

ANNEX

TEMPLATE FOR INTERREG PROGRAMMES

CCI	[15 characters]
Title	Interreg IPA III Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “Greece-Albania 2021-2027”
Version	Draft 2
First year	2021
Last year	2027
Eligible from	01.01.2021
Eligible until	31.12.2029
Commission decision number	
Commission decision date	
Programme amending decision number	[20]
Programme amending decision entry into force date	
NUTS regions covered by the programme	Greece EL531 (Grevena, Kozani) EL532 (Kastoria) EL533 (Florina) EL541 (Arta, Preveza) EL542 (Thesprotia) EL543 (Ioannina) EL621 (Zakynthos) EL622 (Kerkyra) EL623 (Kefallinia, Ithaki) EL624 (Lefkada) Albania AL031 Berat AL033 Gjirokastrë AL034 Korçë AL035 Vlorë AL032 Fier
strand	A

Contents

1. Programme strategy: main development challenges and policy responses.....	5
1.1 Programme area.....	5
1.2 Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other forms of support, lessons-learnt from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies.....	7
1.2.1 Context of the Programme and EU strategic orientations.....	7
1.2.2 Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities, joint investment needs.....	9
1.2.2.1 Demographic trends.....	10
1.2.2.2 Economy, research and innovation.....	11
1.2.2.3 Environment, climate change and energy.....	14
1.2.2.4 Accessibility and transport.....	19
1.2.2.5 Social development (labour market, health and education).....	21
1.2.2.6 Tourism and Cultural Heritage.....	23
1.2.3- SWOT analysis of the Programme Area.....	25
1.2.4 Lessons Learnt from past experience.....	31
1.2.5 Complementarities and synergies with other forms of support.....	33
1.2.6 Complementarity with Macro-regional Strategies.....	36
1.2.7 Programme Strategy.....	37
1.3 Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure.....	38
2. Priorities.....	49
2.1 Priority Axis 1: Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions.....	49
2.1.1. Specific objective: Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution.....	49

2.1.2	Specific objective 1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches.....	54
2.1.3	Specific objective 1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	59
2.2	Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area.....	63
2.2.1.	Specific objective 2.1: Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility	63
2.3	Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development	68
2.3.1.	Specific objective 3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.	68
3.	Financing Plan (to be updated).....	74
3.1	Financial appropriations by year (to be updated)	74
3.2	Total financial appropriations by fund and national co-financing (to be updated) ...	75
4.	Action taken to involve the relevant programme partners in the preparation of the Interreg programme and the role of those programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation	78
5.	Approach to communication and visibility for the Interreg programme (objectives, target audiences, communication channels, including social media outreach, where appropriate, planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation).....	82
5.1	Programme communication and visibility objectives	82
5.2	Target audiences.....	83
5.3	Means of communication	84
5.4	Planned budget	84
5.5	Monitoring and evaluation of communication activities.....	84
6.	Indication of support to small-scale projects, including small projects within small project funds	85
7.	Implementing provisions.....	85
7.1.	Programme authorities (to be updated)	85
7.2.	Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat	86

7.3 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission 87

8. Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs (to be updated)
87

DRAFT

1. Programme strategy: main development challenges and policy responses

1.1 Programme area

Reference: Article 17(4)(a), Article 17(9)(a)

Text field [2 000]

The eligible cross-border area of the Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 spreads from the Ionian Sea until the Prespa lakes and includes:

Country	NUTS 3 units ¹
Greece	EL531 (Grevena, Kozani)
	EL532 (Kastoria)
	EL533 (Florina)
	EL541 (Arta, Preveza)
	EL542 (Thesprotia)
	EL543 (Ioannina)
	EL621 (Zakynthos)
	EL622 (Kerkyra)
	EL623 (Kefallinia, Ithaki)
	EL624 (Lefkada)
Albania	AL031 (Berat)
	AL033 (Gjirokastër)
	AL034 (Korçë)
	AL035 (Vlorë)

¹ NUTS 2021 classification: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/background>

The Programme Area is part of the wider region of the Adriatic-Ionian, spreading from the Ionian Islands in Greece up to the coasts of the Region of Fier in Albania. On the Greek mainland the Programme area includes the whole Region of Epirus and the Region of Western Macedonia, including the land borders with Albania, from Mavromati-Qafë Botë to Krystallopigi-Kapshticë, while in the insular part it includes the Region of Ionian Islands (4 regional units). The Albanian Programme Area on the west side spreads from the Region of Vlorë up to the Region of Fier and on the east side from the Region of Gjirokastër up to the Regions of Berat and Korçë. The eligible programme areas in Albania include: the Region of Berat, the Region of Gjirokastër, the Region of Korçë, the Region of Vlorë and the Region of Fier.

In comparison to the previous programming period 2014-2020, the eligible cross-border area of IPA III CBC Greece-Albania 2021-2027 incorporates the Regional Unit of Kozani from Greece and the Region of Fier from Albania. The inclusion of all four regional units of the Region of Western Macedonia in the eligible area contributes to the EU objectives in relation to the establishment of a Just Transition Fund and the Just Transition Plan for the Region of Western Macedonia offering additional supporting tools for transition to a climate-neutral economy and investment in sustainable economic activities. The Region of Fier withholds an important position in the socio-economic development of Albania, covering $\frac{1}{4}$ of the western region and 6.6% of the general area of the country. It includes the important street arteries of Albania and is located in the crossroad of the north-south corridor and west-east corridor of the country, including as well the railway corridor of Tiranë-Vlorë. The inclusion of the Region of Fier in the eligible programme area is considered important due to its strategic position in the Adriatic-Ionian corridor, its contribution to the economic activity rates of Albania, its strong historical and cultural presence in the cross-border area.

The eligible cross-border area covers an area of 33.932 km² (20.961 km² for Greece cross-border area and 12.971 km² for Albania cross-border area), with a total population of 1.801.496 inhabitants (936.470² inhabitants in the Greek cross-border area and 865.026³ inhabitants in the Albanian cross-border area). The Programme area combines a wide variety of geomorphological features. The main characteristics are the extensive coasts, reaching from the north side of Fier to the south of the Regional Unit of Preveza, the insular area of the Ionian islands and the mountain areas in the mainland of the cross-border area.

² Census data of 2011. <https://www.statistics.gr/>

³ Data of 2020 by <http://www.instat.gov.al/>

1.2 Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other forms of support, lessons-learnt from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies.

Reference: Article 17(4)(b), Article 17(9)(b)

Text field [50 000]

1.2.1 Context of the Programme and EU strategic orientations

The Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 aims in supporting the cross-border regions of Greece and Albania to achieve a smooth and integrated transition to more sustainable economies that can overcome disparities and establish a better cross-border governance.

In this new decade EU is setting new goals and instruments in order to lay the foundations for a **greener, more digital and more resilient Europe**. Recovery and transition are the new concepts that prevail in the programming and preparation of the 2021-2027 period, as EU wishes to strengthen its structures and its economic, social and territorial resilience following the damage on growth, societies and businesses caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The EU is committed to deliver results via several strategies focusing on a) digital technology, b) sustainable growth, c) green economy and d) research and innovation.

EU has adopted the **European Green Deal** that provides an action plan for a more sustainable EU economy by boosting the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy, restoring biodiversity and cutting pollution. The European Green Deal outlines the available tools and investments for achieving transition with the aim of an EU that will be climate neutral in 2050. Investing in environmentally friendly technologies, industry innovation, cleaner forms of transport, for a decarbonized energy sector and in energy efficiency are key priorities for the EU. **Blue Economy** is considered to offer many solutions to achieve the European Green Deal objectives. The blue economy can contribute to carbon neutrality by developing offshore renewable energy and by greening maritime transport and ports. Sustainable development is deeply rooted in the EU policies and the EU has fully committed itself to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The **EU's Territorial Agenda 2030** underlines the importance of inclusive and sustainable future for all places and people in Europe. It provides orientation for strategic spatial planning and calls for strengthening the territorial dimension of sector policies at all governance levels. The Agenda defines

two overarching objectives, a **Just Europe** and a **Green Europe**, which have six priorities for developing the European territory as a whole, along with all its places. Achieving less inequality between regions, better territorial development, transition to climate-neutral and resilient regions, sustainable local economies and sustainable digital and physical connectivity are some of the main orientations provided for the new decade.

EU cohesion policy remains the main European policy that supports the economic and social recovery in all EU regions. In the new Cohesion Policy, there are five Policy Objectives, which aim at:

- a **Smarter Europe**, through innovation, digitization, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses
- a **Greener, carbon free Europe**, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change
- a more **Connected Europe**, with strategic transport and digital networks
- a **more Social Europe**, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare
- a **Europe closer to citizens**, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

Another specific objective is also created by the establishment of the **Just Transition Mechanism** and the **Just Transition Fund**. The Just Transition Mechanism was adopted by the EU in the framework of the European Green Deal in the fight against climate change and for environmental protection. The Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) focuses on those regions and sectors that are most affected by the transition given their dependence on fossil fuels, including coal, peat and oil shale or greenhouse gas-intensive industrial processes. Aim of the JTM is to ensure that the transition is accompanied by specific and integrated measures in order to support the economies of those regions and enhance employment. The Just Transition Fund is the first pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism, which is a key tool introduced by the EU for the transition towards a climate-neutral economy by ensuring that this transition is carried out in a fair way, leaving no one behind. In Greece the two districts that fall under the JTF are the region of Western Macedonia (eligible area of the cooperation programme) and the Megalopolis city in the Peloponnese.

For Albania additional objectives are set by the EU enlargement policy and the strategy for 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans'⁴, which sets the priorities and areas of joint reinforced cooperation, addressing the specific challenges, the Western Balkans face. Six flagship initiatives are proposed by the Western Balkan Strategy

⁴ A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, Strasbourg, 6.2.2018, COM (2018) 65 final.

including strengthening the rule of law, reinforcing engagement on security and migration, enhancement support for socio-economic development, increase of connectivity, implementation of the Digital Agenda of the Western Balkans and support of reconciliation and good neighbourly relations. The EU engagement on the Western Balkans is highlighted by the **“Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans”**,⁵ which aims to spur the long-term recovery of the COVID-19 disrupting effects on the economies of the Western Balkans, backed by a **green and digital transition**. For the efficient support of the **European Green Deal**, the European Commission has presented a **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans** aiming at: decarbonisation, depollution of air, water and soil, circular economy, farming and food production, and protecting biodiversity. The **Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans**⁶ is in the heart of the new Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans focusing on key investment areas such as transport, energy and the twin green and digital transitions. An Agenda for the Western Balkans on Research, Innovation, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is expected to be a vehicle supporting the deliverables of the Economic and Investment Plan, providing opportunities to students, researchers, innovators and cultural operators so that they access new markets, become more competitive and build sustainable prosperity.

