of the Strategic Projects are the following:

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1. They are strongly connected with the national and regional policy framework, with the EU policies, as well as with the essential standards identified in the Cooperation Programme
2. They are thematically focused, and tackle issues that cannot be sufficiently dealt with, by individual regions or by ordinary cross-border projects
3. They engage a significant proportion of the Programme's budget
4. They provide clear added value and create territorial economic dynamics
5. There is always strong involvement of higher level national authorities -stakeholders

In order to facilitate the development and assessment whether a project is strategic, it is needed for the following three dimensions to be recognized:

A. Policy / Programme dimension

1. Be Coherent with the Programme strategy and with European, national and regional policies

B. Geographical dimension

2. Have real impact on the cooperation area
3. Bring tangible and visible results
4. Be sustainable

C. Action dimension

5. Built strong partnerships
6. Capitalise on experiences
7. Be innovative
8. Be "holistic"/ interdisciplinary
9. Communicate

4. Priority Axes, Thematic priorities, Specific objectives

The present call for proposals is open to both Priorities Axes, two of the four Thematic Priorities and to the two of the six related Specific Objectives of the programme, namely:

Table 1: Programme Priority and Specific Objectives under this call

Priority Axis	Thematic Priority	Specific Objective	Indicative type of actions
1. Promotion of the environment, sustainable transport and public infrastructure	(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 CB infrastructure in transport, water & waste management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning, construction, rehabilitation of water management supply, infrastructure and drinking water quality monitoring systems; 2. Planning, construction and rehabilitation of border crossings; planning, construction and rehabilitation of road network; 3. Planning, construction and rehabilitation of maritime port infrastructure, replacement/improvement of port superstructure and construction of multi-modal facilities (e.g. shelters for fishing vessels); 4. Planning, construction and rehabilitation of small wastewater management infrastructure and surface water quality monitoring systems; 5. Planning, construction and supply activities for sustainable solid waste management infrastructure, including integrated waste management infrastructure, recycling and composting, in accordance with approved Regional Waste Management Plans (as in force for each participating country).
2. Boosting the local economy	(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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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; 2. Rehabilitation of buildings of special architectural and cultural characteristics; 3. Construction / Rehabilitation of infrastructures for the promotion of local products or/and cultural products (e.g. exhibition centers, local auction places, upgrading and consolidation interventions of local, biological markets, musical and theater scenes); 4. Construction / Rehabilitation of camps, environmental and agro touristic parks.

The results that the partner States seek to achieve with Union support are:

- a. **Specific Objective 1.1: Increase the capacity of CB infrastructure in transport, water & waste management.** The aim of this specific objective is to:
- Increase share of water resources used sustainably.
 - Increase capacity for wastewater treatment.
 - Increase share of solid waste managed sustainably.
 - Improve maturity of cross-border accessibility interventions.
- b. **Specific Objective 2.1: Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area.** The aim of this specific objective is to:
- Contribute to growth in the tourist business sector.
 - Improve capacity to sustainably use natural and cultural resources in the cross-border area.
 - Preserve/protect/promote cultural and natural assets.

5. Programme Area

The eligible programme area is indicated in the table below:

Table 2: Eligible NUTS III or equivalent regions

Country	Regional Unit/Region
GREECE	Regional Unit of Grevena
	Regional Unit of Kastoria
	Regional Unit of Florina
	Regional Unit of Arta
	Regional Unit of Thesprotia
	Regional Unit of Ioannina
	Regional Unit of Preveza
	Regional Unit of Zakynthos
	Regional Unit of Kerkira
	Regional Unit of Kefallinia
Regional Unit of Lefkada	
ALBANIA	Region of Berat
	Region of Gjirokaster
	Region of Korçë
	Region of Vlorë

Beneficiaries from the Regional Unit of Kozani in Greece, will also be eligible as per the flexibility rule as stipulated in Article 44(2b) of Regulation (EU) No.447/2014, “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.

This, however, does not necessarily mean that a fixed share of 20% of the programme’s budget is reserved for beneficiaries outside the eligible area.

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6. Budget available

The total available budget for the strategic call is **11.000.000,00 €** (including Union Support and National Counterpart) and is **indicatively** allocated per Priority Axis/Specific Objective, as follows:

Table 3: Budget Available for Beneficiaries

PRIORITY AXIS:		INDICATIVE BUDGET ALLOCATION (€)		
P.A No	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	EUROPEAN UNION CONTRIBUTION	NATIONAL COUNTERPART	TOTAL BUDGET
		1	Increase the capacity of CB infrastructure in transport, water & waste management	5.950.000,00
2	Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area	3.400.000,00	600.000,00	4.000.000,00
TOTAL BUDGET		9.350.000,00	1.650.000,00	11.000.000,00

The Union Support rate is 85%.

In case where the indicative amount foreseen for the specific Priority Axis cannot be used due to the insufficient quality or the low number of proposals received, the Joint Monitoring Committee reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to another Priority Axis, with the conditions of Programme amendment (if applicable).