The **EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)** a macro-regional dimension that reconnects the Western Balkans to the EU and supports a convergence of interests on the enlargement between EU member and IPA countries, while promoting the strengths of the area building on the common challenges. This aspect of the EUSAIR can be enhanced by putting emphasis on territorial cooperation and cohesion. The Commission Communication on **“Enhancing the accession process-A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans”**⁷ is forming the basis for the EU enlargement process and sets the clear criteria and commitments to be examined in the accession negotiations. The European Council has acknowledged the progress made by Albania towards justice reform, fight against corruption, fundamental rights and public administration reform and opened the accession negotiations with Albania in March 2020⁸.

1.2.2 Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities, joint investment needs

The Programme area shares many challenges connected with economic growth, infrastructure, social and environmental issues. The main joint challenges of the Programme area are being analysed

⁵ “An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkan”, COM (2020) 641 final, Brussels, 6.10.2020

⁶ EU Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans, European Union 2020.

⁷ Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans, COM(2020) 57, Brussels 5.02.2020.

⁸ 2020 Communication on EU enlargement policy, COM(2020) 660 final, Brussels 6.10.2020

regarding the following main fields: economic development, demography, environment and energy, accessibility and transport, social development (labour market, health and education), tourism and cultural heritage.

1.2.2.1 Demographic trends

Demographic trends remain an issue for the Programme area, since both countries are facing a decrease in their population, while a severe aging problem is also detected, especially for the southern part of Albania. Greece's population is declining, with more than 100,000 people leaving the country every year. The total population decreased by almost 400,000 between 2010 and 2019 due to the combined effect of net emigration and a negative natural population change. Annual emigration flows have risen, from about 40,000 people before 2010, to above 100,000 in 2012-2017. In 2016 and 2017, the overall migration balance turned positive due to large inflows of non-EU citizens, mostly refugees. However, the net emigration of Greek citizens continued and people who left the country exceeded those who returned by 22,000 in 2017, although this trend has slowed since 2013. The high number of people leaving the country has led to further decreases in fertility rates and a worsening of the pressure of population ageing. The population of Albania in 2019 has experienced a decrease with 1.06% compared to 2015. The Region of Fier occupies 10.3% of the total population in Albania, while the Region of Gjirokastrë occupies only 2.1% of the country's population, presenting also the highest old dependency ratio (21.3%) among the Albanian regions⁹. Emigration remains a reason in the decrease of the Albanian population, combined by low fertility rates. According to a World Bank study, by 2005 at least one in three households had a member who had left the country (World Bank 2007).

Due to its geographical position, the cross-border eligible area during the recent years has received a high level of influx of migrants and refugees. An increase is being recorded since 2017 in the number of migrants in Albania. According to Albania's statistical data in the year 2019 asylum seekers in Albania increased by 49.5 % compared to 2018. Asylum seekers originating from Iraq and Syria accounted for 62.4 % of the total number of asylum seekers in 2019 and result 2,408 and 1,682 asylum seekers respectively¹⁰. Greece has experienced an intensification of migrant inflows in 2019. An estimated 112,300 refugees and asylum seekers were hosted in Greece in December 2019 (UNHCR, 2019). Cross-border cooperation could set up respective priorities and measures for the border crossing management and mobility and migration management, including the protection of migrants and refugees, as well as the building of a safety net for the provision of the basic living conditions. Cross-border cooperation can contribute in adopting measures intended to address the

⁹ Population of Albania, 2019: <http://www.instat.gov.al/>

¹⁰ Asylum seekers in Albania, year 2019. Instat

needs of refugees, including sustainable accommodation in shelters or supported independent living and a guardianship system for unaccompanied minors.

1.2.2.2 Economy, research and innovation

Economy

In terms of economic development, the total gross labour productivity in the cross-border area is significantly lower than the EU27 avg. (approximately 25%). Albania's real GDP per capita is less than one third of the EU average and less than half of that of the new EU member states¹¹. In Albania GDP growth slowed considerably in 2019 due to lower hydro-electricity production, a drop in investment and the fallout from the earthquake of November 2019. Additionally, the completion of some large infrastructure projects caused a contraction in investment. Household consumption continued to be the main growth driver in Albania¹². In order to speed up convergence to the EU income levels, Albania needs to increase productivity, shifting the growth model away from consumption to investments and exports. In Greece, following the return to economic growth in 2017, the growth rate has stabilized at around 2%, largely backed by consumer spending and net exports. Export performance has been positive in recent years backed by cost competitiveness gains. Despite the economic upturn, large accumulated imbalances remain as a legacy of the crisis. These imbalances concern the high public debt, the negative net international investment position, the high share of non-performing loans on banks' balance sheets and the still high unemployment rate¹³.

The Greek economy revolves around the tertiary sector of the economy (services) (80.6%) and the secondary sector of the economy (industry) (16%), while primary sector of the economy (agriculture) made up an estimated 3.4%¹⁴. For Western Macedonia the productive model of the Region was traditionally characterized by the emphasis on the primary sector and the utilization of some of its natural advantages, but over time it evolved into the development of some prominent economic activities, such as the lignite-energy sector and the fur production sector. The dominance of these two sectors in the region's economic activity has limited efforts to develop other development activities¹⁵. In the Region of Ionian Islands, the participation of the tertiary sector in the total gross added value of the Region amounts to 89%, while the secondary and primary sectors participate by 8.6% and 2.6% respectively. In the Region of Epirus the primary sector has a significant weight in the

¹¹ Albania Country Strategy 2021-2025, Approved by the Board of Directors on 12 February 2020.

¹² "Albania 2020 Report", Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, SWD(2020) 354 final.

¹³ Country Report Greece 2020, 2020 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011, SWD(2020) 507 final.

¹⁴ Country Report Greece 2020, 2020 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011, SWD(2020) 507 final.

¹⁵ Strategic Environmental Impact Study of the Operational Programme of Western Macedonia 2014-2020.

economic development of the Region: In Epirus 7% of the gross added value belongs to the primary sector, while the corresponding Nationwide is 3.3% (provisional data 2011).

Agriculture is an important economic sector for the Albanian economy. It contributes 18.5% of the GDP and employs 36.1% of the workforce (World Bank, 2020). However, the agricultural sector suffers from a lack of modern equipment, highly fragmented land ownership and limited area of cultivation, all of which lead to a relatively low productivity. The industrial sector accounts for 20.2% of the country's GDP and employs 20.2% of the active population. The services sector represents 48.6% of the GDP, employing 43.7% of the workforce. Trade, transport and hospitality services, are important branches of the Albanian economy. Tourism has the potential as one of the key drivers for growth, job creation and investments – both foreign and domestic and has experienced a rapid increase in annual tourist arrivals but it still needs to convert this to a sustainable increase in value added and employment¹⁶.

Research and innovation

In the fields of research and innovation the Programme area presents low performance levels. Despite the presence and operation of important institutions that could be accelerators for development of synergies for innovation in the business sector, the cross-border area has not yet fully adapted and implemented the necessary policies that can support smart specialization. Albania has recently completed the mapping phase of the Smart Specialization Strategy, while Greek regions have recently developed “smart specialization” strategies, but only 3 out of the 13 Regions established a Smart Specialization Technical Office and only one is operating. According to the European Regional Innovation Scoreboard (data of 2019), the regions of Western Macedonia, Epirus and Ionian Islands in Greece are characterized as moderate innovators. Among the three regions the Region of Western Macedonia presents the highest increase in innovation performance over time (23.1%), while the respective rate for Epirus is at 12.5% and for the Ionian Islands at 22.8%. Albania provides small-scale financial instruments for innovation of SMEs, provided by the Innovation Fund administered by the Albanian Investments Development Agency (AIDA), which is responsible for overseeing the innovation policy implementation in the country.

The growing number of SMEs especially in the tourism sector in both countries and the key importance of agriculture in the local economies could be furtherly benefited by the development of innovation skills enabling the increase of SMEs competitiveness and transition to sustainable models of production and services. Opportunities in research and innovation arise for the Greek regions by the presence and operation of the three main Academic institutions, the University of Western

¹⁶ Country Partnership Framework for Albania 2015-2019. World Bank Group.

Macedonia, the University of Epirus and the Ionian University (including the merged Technical Education Institutions). The main fields of scientific activity for the University of Ioannina are natural sciences, medical & health sciences and agricultural sciences. For the University of Western Macedonia, the main scientific activity regards natural sciences, engineering and technology (in fields such as energy production, clean energy technologies, hydrogen and alternative energy sources, energy saving and related environmentally friendly technologies). For the Ionian University the main fields of scientific activity include natural sciences, history and social sciences, informatics, tourism and music studies. On the Albanian side there are four Universities, the University of Gjirokastrë (Eqrem Çabej) within main scientific fields in Social Sciences, Economics and Education, Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The University of Korça (Fan S. Noli) Social Sciences, Agriculture, Education and Economics. The University of Vlora (Ismail Qemali) with the main fields of scientific activities in Public Health, Marine Science, Engineering and Technology, Biology, and Economics. And, the University of Tirana, Saranda's branch with scientific activities in economics, and tourism.

Connectivity and digitalization

IT network and connectivity are still weak in the cross-border area, especially for rural areas. Development of the IT network and connectivity is an important factor for supporting economic activities especially in the tourism sector. In Albania there is a considerable gap in fixed internet-broadband penetration between urban and rural areas. Rural areas in Albania account for 40% of the population, but only 5% are connected to the internet. In Greece, the transition to fast and ultrafast broadband is much slower than in the rest of the EU. Although the national broadband plan has been updated, there are considerable delays in project implementation and the absorption of allocated funds remains low. The use of internet services is picking up, although from a markedly low level. Moreover, regional disparities in terms of access to internet are particularly high. Transition to digital services is a key priority for Albania according to its national strategy, while Greece has introduced the Digital Transformation Bible 2020-2025 which outlines the strategy, guiding principles, the strategic axes, the horizontal and vertical interventions that will lead to the digital transformation of the Greek society and economy. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the efforts and the need for transition to digital services, especially in public services.

COVID-19 impact on economy

The measures that have been applied in both countries to confront the pandemic, have caused uncertainty for the progress of the economic development. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic Greece has applied measures aiming at the mitigation of the effects on the labour market. Emphasis was placed on maintaining jobs and compensating employees' incomes. Increased uncertainty and reduced demand for products led to an increase in borrowing for almost all sectors.

The sectors that received the most funding in October 2020 were manufacture & industry, commerce and tourism, i.e. sectors that were most affected by the pandemic, with annual funding changes of 10.5%, 9.2% and 13% respectively. The largest annual change of funding was recorded by the logistics and transport sector (24%) in its attempt to adequately finance the increased activity that resulted from the recent lockdown¹⁷. In Albania the economy was projected to contract by about 7.5% in 2020 (vs. 2.2% in 2019) reflecting its dependence on tourism and remittances. Trade, transport and hospitality services, important branches of Albania's economy, greatly contributed to the recession with a 27% decrease.