After the evaluation, a ranking list of the evaluated project proposals per priority axis will be drawn up. In addition, a reserve list of projects may also be drawn up following the same criteria to be used if more funds should become available. The selection of projects from the reserve list will be made on the basis of its ranking and the marking it received. The Joint Monitoring Committee may decide not to finance projects on the reserve list. In case there will be savings from the overall budget, those funds will be allocated for the future Calls for Proposals.

7. Eligible Partnerships

Project proposals must include **at least** one beneficiary from the Programme area of each country participating in the Programme. For Albania, an organization from central government may be considered as beneficiary from the programme area according to its competences.

All beneficiaries should be entitled to implement the project activities.

All projects shall be developed and managed according to the Lead Partner Principle. Beneficiaries shall appoint a Lead beneficiary among themselves that shall assume responsibilities according to the Lead Partner principle. The Lead beneficiary will represent the entire partnership towards the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat and will ensure the sound implementation of the entire project.

The Lead beneficiary should be Ministries, Central Level Bodies governed by public law (only for beneficiaries from Albania), Decentralised Administrations, or Regional Authorities.

Each applicant can participate as Lead beneficiary in no more than one project proposal per specific objective. If an applicant does not conform to the previous rule, as explicitly stated above, **all of its project proposals will be rejected.**

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Beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in either the staffing or the financing of the operations or both.

The total number of beneficiaries must not exceed eight (8) including the Lead beneficiary and should not be less than four (4).

This call for proposals is only addressed to:

- a. national, regional or local **public authorities**;
- b. **bodies governed by public law¹**, having legal personality, other than legal entities defined under paragraph a, established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest (needs not having an industrial or commercial character), and which fulfil at least one of the following conditions:
 - I. be financed, for the most part, by the national, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law or
 - II. be subject to management supervision by those bodies or
 - III. have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the national, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law;
- c. **private organisations**: non profit organizations founded according to applicable legal framework/law in the respective country can be eligible under the following conditions:
 - I. they do not have a commercial or industrial character or activities
 - II. they are non-profit² and have a legal personality.

Bodies governed by public law (under category b. above) and private organisations (under category c. above) must be operational for at least 24 months before the launching of the call for proposals. If a body governed by public law or a private organization is participating through a branch located at the Programme area, the branch must be operational for at least 24 months before the launching of the call for proposals. The documentation required for the eligibility of a branch is described in paragraph 8.

It should be noted that private entities not falling under the above categories b. and c. are not eligible.

Further information about the eligibility of partnerships and the Lead Partner Principle is provided in the Programme and Project Manual (Part A. Programme Guide).

8. How to apply – deadline

In order to submit a project proposal, Applicants must refer to the Applicant's Package and to all relevant documents for this call for proposals. Project Proposals should be submitted according to the guidelines given below:

A Project Proposal consists of:

1. The 'Application Form' (standard **excel form** provided), **stamped** and **signed** by the Lead beneficiary, in original version, (not copy or digital).

¹ Bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 1(9) of Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:134:0114:0240:EN:PDF>) and in compliance with the national legislation of each participating country.

² Profit is the making of gain in business activities for the benefit of the owners of the business (paying out dividends).

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2. The 'Concept note' on the "Strategic Scope of the Project and Sustainability" (standard form provided). A maximum 3-page document officially signed and stamped by the Legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary, to be submitted, in order to demonstrate the project's strategic character.
3. The 'Partnership Declaration' (standard form provided), **stamped** and **signed** by all the participating beneficiaries.
4. The 'Co-Financing Statement - Non double financing' (standard form provided), **completed, stamped** and **signed** by each beneficiary separately.
5. The 'Declaration of not generating revenues' (standard form provided) **completed, stamped** and **signed** by the Lead beneficiary. In case of revenue generating projects, a cost - benefit analysis should be attached (using the "Guide to Cost-benefit Analysis of Investment Projects - Economic appraisal tool for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020" at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/cba_guide.pdf).
6. The "Declaration for the non distribution of profits" (standard form provided), **completed, stamped** and **signed** only by beneficiaries under category of article 7.c (private organisations).
7. The 'Specification of Budget Costs' (standard form provided), **completed, stamped** and **signed** by the Lead beneficiary.
8. The 'Maturity Sheet' per beneficiary (standard form provided), **completed, stamped** and **signed** by each beneficiary separately.
9. Decision of the designated body of each Project Beneficiary (e.g. Municipal Council, Board of Directors, etc) stating its agreement for submitting the particular project proposal, according to the internal rules/statute of each Beneficiary or the national legislation.
10. For
 - bodies governed by public law (of article 7.b above) official documents providing evidence that the requirements of article 7.b of this call are met. In case that the nature of a public body is not clearly delivered from the submitted documents, the JS or MA may request additional documentation for clarification.
 - private organisations (of article 7.c above) :
 - Statutes including all modifications for the past 2 years.
 - Official document indicating the composition of the administrative/managerial or supervisory board.
 - Official document indicating the supervision by national, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law (if applicable)
 - Official document indicating the sources of the body's revenues, during the last two years preceding the presentation of the project proposal.
 - Declaration for the non distribution of profits.
 - Any official document certified by a public administration authority, providing that the organisation operates for at least two years before the launch of the specific call for proposals.
 - bodies governed by public law (of article 7.b above) and for private organisations (of article 7.c above) the existence of a branch within the Programme area or the participating countries is documented with at least one of the following documents:
 - Official document for the establishment/registration of a branch issued by the competent Public Authority (e.g. Tax Service of the respective country)
 - Copy of the rental contract, submitted to and validated by the respective Public Authority (e.g. Tax Service of the respective country)

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- Payroll sheet, validated by the competent Public Authority (e.g. Ministry of Labour)
- Operational costs bills (e.g. electricity, telephone etc.)

For bodies governed by public law (of article 7.b above) that have been established by a Law or Presidential Decree, the submission of a copy of the respective Official Government Gazette where the establishment of the branch is being mentioned is sufficient.

In any case, the documents above must provide evidence that the branch was established and in operation for the period required by the call under each type of beneficiary/category of beneficiary.

11. Infrastructure Projects (where infrastructure activities are foreseen in the AF) **must include** the relevant accompanying documents (licenses, approval of feasibility study or any other required approvals, construction permits, preliminary designs/studies, priced bill of quantities signed by the respective body, technical specifications, technical designs, a document certifying the land/building ownership or documentation of transferring the operation rights for the period of 5 years after the end of the project environmental impact assessment etc., where applicable), any other required approvals according to the National Legislation proving the maturity of the proposed project.
12. The Beneficiaries in Albania must additionally submit, **stamp and sign**:
 - a. The "Legal Entity" Form (standard form provided)

Particularly partners from Albania should take into account the following:

- The Legal Entity Form must be duly completed and signed by the each beneficiary in Albania, accompanied by the justifying documents which are requested therein.

The template of the respective form is also available on: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/?header_description=DEVCO+Prag+to+financial+and+contractual+procedures+applicable+to+external+actions+financed+from+the+general+budget+of+the+EU+and+from+the+11th+EDF&header_keywords=ePrag%2C+europa

13. A CD/DVD including the electronic version of the proposal as described below.

The CD/DVD, must be submitted in 2 copies and include the Application Form in excel format and all documents referred to under point 2-10 and 12 in electronic version or scanned version in case of documents signed and stamped.

The non-submission of the above mentioned documentation (points 1-12), in hard copy stamped and signed (where applicable) in one original and one copy, and the CD/DVD ROM (point 13) in two copies, will lead to the project proposal rejection. In case there are differences between the electronic and the paper version, the paper version is the binding one.

Regarding the "Partnership Declaration" (point 3), the JS shall accept the signature of each beneficiary on a separate page.

Inconsistencies (such as wrong name of beneficiaries, wrong project title or budget, wrong name of undersigning person if not entitled to sign) among the information provided in the documents under points 1 and 3-8 will lead to the project proposal rejection (deviations of decimals – amounts lower than 1€ in budget reference can be accepted).

The Application Package must be compiled in English language apart from the supporting documents (9) the decision of the designated body stating its agreement for submitting the particular project

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9. Project size

The threshold of the total project budget upon submission for each one of the Specific Objectives is provided in the following table:

Specific Objective	Minimum (€)	Maximum (€)	Minimum per partner (€)
Increase the capacity of CB infrastructure in transport, water & waste management	1.200.000,00	4.000.000,00	100.000,00
Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area	1.000.000,00	2.500.000,00	

The project budget distribution should be balanced between the participating countries, in order for the project to be effective, efficient and result oriented.

10. Eligibility of expenditure

Eligibility of expenditure for beneficiaries from Greece commences on the 1st of January 2014. Eligibility of expenditure for beneficiaries from Albania commences on the 22nd of September 2014 and payments can only be made after the signature of the Financing Agreement.

The final date of eligibility of expenditure under no circumstances may exceed the 31st of December 2023.

Eligibility rules on activities and related expenditure are described at the Programme and Project Manual.

11. Duration

The project activities shall not be physically completed or fully implemented before the application for funding is submitted.

Projects should be concluded within a maximum period of thirty six (36) months after the signing of the Contract between the Managing Authority and the Lead Beneficiary. Projects that have started their implementation before the signing of the contract, and in any case after 1/1/2014, should not have been concluded before the official launch of the respective call for proposals.

12. Evaluation of proposals

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 evaluation procedure is described in Annex, "Project Selection Criteria".

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Additional information

To obtain additional information on the project application procedure, please contact:

**Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism
Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes**

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Information Sessions regarding this call shall take place in both countries. The date and time of these events will be concurrently announced on the Managing Authority's website at <http://www.interreg.gr>, on the Programme's website at <http://www.greece-albania.eu> and on the site of the Ministry European Integration of Albania <http://www.integrimi.gov.al>

Potential applicants may pose questions in written to the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, no later than eleven (11) days before the deadline for the submission of proposals. The answers shall be agreed by both the national authorities and will be published at the above sites. Answers shall be published no later than six (6) days before the deadline for the submission of proposals.

Potential applicants are invited to regularly consult the above sites.

Special Secretary for ERDF & CF Funded Sectoral OPs

Evgenia Fotoniata

Annexes:

1. Applicant's Package (all standard forms provided)
2. Programme and Project Manual