1.2.2.3 Environment, climate change and energy

Environment and natural resources

One of the most competitive advantages of the cross-border programme area is its environment and its unique natural resources. The eligible cross-border area combines a variety of geomorphological features: high mountains, rolling hills and small plains, a long coastal line and a significant number of islands (small and large), rivers, lakes and lagoons.

Protected areas of international interest are included in the cross-border area that call for integrated and coordinated actions for their preservation and valorization. The Great Prespa Lake with a surface of 281.7 km² is shared between Albania (18%), Greece (14%) and the Republic of North Macedonia (68%). The river of Aoos, known also as Vjosa (and its tributary Drinos), which originates from the Northern Pindus Mountain range, flows for 70 kms through Greek territory and for 190 kms through Albanian territory and flows out into the Adriatic Sea, north of the city of Vlorë. Sites of international interest include Little Prespa Lake in Greece, which is part of the Prespes National Park, the National Park of Butrint and the National Park of Karavasta Lagoon in Albania (all protected by the Ramsar convention). In Western Macedonia 24 protected areas are situated, whereas the areas included in the Natura 2000 network in the area represent the 3,62% of the protected areas of the country¹⁸. The Regions of Ionian Islands and Epirus are also characterized by rich biodiversity. In the Ionian Islands there are 19 areas included in the Natura 2000 network, while in Epirus the same areas are 31. The highest pressure on these areas is caused by human activity and climate change. Invasive alien species is also becoming a serious problem in the cross-border regions, as they are one of the most important direct drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem service changes, and they constitute the greatest threat to fragile ecosystems such as islands. Albania is considered a biodiversity hotspot in Europe. To protect the remarkable biodiversity and valuable natural resources, the government has placed under protection about 18% of the territory, including 58 protected areas covering a

¹⁷ The response of the Greek companies to the pandemic. PwC network, 2020.

¹⁸ Region of Western Macedonia, Action Plan for Biodiversity, September 2017.

range of categories under IUCN –International Union for Conservation of Nature¹⁹. In the Programme area, within Natura 2000, are listed 5 main sites, like Tomorri mountain National Park, Divjaka-Karavasta National Park, Llogara National Park, and Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape. Cross-border lakes, such as that of Ohrid and Prespa represent the exchange points of the flora and fauna with neighboring countries. The large number of sub-endemic species related to Greece, and marine endemic species in the Adriatic Sea point out the importance of Albania regarding protection of biological diversity in the regions of the Balkans and the Mediterranean²⁰. In Albania, the number of tourists in Protected Areas increased by 30% in 2019 (916,660 visitors) compared to 2018 creating a need for more investments in human and eco-friendly infrastructure as well as enforcement of environmental regulations²¹.

The ratification of the Prespa Lake Agreement²² is an important step forward by the countries that shows their commitment to address joint challenges in the field of biodiversity protection and preservation. It also creates an area of possible territorial focus in the cross-border for the support of environmentally friendly local economies, the promotion of protected areas and networks with tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian region in line with the objectives of the EUSAIR for the establishment of protection measures for natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems.

Climate change

Regions of the cross-border area are highly vulnerable to the climate change risks, which can also affect their economic activities (agriculture, forestry, tourism). Albania is a small country with a fragile economy reliant on the services, industrial and agriculture sectors, and faces a range of challenges in addressing climate change risks. The vulnerability of Albania's energy supply and agriculture sector to climatic changes, combined with a series of recent heavy floods and landslides, are elevating climate change preparedness as a priority within Albania's development planning²³. The National Adaptation Strategy of Greece that was published in 2016²⁴ categorizes the Greek regions within the cross-border areas as highly vulnerable, especially in the sectors of mining industry (Western Macedonia), agriculture, fisheries and forestry (Region of Epirus) and tourism (Region of

¹⁹ COVID-19 impact on the Western Balkans. Deep-dive in Albania and how the pandemic impacted the SDG's. Erik Gjermeni and Alban Lika in collaboration with the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) as part of a project supported by the United Nations Economic Commission.

for Europe (UNECE) and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Albania

²⁰ CBD Strategy and Action Plan- Albania.

²¹ COVID-19 impact on the Western Balkans. Deep-dive in Albania and how the pandemic impacted the SDG's. Erik Gjermeni and Alban Lika in collaboration with the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) as part of a project supported by the United Nations Economic Commission.

²² Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area. Official Journal of the European Union, 4.10.2011

²³ USAID, Climate Change Risk Profile Albania, Fact Sheet.

²⁴ "National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy", General Directorate of Environmental Policy, Directorate of Climate Change and Atmosphere Quality, April 2016.

Ionian Islands). Impacts of the climate change in the Programme Area are expected to be heatwaves, recessionary or cyclonic rains, floods, wildfires, landslides and erosion. The cross-border area is also showing high vulnerability to natural disasters, especially: floods, droughts, extreme temperatures, fires and earthquakes.

Cross-border cooperation can support investments for the development of joint management plans and policies in this field, as well as the implementation of measures for ensuring better preparedness to climate change risks. Greece's National Energy and Climate Plan has been set as one of the main strategic documents for the country. A key objective for the climate strategy of Greece is reducing the share of lignite in power generation and putting a complete end to the use of lignite for power generation in Greece by 2028. The lignite phase-out plan for the Region of Western Macedonia in the eligible cross-border area will have to be furtherly supported with the implementation of integrated actions for smoothening transition of the affected areas to the post-lignite era. The adoption of a Just Transition Plan for the Region of Western Macedonia in Greece puts in focus the support of regions in transition such as Kozani and Florina, in a way to ensure that the shift from the lignite activity will be accompanied with investments for development of new business activities such as investments in clean energy (e.g., photovoltaic parks), sustainable tourism (e.g., wine tourism, medical tourism), smart agriculture production (e.g., hydroponics).

Regarding climate change Greece has also developed and adopted by means of Law 4414/20 the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change. Regions of Greece are also set to prepare their plans for adaptation to climate change by defining the immediate adaptation priorities at regional/local level. An important step towards adaptation to climate change for Albania has been the ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. This step has paved the road for Albania to set its Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) baseline, freeze its consumption amount and establish a schedule for phase-down of HFCs. In 2019 the Albanian government endorsed the National Climate Change Strategy, representing the country's low carbon-development strategy towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement²⁵. The strategy focuses on energy, transport, agriculture, land use and forestry, with a 32% renewable energy target.

Energy and renewable resources

Energy efficiency is another common challenge of the Programme area. Disparities in this area are also an issue. In Greece funding programmes for promoting energy efficiency in private and public buildings during the last years have been welcomed by final stakeholders, but the need for more

²⁵ Paris Agreement, United Nations 2015, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

such measures and programmes is highlighted. Cross-border cooperation has brought some positive results in this field during the previous and current programming period, contributing in the implementation of interventions for the improvement of energy efficiency. It is acknowledged though that both countries still perform low in energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources. In Albania there is no wide-reaching progress in the field of renewable energy sources, as well as in the field of energy-saving in buildings. In Greece during the past years there have been funding initiatives on national and regional level for promoting energy-saving actions for public building, businesses and private housing. The Region of Western Macedonia has already adapted a strategy for the improvement of public building energy efficiency including provisions and targets for public schools, health care buildings, administrative and other public buildings²⁶. Resource efficiency is also becoming a priority due to the rapid growth in demand for resources. The Region of Ionian Islands has also incorporated in its regional operational programme priorities for improving energy efficiency in public buildings²⁷, while the Region of Epirus is also funding projects for improvement of energy efficiency in public buildings²⁸.

Cross-border cooperation can contribute in strengthening measures for the promotion of energy efficient models in public spaces, transport and business sectors by enhancing exchange of know-how, capacity-building, transfer of technology and development of joint solutions and pilot actions. Waste and water management still remains an issue for the cross-border regions, affecting them on different levels according to their geographical characteristics, climate change vulnerability, economic activity and infrastructure capacity. Knowledge transfer and raise of awareness in these fields could be supported by cross-border cooperation.

Water and waste management

Albania is a country, whose water surface and ground water resources far exceed their usage. There are about 250 natural lakes, the three largest being transboundary: Lake Ohrid (estimated volume approximately 55 billion m³), Lake Prespa (estimated volume approximately 5 billion m³) and Lake Shkodër (estimated volume approximately 2 billion m³)²⁹. Along the Adriatic-Ionian coastline there are several lagoons, including Karavasta Lagoon, Narta Lagoon and Butrint Lagoon. Most of economic activities rely on utilization of water resources, where over 90% of energy production comes from Hydropower Plants (HPPs), and agriculture fully depends on irrigation. Also, other sectors of economy like mining, industrial sector and tourism are also relied on clean and sufficient fresh water

²⁶ Region of Western Macedonia Action Plan for the improvement of energy efficiency in public buildings, September 2017.

²⁷ Progress Report on Implementation of the Operational Programme of the Region of Ionian Islands.

²⁸ Annual Report (2018), Operational Programme of the Region of Epirus.

²⁹ Environmental Performance Reviews-Albania, 3rd review. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2018.

resources. In Albania some progress was made in water management through performance contracts signed with utilities, the regularization of illegal connections, a revised subsidy scheme, and the adoption of a staff certification scheme. However, greater efforts are needed to strengthen the capacity, performance and sustainability of utilities. Albania needs to increase capacity in the waste-water sector as well. Waste-water treatment plants cater for only about 15% of the population, they still face key concerns such as lack of licensing and tariffing for waste-water treatment, insufficient operation and maintenance and limited environment impact due to underdeveloped networks and connections.

Greece has adopted and reported the second generation of River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive. In Greece the main user/consumer of water is agriculture. For irrigation purposes 80-85% of the total water consumption is used. Water imbalance is often experienced, especially in the coastal regions, due to temporal and spatial variations of the precipitation, the increased water demand during the summer months. In Greece investments are needed to improve water treatment, also with a view to respecting the guidelines of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. Over the past decades Greece has given priority to the construction of wastewater collection and treatment facilities in medium and large urban centers and about 90% of the generated load is connected to collecting systems, representing slightly more than half of the Greek agglomerations. In 2014, all agglomerations larger than 2000 inhabitants complied with the requirements of sewerage collection, with 89.6% of the generated load connected to collecting systems and 10.4% was collected through individual or appropriate systems (Office International de l'Eau (2017)). However, A significant part (16%) of urban areas with over 10,000 inhabitants is served by individual systems, whose appropriateness to protect the environment may be questionable. Reuse of waste waters is expected to be adopted increasingly in the coming years. Investments are required to fully comply with the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive in order to support actions such as the removal of obstacles to fish migration, the re-naturalization of the flow of rivers, and measures for flood prevention and mitigation.

Waste management remains a concern for Albania as separate collection of waste streams and economic instruments to promote recycling and reuse and to prevent waste generation remain limited. The completion of the sanitary landfill in Maliq can provide safer solid waste management for the areas of Korçë and Pogradec, allowing other local government units to transport their solid waste to this sanitary landfill as well. However, for the successful management of solid waste additional support is required by local government units for sorting, collection, transport and disposal of solid waste in the available sanitary landfill of the cross-border regions. Greece disposes the majority of its municipal waste in landfills (80 %, vs EU average of 24 %), with only 17% being recycled (EU average 46 %). Additional efforts and actions are required for the increase of recycling

rates in Greece, in line with the EU standards. The use of financial instruments to incentivize prevention, reuse and recycling is insufficient and the existing schemes are performing poorly.

COVID-19 impact on the environment

The pandemic outbreak demonstrated a mixed impact on climate and the environment. Air pollution improved substantially during the lockdown but the positive impacts reversed immediately with the relief of the measurements. The short-term positive impact on air pollution and climate of pandemic showed once the need to promote the use of renewable energy sources to meet the energy demand and keep low rates of greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and pollution reduction.

1.2.2.4 Accessibility and transport

The geographical characteristics of the cross-border area create several joint needs for the regions. The main challenges for the cross-border area in the fields of transport and connecting the area arise from a) the insular complex of the Region of Ionian Islands, b) the remote, mountainous and sparsely populated areas of Albanian regions and c) the extensive coastline of the cross-border area. The geographical features of the cross-border region create challenges arising from territorial fragmentation and discontinuity, as well as difficulties in accessibility.

The cross-border area is covered by maritime transport and road network, but the current infrastructure in both transport sectors does not have sufficient density or proper quality. Poor road network in remote and isolated areas and inadequate infrastructure are not ensuring a good connectivity across the border. All airport infrastructure is located on the Greek side of the cross-border area (Ioannina, Kerkyra, Kefallinia, Zakynthos, Kozani and Kastoria), and cater to both domestic and international flights (regular and charter). Albania's international airports are located in Tirana and in the city of Kukës, while the construction of one more international airport is being planned, which will be located in the Region of Vlorë. The inclusion of the Region of Fier in the eligible cross-border is creating new potential for the development of better connection networks in Albania since the region holds a strategic location in the polycentric system of national roads networks in the country, being also part of the Tirana–Vlorë railway connection. In light of recent developments in railway infrastructure, the IPA II programme is supporting the strategic project of constructing the Krystallopigi - Pogradec railway line, which will serve as a cross-border communication facility and a better connection within programme area.

Some progress is being recorded in Albania's transport networks, as it continued to harmonize its legal and institutional framework with the EU Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) Regulation and the Transport Community Treaty (TCT). Progress is also made in the preparation of

road, rail and port infrastructure projects, especially along the Adriatic-Ionian corridor and corridor VIII (Varna–Durrës)³⁰. Road safety issues though are still a concern for Albania, pointing out that interventions are needed in order to eliminate “blackspots” and reduce road fatalities. Greece presents low performance rates as well, in the fields of road safety and service quality. Road fatalities are still high in Greece comparing to the EU average, as 64 fatalities per million inhabitants were recorded in 2018, against an EU average of 49. The Greek Road vehicle fleet is also highly dependent on oil with low use of renewables, resulting to low score in carbon emissions performance. Greece and the European Investment Bank, have prepared a National Transport Master Plan for Greece³¹. The main goals for Greece include increase of multi-modality for freight transport by improving rail connections to Trans-European Networks ports and redesign of the coastal shipping network to create regional nodes that will allow faster transfer to smaller ports and islands. Maritime transport is one of Greece’s competitive advantages that could be exploited further contributing in domestic economy and urban regeneration.

The Programme area includes strategic ports (port of Corfu, Igoumenitsa, Vlora and Saranda) important for tourism and commerce. According to statistical data for 2019 in Greece a total of 881.237 passengers have disembarked in the port of Igoumenitsa and a total of 561.204 passengers in the port of Corfu. The highest number of passengers disembarked in recorded from March until August (602.487 passenger in Igoumenitsa and 519.119 passengers in Corfu) and is connected with tourism. The Albanian programme area includes the ports of Vlora, Himara and Saranda. The port of Vlora is the second largest port in Albania and comprises a dry cargo port, the Vlora 1 petroleum port and a fishing harbour. The port of Vlora is expected to be upgraded by the investment for the creation of a marina for recreational boats and tourism services. The port of Himara is a small harbour for recreational boats, and ships, and it has an entrance gate for all international tourists. However, it has basics infrastructure and port facilities. In the port of Saranda an increase has been marked in the number of international tourists who enter the city via Saranda port from the stopping by Cruises, marking the importance of the port in the local economy. Some of the main challenges in maritime transport of the programme area are the delays in the completion of infrastructure projects in port areas and facilities, which could improve mobility, transfer of goods and people in the cross-border area and thus economic growth especially for developing regions. In the Greek programme area and specifically in the Region of Ionian Islands connectivity within the insular complex is inadequate. Ferry connectivity between the Ionian Islands is a major issue for the Region and it is also affected by seasonality. A ferry connectivity is available between the islands of Kefalonia,

³⁰ “Albania 2020 Report”, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, SWD(2020) 354 final.

³¹ Country Report Greece 2020, 2020 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011, SWD(2020) 507 final.

Lefkada and Zakynthos. The port of Corfu is the only one connected with the Diapontia Islands, but frequency of routes is higher only during summer. The port of Corfu is also the only one connected with the Albania, as there is a ferry connectivity with the port of Saranda. However, frequency of routes and passenger's capacity load are low.

COVID-19 impact on transport

Transport has been one of the main sectors that was hit hard due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Greece the travel restrictions, the closure of borders and the subsequent restrictions combined with the strong reduction of tourist arrivals by 77.2%³² for the period Jan-Sept 2020 compared to the corresponding period of 2019, hit the transport sub-sector companies represented in the wider service sector. In Albania the number of sea passengers dropped by 75,92% in comparison to 2019, while the number of air passengers dropped by 60,74% in 2020³³. Cross-border mobility was highly affected by the travel restriction measures applied by both countries. The main border stations (Krystallopigi- Kapshticë, Sagiada-Qafë Botë, Ktismata-Kakavijë) remained closed from April to May 2020, while in December 2020 only the border station of Ktismata-Kakavijë was available for limited cross-border transportation and exchange. International road arrivals in 2020 from the border stations dropped severely in comparison to 2019 (-80,8% in Sagiada-Qafë Botë, -73,7% in Krystallopigi- Kapshticë and -68,6% in Ktismata-Kakavijë)³⁴. Sea transport between Greece and Albania (ferry connection from Corfu port to Saranda port) remained unavailable since the travel restrictions forced in March 2020 and throughout the same year.

1.2.2.5 Social development (labour market, health and education)

Employment and labour market

The Programme area faces high unemployment rates both on total active population and on youths. Progress in promoting investment in education skills and employability is limited. According to the latest regional statistics about unemployment, the total unemployment rate in the Greek and Albanian border regions is around 20%. In Greece, large disparities are recorded at regional level. The unemployment rate is highest in Western Macedonia (27.0% in 2018), a matter that creates great concern as the country is preparing for the implementation of its Just Transition Plan that involves the aforementioned region. Unemployment rates in Albania are also high, while a significant difference is being recorded in the unemployment rates between men and women. The exchange of

³² INSETE intelligence data, November 2020 issue.

³³ INSTAT. Transport of passengers, 2012 -2020 data.

³⁴ INSETE intelligence data, February 2021 issue.

seasonal laborers is one of the main characteristics of the labour market in the cross-border area. About 10.000 seasonal workers are required every year from Greece to be employed in agriculture.

Health services

Health services are also a field of common challenges and needs. The COVID-19 crisis has surfaced the importance of health infrastructure and services. Improving access to health services especially in remoted areas is very important for the cross-border area. In Albania, public spending on health remains low at 2.9 % of GDP with disproportionately low resource allocations to primary health care, despite the fact that the country had adopted the 2016-2020 national health strategy. Greece still presents a limited progress in investment in the health sector, keeping in 2017 one of the lowest percentages in the euro area (0.1% of GDP as opposed to 0.2% of GDP in the euro area). Financing from the European Social Fund, has however contributed to the reform of primary health care and the rolling out of a network of local healthcare units to strengthen access to primary healthcare. Public spending on long term care is very low, as it amounts for 2% of total healthcare spending. Considering the high rate of aged people (+65) who face serious difficulties in personal care and/or household activities this record creates great concern for Greece. The operation of the General University Hospital of Ioannina is an important factor for the cross-border area as it facilitates the population from both countries. Improvement of cross-border management could contribute to improve the valorization of this asset of the programme area.

Education and vocational training

The Greek regions exhibit relatively higher educational levels than the areas in Albania. The Adult Education Survey (AES), which measures participation in formal or informal education over a longer time span of one year, also shows a significant gap between Albania (9.2%) and the EU-28 average (45.1%). In Albania a positive record is that the secondary school and university enrolments and outcomes have improved steadily over the past decade. However, public spending on education remains low. A new Agency has also been established for the employment and vocational education and training (VET) structure, which could contribute to the efforts for alignment of education and training to the needs of the labour market. In Greece, progress in promoting investment in education skills and employability is also limited. Public expenditure on education accounted for 3.9% of GDP in 2017, among the lowest in the EU (EU average: 4.6%). The proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training was far below the EU average (28.8% compared with an EU average of 47.8% in 2017) and has been decreasing since 2013. However, challenges are still identified in the field of vocational education and training.

COVID-19 impact on social development

The COVID-19 crisis has affected nearly every aspect of social development. Governments in both countries have applied subsequent measures for mitigating the socio-economic effects of the restrictions taken for preventing the spread of the pandemic. In Greece measures focused in supporting citizens to maintain their income and mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the labour market. However, there is a need for additional specific measures that will mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis for vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees, single-parent families, Roma people)³⁵.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 in Greece has highlighted the deficiencies of the health care system, as well as the limited healthcare services available to the refugee population currently living in Greece. In Albania key measurements consisted of additional funding for the health sector, paying minimum salaries supporting small businesses and self-employed, funding for companies to access in overdrafts for paying employee wages. The 2021 budget for health and social protection compared to the 2020 budget, is enriched by 7.5%, while only for the health sector, the budget was amplified by 8.25%³⁶.

In education the restriction measures and the closure of schools and universities during 2020. Online learning was introduced to both countries but it was highlighted that an important number of students did not have adequate access to online learning due to connectivity or devices deficiencies. Such problems affected mostly children and students living in rural or remote areas.

Economic disruption and, consequently, large job losses are expected to increase the already high unemployment rates in both countries. The number of people in need of social protection will increase calling for a need to strengthen protection policies as to respond effectively to the ever-increasing pressure on the system and to cushion effectively both the short-term and the potential long-lasting socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.

1.2.2.6 Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Tourism

For the Programme, area tourism is one of the most important economic sectors. In Albania, tourism is growing steadily and investments in this area are increasing. In 2019, Albania adopted a national strategy for the sustainable development and tourism and an action plan. In the period 2014-2018,

³⁵ Support measures to mitigate the effects of the second wave of COVID-19 in Greece. ESPN Flash Report 2020/66.

³⁶ COVID-19 impact in the Western Balkans. Deep dive in Albania and how the pandemic impacted the Sustainable Development Goals. Erik Gjermeni and Alban Lika in collaboration with the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) as part of a project supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Albania.

the arrivals of foreign citizens coming in Albania were approximately 23.6 million persons. Only during 2018, the arrival of foreign citizens is 15.8% more than 2017. Activities related directly with tourism (2 digit NACE Rev.2: 55, 56, 77, 79) generated 45 ALL billion value added in 2018 with a contribution by 2.8 % in GDP. Cultural tourism seems to be important for the country as in the period 2014-2018, the number of visitors in archaeological parks, museums, castles and other monuments was approximately 3 million persons with an increase by 49.4 % for the year 2018. In the eligible Programme area, the higher percentage of trips for holidays preferred by Albanian citizens in 2017 was registered in the Region of Vlorë³⁷. In Albania 80% of its hotels are located in coastal areas (Velipoja, Shëngjin, Durrës, Kavaja, Vlora, Saranda, or Pogradec). Most accommodation facilities are family businesses rather than large professionally managed groups. Thus, there is a need for supporting development of skills through vocational training and stimulating innovation, knowhow transfers and the provision of business advice. Tourism is a big force for the Greek economy. Tourism GDP accounted for 6.8% of total GVA in 2017. The sector directly employed 381. 800 people in 2018, accounting for 10.0% of total employment in the country. In the Greek programme area, the Region of Ionian Islands and Epirus are those with the highest number of visitors, while the Region of Western Macedonia has the lowest number at national level³⁸. The Region of Ionian Islands ranks fourth in the list of the Greek regions with the highest rates of international airport arrivals and concentrates more than 80% of the accommodation establishments of the Greek cross border area. Cruise tourism in the Region of Ionian Islands has been growing steadily from 2013 to 2019, being an important economic industry for the region. In 2019, a total of 1.044.160 cruise passengers arrived in the ports of Corfu, Kefalonia and Zakynthos³⁹.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural and natural heritage is another territorial asset of the cross-border region, presenting similarities and common challenges when it comes to protection measures, valorization and effective promotion with the scope to strengthen tourism destination branding. The eligible cross border area is characterized by unique and diverse cultural heritage that could form the basis for tourist development. On the Albanian eligible part there are three sites on the UNESCO World Heritage Site register, the historic centers of Berat and Gjirokastrë, the Butrint Archaeological Site, the natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region and two on the tentative list (the Ancient city of Apollonia in the region of Fier and the Royal Tombs of Selca e Poshtme in Korçë). On the Greek eligible area there is one site on the UNESCO World Heritage Site register, the Old Town of Corfu and three on the

³⁷ Tourism in figures. Albania 2019, INSTAT.

³⁸ INSETE, Annual Report on Competitiveness and Structural Adjustment in the Tourism Sector: Region of Epirus. December 2020.

³⁹ INSETE, Annual Report on Competitiveness and Structural Adjustment in the Tourism Sector: Region of Ionian Islands. December 2020.

tentative list (Archaeological site of Nikopolis and Zagorochoria – North Pindos National Park in Epirus and the area of the Prespa Lakes: Great Prespa Lake and Small Prespa Lake in Western Macedonia).

COVID-19 impact on tourism and culture

Tourism has been one of the main sectors to be affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Tourism, which accounts for more than 20% of Albania's GDP, was one of the most affected sectors by the pandemic. In July 2020, the number of foreign tourists was found to have decreased by 61.5% compared to last year. The Greek tourist product is characterized by massiveness and seasonality as tourist flows are particularly dense at certain period of the year. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Greece's most profitable sector. A need to upgrade the tourism product by investing in less seasonal and more qualitative forms of tourism has emerged (e.g., conference, medical tourism). Culture has also been affected by the restrictions applied due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visits in archaeological sites and museums, as well as organization of theatre performances and cultural events were suspended during the lockdown. Several cultural institutions turned to new technological means and digitalization for producing cultural products. However, additional measures are required for supporting culture to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and acquire alternative tools for cultural production.

1.2.3- SWOT analysis of the Programme Area

According to the socio-economic analysis the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the programme area are being presented in general and in connection to the relevant Policy Objectives of the Cohesion Policy.

General SWOT of the Programme Area

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geographical position in the southeastern Mediterranean and in the Adriatic-Ionian corridor, including strategic ports. ▪ Cross border area rich in natural resources, including protected areas and biodiversity of international interest. ▪ Operation of Higher Education Institutions in the cross-border area with valuable research output, including departments in the fields of mechanic, engineering, IT and health studies. ▪ Variety of renewable energy resources (solar, wind, geothermal). ▪ Important contribution and position of tourism and agriculture sector in local economies. ▪ Rich common cultural heritage in the cross-border area and prominent UNESCO World Heritage Monuments. ▪ Growing number of SMEs, especially in tourism sector ▪ The participation of Greece and Albania to the EUSAIR strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-border area including remote and sparsely populated areas, as well as islands. ▪ Negative demographic trends, including high rates of aging population and high levels of young people emigration leading to brain-drain. ▪ Cross-border regions with high vulnerability to climate change. ▪ Low performance levels in energy efficiency and limited exploitation of renewable energy resources. ▪ Limited progress in waste management and water quality treatment. ▪ Inadequate interconnectivity in cross-border area, especially in remote areas and insular complexes. ▪ Weak IT network and connectivity, especially in rural areas. ▪ High unemployment rates and inadequate investment in vocational training. ▪ Limited access to long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptation of EU development policies and implementation of EU funding programmes, including participation to macro-regional strategies. ▪ Development of Just Transition Plan for Western Macedonia and decommissioning of lignite-based generation plants in Greece. ▪ Cross-border cooperation and agreements on protection and valorization of natural resources (Prespa Lake Agreement). ▪ Synergies between private sector and research institutions in the field of innovation. ▪ Implementation of infrastructure project in transport. ▪ Adoption of regional development policies and programmes. ▪ Embedding priorities and flagship actions of the EUSAIR strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the cross-border, affecting already less developed regions. ▪ Regional disparities in the fields of health services adequacy, education and training services and economic development. ▪ Brain-drain as a result of emigration rates of young educated people. ▪ Delays in the implementation of adaptation to climate change strategies. ▪ Threats on natural resources and ecosystem due to invasive alien species that intrude to natural habitats and human economic and industrial activity. ▪ Socio-economic impact for regions in tradition from lignite activity. ▪ Inadequate administrative capacity in the monitoring and implementation of European, national and regional strategies. ▪ Delays in the completion of large infrastructure project in the cross-border area. ▪ Administrative and legal barriers and different levels

	health care services and health care in general especially for remote areas. ■ Low performance in research and innovation. ■ High dependence on lignite for energy production.		of institutional capacity of potential beneficiaries.
--	--	--	---

DRAFT

Thematic SWOT of the Programme area

Policy Objective	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>PO2-A greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique and rich biodiversity • A high number of identified protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites, internationally designated protected areas (Prespa lakes, Karavasta Lagoon). • Extensive coastal front in the Adriatic-Ionian region. • Variety of renewable energy resources (solar, wind, geothermal). • Rich water resources • Rich and diverse coastal lines • Participation of Greece and Albania to the EUSAIR strategy in reference to Pillar 3 “Environmental Quality”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High vulnerability to climate change • Low levels of energy efficiency • Inadequate management of water and waste • Limited progress in recycling and reuse • High levels on dependence on imported energy • High risk for floods and forest fires • Low level of awareness of pollution control, and carbon emission • Limited progress in protecting the environment and biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition of the energy sector and adaptation of Just Transition Plan of Western Macedonia • Funding programmes for energy efficiency in public and private buildings • Adaptation of National Strategy for Circular Economy in Greece. • Greece’s National Energy and Climate Plan. Adaptation of respective plan by Greek regions. • Ratification of Prespa Lake Agreement • National Strategy for Climate Change adaptation in Albania. • Ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer by Albania. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change risks, particularly for coastal and insular areas. • Detection and impact of Invasive species on cross-border ecosystems. • Delays in the adjustment to EU standards for waste management. • Impact of increased human activity on environment and biodiversity. • Socio-economic impact for regions in transition. • Migration of resident people of the programme area. Lading to declination of the POs impact.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of EUSAIR flagship projects in the eligible area in the fields of protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems. 	
PO3- A more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic geographic position of cross-border area in the South-Eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic-Ionian corridor • Operation of strategic ports for tourism and commerce • Unique environment that can support different types of tourism • Strong position of maritime transport in Greece • Participation of Greece and Albania to the EUSAIR strategy in reference to Pillar 2 “Connecting the Region” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of infrastructure in transport • Poor road network in rural and inaccessible areas • Inadequate interconnectivity in insular areas (Region of Ionian Islands) • Low progress in reduction of road carbon emissions and road safety measures • Fragmentation of the eligible territories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonization with EU TEN-T and Transport Community Treaty • Implementation of projects on road, rail and port facilities in the Adriatic-Ionian corridor. • Adaption of National Transport Master Plan for Greece • Expansion of broadband connectivity • Inclusion of EUSAIR flagship projects in the eligible area supporting cross-border connection and integration to TEN-T network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in the implementation of large infrastructure projects • Limited progress in the transition to environmentally friendly means of transport • Accessibility difficulties for remote, mountainous and insular areas • COVID-19 impact in transport sector • Lack of resources required for large infrastructure
PO4- A more Social Europe, delivering on the European	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of Academic Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High unemployment rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Funding tools and Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 impact in social protection,

<p>Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained staff in the health sector • Operation of University Hospital in the cross-border area • Rich cultural heritage • Increasing investments in tourism sector • Participation of Greece and Albania to the EUSAIR strategy in reference to Pillar 4 “Sustainable tourism” • Operation of Universities in the CBC area within healthcare, social care, humanities academies researches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disparities between regions • Inadequate access to services for inhabitants in sparsely populated rural areas. • Low rates in the modernization of health care services • Inadequate tourism branding and marketing for destinations in the cross-border area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments for strengthening primary health services • Adaption national strategy for culture and action plan in Albania • Just Transition Plan for Western Macedonia • Inclusion of EUSAIR flagship projects in the eligible area supporting sustainable and thematic tourist routes, the brand building of Adriatic-Ionian services and products and fostering of the Adriatic-Ionian cultural heritage. 	<p>tourism and culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in the population, especially of the young population • Absence of policies for long-term health care services • Massiveness and seasonality in the tourism sector
---	--	---	--	--

1.2.4 Lessons Learnt from past experience

Cross-border cooperation in the eligible area during the previous and the current programming period has brought important achievements mainly in the areas of tourism and environment, supporting the development of tools for the better exploitation of the tourist areas and the cultural heritage. The implementation of the cross-border cooperation Programme Greece-Albania 2007-2013 and the current implementation of the Interreg IPA II CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2014-2020 has contributed to the creation of more experienced beneficiaries.

The Interreg IPA II CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2014-2020 aimed 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 launched in total five Calls for proposals (two calls for ordinary projects, one call for strategic projects and two calls for targeted projects). A total of 68 projects were selected for funding. The projects intervened mainly in the following fields: a) waste water treatment, b) solid waste management, c) road network, d) protection of biodiversity, e) nature protection, f) energy efficiency and RES, g) risk prevention and management, h) protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets and i) actions supporting SME's. All projects had to justify their compliance in respect to equality between men and women and non-discrimination and their contribution to sustainable development.

According to the results of the evaluation report on the implementation of the Interreg IPA II CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2014-2020⁴⁰ and the authorities' opinions on the achievement of the Programme's priorities, the relation of the selected projects with other EU Policies and special issues, the selected projects seem to have contributed at a very satisfying level at the Programme's priorities and specific objectives.

The assessment by authorities has also considered the overlook on policy sectors targeted by the selected projects and types of participants, to be positive in term of coherence and consistency with the Programme priorities and with the common and Programme specific results and outputs indicators. Furthermore, the selected projects seem to match with the integration and multi-perspective approach to the local development overall approach of the Cooperation Programme.

⁴⁰ Second evaluation of implementation and impact of the Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece – Albania 2014-2020, 5th deliverable, final evaluation report.

Operational aspect of the cross-border programme

At operational level the programme evaluation report has confirmed the efficient and effective programme support to projects and the related satisfaction of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries have also expressed their satisfaction with the submission procedures and forms, although some declared that there is still some room for improvement. Moreover, the document on Project Selection Criteria, gave a clear picture of the selection procedure, bodies involved, selection rules and criteria, so that beneficiaries were kept well informed about the assessment process and transparency was ensured.

The use of the Management Information System (MIS) has improved application and monitoring process and is considered adequate and in place. Still the administrative burden of the programme is deemed to be heavy for the final beneficiaries (especially with respect to administrative procedures followed for tendering and contracting). The institutional capacity has also been recognized as an important difficulty in project implementation as institutions are still reporting lack of staff. Supportive actions and tools such as the presentations used during info-days, the Frequent Asked Questions and the Programme's Management and Control System uploaded on the programme site, are considered by beneficiaries to be very helpful in the management of their projects⁴¹. Beneficiaries are also suggesting for simplification of verifications procedures is also being suggested by beneficiaries as well as training sessions for enhanced cooperation and exchange of experience.

The biggest issue that arose during the previous programming period was the adaptation and implementation of the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG) by Greek Beneficiaries and the delays that it caused to the implementation of the approved projects. Other implementation issues include:

1. Delays in the opening of bank accounts for Albanian beneficiaries
2. The liquidity of Albanian beneficiaries and the time-consuming transfer of the pre-financing.
3. The unrealistic assessment of the time needed for the preparation and implementation of the tendering procedures.
4. The unavailability of First Level Controllers in Greece, due to the limited number of controllers.
5. Insufficient cooperation between beneficiaries leading to the delays in the submission of payment claims.
6. Delays in the signing of the subsidy contracts leading to delays in project implementation due to the delays on the adaptation and implementation of the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG) by Greek Beneficiaries.

⁴¹ Second evaluation of implementation and impact of the Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece – Albania 2014-2020, 5th deliverable, final evaluation report.

7. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis leading to the change in the time plan and additional modification in order to ensure implementation of the project activities.
8. Inexperienced staff and under staffed organizations.

The main recommendations of the evaluation suggest:

- Better structuring and consistency of the applicant's package for project proposals.
- Reducing the administrative burden for project implementation.
- Harmonization of eligibility rules should be further strengthened.
- Needs and benefits to use modern communication tools (e.g. Skype, Webinar software) should be further explored, live Webinars to better advise applicants on a daily basis in a resource-efficient manner.
- The MA/JS should organize Info Days more often in accordance with the recognized needs in order to efficiently and effectively address identified issues also in the programme implementation.

1.2.5 Complementarities and synergies with other forms of support

The complementarity of Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 with other forms of support focuses on the added value of this cooperation programme along with other sources of financing. In some cases, the complementarity may lead to coordination and synergy actions. Therefore, complementarity has a larger scope than coordination. The complementarity and connections that can be established by Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 refer to the following sources of financing:

a) Complementarities with the Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund is the first pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism, which is a key tool introduced by the EU for the transition towards a climate- neutral economy by ensuring that this transition is carried out in a fair way, leaving no one behind. Greece has already identified the transition areas and has developed a Just Transition Plan for the Region of Western Macedonia and the city of Megalopolis (Peloponnese) which are among the EU regions with the greatest dependence on fossil fuels. Greece has drafted a Just Transition Plan for the Region of Western Macedonia and the Municipality of Megalopolis. A distinctive programme to be supported by the JTM is set for Greece. The investment areas according to the Just Transition Plan are clean energy, smart agricultural production, sustainable tourism, industry- commerce and technology-education.

Creation of job positions in new professions, establishment of SMEs, enhancement of research centers and investment in high technology sectors.

The Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 can contribute in capacity building and promotion of new types of economic activities, development of sustainable tourism services and promotion of cultural heritage for the involved areas of Florina and Kozani. In this way, regions in transition will be provided with additional tools for a more integrated shift to new forms of economic activities.

b) Complementarities to other Programmes

The Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 could develop synergies with other cooperation programmes that include external partners and involve the participation of other countries, considering also that the Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 participates in the network created by the INTERACT with a scope to look for synergies in the Mediterranean Sea. Complementarity shall be pursued with other cross-border programmes namely: IPA CBC Greece- Republic of North Macedonia in promoting joint actions in the Prespes area in line with the Prespa Lake Agreement and Interreg Greece-Italy in supporting joint actions for improved cross-border maritime connectivity. Complementarities can be pursued with other IPA III funding programmes such as the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro, the IPA -IPA Programme Republic of North Macedonia-Republic of Albania, as well as with transnational programmes such as the ADRION and the Euro-MED Programme. Synergy and coordination with the cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes will be pursued through: a) thematic networks including the organization of joint meetings or working groups on complementary topics between the Programmes, b) actions including organization of information seminars for potential beneficiaries on similar themes covered by the programmes and organization of conferences/events to showcase examples of complementary projects. Coordination is also important as the cross-border programmes present thematic similarities especially concerning the themes of tourism, cultural and natural heritage and environment.

The cross-border eligible area is part of the Adriatic-Ionian corridor and the operations of the programme are expected to contribute to the pillars of the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy. Specifically, the cooperation programme is expected to contribute to: a) Pillar 2 “Connecting the Region” in the topics of intermodal connections to the hinterland, as well as maritime transport, b) Pillar 3 “Environmental Quality” in the topics of transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity and c) Pillar 4” Sustainable Tourism” and the topics of diversified tourism and sustainable and responsible tourism management. Therefore, cooperation should be also be promoted between the IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 and the future ADRION Programme which is expected to

contribute in enhancing mobility in the Adriatic- Ionian regions and support transition to greener economies. Euro-MED Programme 2021-2027 is another programme with which the cross-border programme can pursue cooperation, particularly in the field of climate change and mitigating risks and innovative sustainable economy (and tourism).

The Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 Programme can strengthen and capture synergies with other sectoral programmes in the cross-border area. Complementarities can be pursued for green issues (renewable energy resources, green infrastructure, reduction of pollution, climate change adaptation, protection of biodiversity, water management and circular economy) with the Programme “Environment, Energy and Climate Change 2021-2027” implemented in Greece, as it is mentioned in the respective programming document. Synergies can be developed with Greece’s “Transport Infrastructure Programme 2021-2027” which foresees actions for enhancing cross-border connectivity (upgrade of road networks, improvement of cross-border mobility) and supporting connectivity with the islands (improving the port infrastructure of island regions, interconnection of island regions with the mainland).

c) Smart specialization strategies

The integrated adaptation and implementation of Smart Specialization Strategies is considered very important for the cross-border area as it enables each region to identify and develop its own competitive advantages. Through its partnership and bottom-up approach, smart specialization brings together local authorities, the academic community, business spheres and the civil society, working for the implementation of long-term growth strategies supported by EU funds. Albania has completed the mapping phase of the Smart Specialization Strategy, while the Greek regions have already developed “smart specialization” strategies. Cross-border cooperation can contribute in learning and generation of good practices in the field of smart specialization in the sectors of energy efficiency, sustainable tourism, social innovation and transport.

d) Complementarities with the Territorial Agenda 2030

Territorial Agenda is a strategic policy document for spatial planning in Europe, its regions and communities. It provides a framework for action towards territorial cohesion and a future for all places in Europe. It asks policy makers at all governance levels to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable future for all places and to help achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Europe. Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 could contribute to the Territorial Agenda on project level, especially under the Interreg specific objective “a better cooperation governance” and PO5 “A Europe closer to citizens” by investing on actions for the enhancement of capacity

building and reduction of inequalities between better-off places and those with less prosperous future perspectives.

1.2.6 Complementarity with Macro-regional Strategies

Greece and Albania are included in the nine countries of the European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Both countries in their national strategies have highlighted the importance of promoting the emblematic priorities of the Strategy, will proceed with the “embedding process” to include the relevant flagship priorities into the Programme strategy and join efforts to implement projects that contribute to the macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). The general objective of the EUSAIR is to promote the economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity, while safeguarding environmental protection. EUSAIR is also expected to contribute at the further European integration of the Western Balkans. Macro-regional strategies (MRS) have become an integral part of EU regional policy, designed and implemented in a defined geographical area in order to jointly address challenges and develop opportunities they have in common through setting shared, long-term objectives for the macro region in question. The collaboration and the synergies between Managing Authorities in this defined geographical area is becoming a necessity.

Within the national strategic documents, as well as the regional ones, the emblematic priorities of the EUSAIR strategy have been incorporated so that they can lead to the implementation of projects of macro-regional added value. The same principals apply for the Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027, which is invited to promote the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, both at the level of the programme architecture and priority axes, as well as through implementation mechanisms: specific selection criteria (ex. bonus points if the project contributes to a macro-regional strategy); earmarking of a specific budget by a targeted call.

EUSAIR includes four thematic areas/pillars: 1. Blue growth, 2. Connecting the Region, 3. Environmental quality, 4. Sustainable tourism. The Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 will aim at pursuing complementarity with the EUSAIR supporting actions and investments that contribute to the flagships, addressing challenges of macro-regional importance. The cooperation programme is expected to tackle challenges in the areas of environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation of natural risks connected with pillar 3 “Environmental quality” of the EUSAIR. Considering the stakeholder consultation outcomes, it is expected that cross-border cooperation will be pursued in the field of “Sustainable tourism” contributing to pillar 4 of the EUSAIR, especially with the aim to create and promote thematic touristic routes. Among the high priority needs of the programme area that are expected to be tackled through the cooperation programme is the improvement of cross-border connectivity in line

with pillar 2 of the EUSAIR “Connecting the Region”. Capitalization of the Interreg IPA II CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 investments for improving inland border connection of Greece and Albania is expected to be pursued in the new cooperation programme strategy contributing to the EUSAIR overall goals for the creation of multimodal corridors in the Adriatic-Ionian Region, alongside the TEN-T network, reducing infrastructural, technological and legislative gaps.

1.2.7 Programme Strategy

The Interreg IPA CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 aims to promote integrated regional development. Through cross-border cooperation, communities located in border areas seek to promote the socioeconomic development of the border area, develop economies of scale and overcome their peripheral positioning.

The Programme Strategy emphasizes on specific objectives that can contribute in bridging the gap of regional, social and economic disparities in the cross-border area and promoting sustainable development. According to the joint development needs of the cross-border area the three policy objectives of the Cohesion Policy that the Strategy involves are:

- **Policy Objective 2** (a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management)
- **Policy Objective 3** (a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks)
- **Policy Objective 4** (a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights)

On this basis three Priority Axes are formed:

- **Priority Axis 1:** Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions
- **Priority Axis 2:** Improving accessibility in the cross-border area
- **Priority Axis 3:** Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development

1.3 Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure

Reference: Article 17(4)(c)

Table 1

DRAFT 2

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
<p>PO2- a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management</p>	<p>1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution</p>	<p>Priority Axis 1: Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions</p>	<p>The cross-border area presents a rich biodiversity and an important number of protected areas of international interest including lakes, wetlands, mountain ranges and coastal areas (and the most important the last wild river in EU, Vjosa (Aoös) River). The Great Prespa Lake with a surface of 281.7 km² is shared between Albania (18%), Greece (14%) and the Republic of North Macedonia (68%). The river of AooS- Vjosa (and its tributary Drinos), which originates from the Northern Pindus Mountain range, flows for 70 kms through Greek territory and for 190 kms through Albanian territory and flows out into the Adriatic Sea, north of the city of Vlorë. The Ionian Islands include 19 areas of the Natura 2000 network, while in Epirus the same areas are 31. Areas of Natura 2000 in Western Macedonia represent 3,62% of the protected areas of Greece. Albania includes 58 protected areas covering 18% of its territory. Investments for enhancing protection and preservation of these areas and measures for reducing all forms of pollution and impact from human activity will alleviate the risks regarding loss of ecosystems, endangered biodiversity, protection from invasive species and better valorization of natural assets. The National Park of Prespa has been declared as a cross-border Park with international interest. The ratification of the Prespa Lake Agreement</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>between the two countries is an important step for the valorization and protection of natural resources that can be furtherly supported by cross-border cooperation. The development networks in the cross-border area for the protection of habitats and common ecosystems is also important for the promotion of the emblematic priorities of the EUSAIR and the creation of Green and Blue corridors in the Adriatic-Ionian region.</p> <p>Investment in green infrastructure can improve the urban environment and contribute in the reduction of air pollution. Limited progress in waste management and recycling calls for the implementation of concrete measures including raising awareness for recycle and reuse and promotion of circular economy. In Albania separate collection of waste streams and economic instruments to promote recycling and reuse and to prevent waste generation remain limited. The new landfill in Maliq can provide safer solid waste management for the areas of Korçë and Pogradec, but additional actions are required for sorting, transport and safe disposal of solid waste. Greece has not yet overcome many problems in waste management. Municipal waste generation has remained at the same level in recent years. Greece disposes the majority of its municipal waste in landfills (80 %, vs EU average of 24 %), while recycling rates still remain low in comparison to the EU average (17%, vs EU average of 46%).</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
	<p>1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches</p>		<p>Meeting the EU standards in recycling is crucial for the cross-border eligible area.</p> <p>The regions of the cross-border area present high vulnerability to climate change. Economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fishery and tourism are the main sectors affected by climate change in the cross-border area. Albania is reliant on electricity production by hydro sources. This can make energy production sector highly vulnerable to climate change, since droughts can result in less electricity produced by the hydro power plants. The extensive coastal areas, as well as the remote and less developed areas are exposed to several risks arising from climate change. Natural risks (earthquakes, fires, severe weather and floods) can become major cross-border issues. The development of joint measures for monitoring, prevention and preparedness to such risks is important.</p> <p>Interventions for the mitigation of climate change risks is a priority for the cross-border area which every year suffers from wildfires, floods causing severe disasters in the natural environment, on road networks and build-up environment, affecting local communities and economies as well.</p> <p>More investments are needed in energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in order to slow down air pollution (by reducing greenhouse gas emission which results in less ozone layer depletion) and fight climate</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>change. Deployment of technology and infrastructures for affordable clean energy can support transition to an improved quality of environment and mitigation of climate change risks.</p>
	<p>1.3 Promoting access to water and sustainable water management</p>		<p>Sustainable water management is common need for the programme area. In Albania most economic activities rely on utilization of water resources, where over 90% of energy production comes from Hydropower Plants (HPPs). Water supply and sewerage in Albania still faces major problems such as lack of adequate infrastructure in water and waste water management & treatment and the need to increase the water utilities efficiency, especially in rural areas. Waste water treatment plants In Albania cater for only about 15% of the population, while discharges of treated and untreated wastewater pose a threat for rivers and water quality. Uncontrolled and not recorded interventions in the water regimes, deterioration of the water quality and increase of pollution from waste water discharges specifically in coastal areas of Albania create a considerable pressure for water management in Albania. Enhancement of water monitoring (water quality and quantity) is important for the effective implementation of water management measures and programmes. Furthermore, water management measures and action plans will need to take into account flood protection and climate change risks.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>Greece has adopted and reported the second generation of River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive. Greece is mainly dependent on groundwater resources for its water supply. Water imbalance is often experienced, especially in the coastal regions, due to temporal and spatial variations of the precipitation, the increased water demand during the summer months. The Region of Epirus includes some of the most important rivers of Greece (Aoos, Arachthos, Kalamas, Louros, Acheron), while the Region of Western Macedonia holds 65% of the country's surface waters with an important number of lakes, river network and underground water resources. In the Region of Ionian Islands there are 5 rivers, 22 coastal and 5 transitional surface water bodies. Water uses are distinguished in water supply and tourism, related to drinking water, irrigation, livestock and industry. In Greece investments are needed to improve water treatment, also with a view to respecting the guidelines of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.</p> <p>Human economic activities and water demand, especially in cross-border communities with intense agricultural and tourism activity pose a need for investing in measures for preventing water pollution and improving waste water treatment methods.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
<p>PO3- a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks</p>	<p>2.1 Developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility</p>	<p>Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area</p>	<p>Connectivity and accessibility in the cross-border area remains one of the main structural needs. Road network in rural and isolated areas, especially in the Albanian cross-border regions is still inadequate. The main challenges of the programme area include poor road network in remote and isolated areas and inadequate infrastructure. Road safety is an important concern for both countries, as road fatalities rates remain high. Investment in actions for eliminating “blackspots” and improving road infrastructure is considered essential for the cross-border area.</p> <p>One of the main advantages of the cross-border area is the operation of important ports (Igoumenitsa, Corfu, Saranda, Vlora). Tourism growth in the coastal areas of the cross-border regions is creating additional needs in the services provided by ports. Investments for the improvement of port logistics, including information systems and the rehabilitation of port infrastructure, particularly of the maritime ports of Vlorë and Saranda are considered important for the upgrade of maritime transport in the cross-border area. Actions for supporting the transition of ports to climate neutral practices and services will contribute to the EUSAIR priorities, specifically in the EUSAIR flagship for the “Adriatic-Ionian multi-modal corridors” in line with the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (Directive 2014/94/EU) is prioritizing the Onshore Power Supply in TEN-T</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>ports by the end of 2025. In the Region of Ionian Islands connectivity within the insular complex remains inadequate. Actions for the improvement of connectivity between islands, including actions for support of multimodal transport will enhance local economies and improve accessibility in the cross-border regions.</p> <p>Development of intermodal services is important for promotion of sustainable tourism. A future railway connection in the cross-border area and the improvement of sea and road connection could contribute in identifying multimodal corridors in the eligible area in line with the EUSAIR priorities. Mobility plans for the cross-border area could facilitate the local population, especially residents of remote areas that need to commute regularly in larger urban and suburban areas, ensuring better access to health care and other services.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
<p>PO4- a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>3.1 Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation</p>	<p>Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development</p>	<p>Tourism holds an important role in the economies of the cross-border area. It accounts for 18% of Greece’s GDP and employs more than 900,000 people, accounting for one fifth of the workforce. In Albania tourism has been growing steadily. In Albania tourism’s contribution to the country’s GDP rose by 8.5% in 2019, and that tourism contributed 21.2% of the total economy. However, the tourism sector seems to be one of the main sectors affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Investing in measures and actions for the enhancement of tourism competitiveness is essential for local economies. Improvement of tourism branding and promotion of alternative types of tourism (including health tourism, agro-tourism, conference tourism, hiking tourism, enotourism, etc.) will help local communities to boost their competitiveness, especially for regions in economic transition such as the Region of Western Greece. Support of tourism can contribute in generating new jobs and social capital. Investing in sustainable tourism models, promoting resource-efficient and low carbon tourism. Unmanaged tourism growth and seasonality are main challenges for the cross-border area. Preserving natural resources and promoting sustainable tourism is essential for the stabilization of the tourism sector.</p> <p>The cross-border eligible areas presents a rich cultural heritage, a common</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>asset that could be used to support economic development across the region. Investments in the cultural and creative sector can help the local economies to recover from the COVID-19 crisis impact and support the preservation of cultural heritage. The cross-border area includes sites listed in the UNESCO World Heritage monuments (Corfu Old Town, the historic centers of Berat and Gjirokastër, the Butrint Archaeological Site). The valorization of cultural heritage through new technological tools for improving accessibility, supporting cultural expression and creativity through digital channels will enhance the promotion of cross-border cultural heritage. Investments in cultural heritage and creativity shall put emphasis on social inclusion and promotion of equality.</p> <p>Investments under this specific objective aiming at the diversification of the cross-border tourism offer and promotion of sustainable tourism shall contribute to the EUSAIR flagships: “AIR CULTURAL ROUTES/ Development of sustainable and thematic cultural routes/ connecting cultural routes in EUSAIR”, “DesAir- Training and skills in the field of tourism businesses (vocational and entrepreneurial skills)” and “CRUISAIR -Expanding the tourist season to all-year round”.</p>

DRAFT 2

2. Priorities

Reference: Article 17(4)(d) and (e)

2.1 Priority Axis 1: Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions

Reference: Article 17(4)(d)

Text field: [300]

This is a priority pursuant to a transfer under Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective 1.1: Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(i), Article 17(9)(c)(ii)

The programme area is characterized by rich natural resources and biodiversity, including an important number of protected areas. Cross-border shared ecosystems, especially around the Prespa Lakes (Great Prespa Lake and Small Prespa Lake) and river Aoös (Vjosa) are a field of cooperation in the Programme Area for the enhancement of their environmental and touristic value. Special attention needs to be paid in the management and protection of designated areas and the biodiversity of the cross-border regions in line with the EU objectives for a greener Europe. The enhancement and protection of less-known ecosystems is considered important and is associated with the touristic promotion of undiscovered gems in the cross-border area. The promotion of eco-tourism and the adoption of joint actions for supporting responsible tourism in protected areas and areas of environmental value can foster tourism growth in the programme area that is more sustainable and more distant to the massive tourism models that are causing an increased pressure on the environment.

In the Region of Fier, the area of Mallakstra suffers from high level of pollution as a result of the exploitation of the oilfield. The pollution from the extractive and processing industry of hydrocarbons are affecting the air and soils. There are needed measures to be taken regarding the improvement of air quality through the increase of the green areas and green infrastructures, and measures to be taken for protecting the environment.

Transition of the Region of Western Macedonia in Greece from the lignite activity creates a need to invest in measures for rehabilitation and promotion of clean energy in the affected areas. Renewable energy resources and energy efficient measures can be promoted through the promotion of green infrastructure in urban areas of the cross-border regions, contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions. Green infrastructure is a concept that can support rehabilitation activities for cities and areas in transition from industrial activities by investing in parks, green streets and smart conservation measures. Green infrastructure can be multifunctional, enabling different types of benefits and services for local communities including measures for the protection of biodiversity, accessibility in nature, recreation and social interaction, reducing flood risks and improving despoiled landscapes.

Waste management remains an important challenge for the cross-border area. In Albania waste management remains at a low level, especially for rural areas. Raising awareness among citizens in recycling and reuse is considered crucial for an effective waste management in the cross-border area, as both Greece and Albania present low performance rates in recycling. Circular economy is becoming more and more a topic for local communities since it is associated with the objective for transition to greener economies. The promotion of effective waste management is connected with the need to reduce pollution in the cross-border area and apply measures for minimizing the impact of human activities on the environment.

Cross-border cooperation governance in the field of environmental protection is another important theme expected to be addressed by this specific objective. The goal is to support public authorities and stakeholders to work on common understanding of cross-border environmental issues. Actions for improving cross-border cooperation governance may include the development of joint solutions for monitoring and collecting data on cross-border shared biodiversity. Such initiatives shall be complemented by actions for the development of the institutional capacity of public and environmental authorities, as well as NGOs in supporting the exploitation of common natural heritage and improving cross-border coordination for the prevention of risks and monitoring of threats on natural habitats.

Type of actions (non-exhaustive list)

- Investments for the protection and enhancement of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity including the promotion of responsible tourism and eco-tourism.
- Measures for monitoring of biodiversity, genetic sources and protected ecosystems.
- Promotion of the use of technologies for environmental protection and preservation.
- Actions for the restoration, protection and efficient management of natural protected areas (e.g. Natura sites), with a focus on endangered species.

- Support data on natural resources preservation (natural parks, protected areas, Natura 2000 etc.)
- Joint actions for the protection of nature and biodiversity (protection of wetlands, mountainous natural reserves, rivers)
- Develop the capacity of environmental authorities and NGO to exploit their common heritage.
- Promotion of measures for reducing pollution (waste collection and management, recycling and reuse, prevention of sea pollution in coastal areas, rivers soils and air pollution and raising awareness for reducing the use of plastic).
- Investments for the promotion of green infrastructure mainly in urban areas (green streets, recycling systems, accessibility in nature, reducing flood risks, etc.) and the rehabilitation of areas in industrial transition.
- Development of joint strategies and action plans for tackling pollution, protection of cross-border shared natural resources and biodiversity.
- Pilot actions for testing possible solutions in collecting and monitoring cross-border biodiversity data and threats for natural resources.

Type of actions contributing to the EUSAIR

Investments under this specific objective can contribute to Pillar III of the “Environmental Quality” of the EUSAIR and particularly in the flagship for:

- “Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems”, by implementing actions aiming the improved management and monitoring of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems, particularly in cross-border protected areas and Natura 2000 areas.
- “Development and implementation of Adriatic-Ionian sub/regional oil spill contingency plan”, by implementing actions for improving the capability of reaction at possible accidents and better prevention of risks for possible accidents, as well as actions for raising awareness on pollution prevention.

2.1.1.2 Indicators

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(ii), Article 17(9)(c)(iii)

Table 2: Output indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	RCO 36	Green infrastructure supported for other purposes than adaptation to climate change			
		RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions			

Table 3: Result indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	RCR 95	Population having access to new or improved green infrastructure						
		RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations						

2.1.1.4 The main target groups

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iii), Article 17(9)(c)(iv)

Text field [7000]

The main target groups of specific objective 1.1 “Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution” are:

- The local population and the local communities of the cross-border eligible area.
- Environmental management and protection organizations.
- National, regional and local authorities of the cross-border eligible area.

2.1.1.5 Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.1.1.6 Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(v)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.1.1.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(vi), Article 17(9)(c)(v)

Table 4: Dimension 1 – intervention field (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	050-Nature and biodiversity protection, natural heritage and resources, green and blue infrastructure	
	IPA III	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	042-Household waste management: prevention, minimisation, sorting, reuse, recycling measures	
	IPA III	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	135 Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement territorial cooperation projects and initiatives in a cross-border, transnational, maritime and inter-regional context	

Table 5: Dimension 2 – form of financing (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	01-Grant	

Table 6: Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus (to be updated)

Priority No	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.1 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	48: No territorial targeting	

2.1.2 Specific objective 1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)

2.1.2.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(i), Article 17(9)(c)(ii)

Climate change is a main challenge for the cross-border area and is connected not only with environmental policy but also with all sectors of the economy. The energy sector in particular is one which requires substantial transformation. Greece has set a goal of withdrawing all lignite plants by 2028, with the majority of units - representing over 80% of current installed capacity - being withdrawn by 2023. The goal of complete decarbonization of the country, by 2028, is reflected in the forecasts of Greece's National Energy and Climate Plan, which ensures the stability of the electrical system and the energy security of the country in line with the European Climate Neutrality Strategy. The Just Transition Development Plan of lignite areas concerns directly the eligible Region of Western Macedonia. Supporting the promotion of clean energy infrastructure for regions in transition can contribute in their efforts to achieve climate neutrality. Albania has achieved some level of preparation for tackling climate change. It made progress by ratifying the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. In July 2019, Albania adopted a national strategy on climate change for 2019-2030, with objectives for 2050. The strategy focuses on energy, transport, agriculture, land use and forestry, with a 32% renewable energy target.

Fighting climate change is connected with reducing greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible. Achieving energy efficiency is necessary for shifting towards a net-zero emissions society and it

requires action on all fronts. Improving energy efficiency in public buildings and promotion of the use of renewable energy in communities are measures that can contribute in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For achieving the implementation of effective interventions in the fields of energy efficiency and renewable energy installing additional operational capacity in local communities is necessary. Raising awareness and actions for improving the capacity of authorities and local communities in the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures could be supported through cross-border cooperation investing in the development of innovative tools for assessing the feasibility of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in communities.

In the cross-border area climate change is expected to increasingly impact the quality of life and pose challenges in tourism, agriculture and forestry. Taking into consideration that the programme area is extremely prone to natural disasters including wild fires and floods, climate change adaptation and decrease of risk vulnerability is a priority for the cross-border regions. Coastal erosion is a major challenge in the eligible areas that can have a negative impact on local communities and their economies.

The Programme can play an important role in supporting risk prevention efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change and it can support adaptation measures and disaster resilience at local, regional and cross-border level. The development of joint action plans and tools for risk management in the cross-border area shall be accompanied with initiatives for shared technological means and enhancement of the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders in the implementation of the national strategies on climate change and risk prevention measures.

Type of actions (non-exhaustive list)

- Joint actions and strategies for supporting adaptation to climate change and preventing natural risks.
- Investments in the development of mechanisms and tools for the prevention and management of climate related risks, e.g. fires, storms, drought.
- Investments in the development of mechanisms and tools for the prevention and management of non-climate related risks (i.e. earthquakes) and risks connected to human activities (e.g. technological accidents).
- Measures for the enhancement of civil protection policies and disaster management systems and infrastructures.
- Raising awareness activities in the field of climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as emergency preparedness.

- Actions for the promotion of measures and investments aiming at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including the promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.
- Increasing institutional and operational capacity of local communities for supporting the implementation of clean energy infrastructure.
- Pilot actions in cross-border communities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Development of joint action plans and strategies for climate change related risks.

Type of actions contributing to the EUSAIR

The type of actions supported by specific objective 1.2 “Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience” can contribute to Pillar III “Environmental Quality” of the EUSAIR. Actions implemented under this specific objective can be complementary to the EUSAIR flagship for “Promotion of sustainable growth of the Adriatic-Ionian Region by implementing Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) also to contribute to Common Regional Framework (CRF) on ICZM of Barcelona convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected area” supporting climate change adaptation and risk prevention.

2.1.2.2 Indicators

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(ii), Article 17(9)(c)(iii)

Table 7: Output indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
<i>Priority Axis 1-Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions</i>	<i>1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches</i>	<i>RCO 24</i>	<i>Investments in new or upgraded disaster monitoring, preparedness, warning and response systems against natural disasters</i>			
		<i>RCO 121</i>	<i>Area covered by protection measures against climate related natural disasters (other than floods and wildfire)</i>			
		<i>RCO 83</i>	<i>Strategies and action plans jointly developed</i>			

Table 8: Result indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account ecosystem based approaches	RCR 37	<i>Population benefiting from protection measures against climate related natural disasters (other than floods and wildfire)</i>						
		RCR 96	<i>Population benefiting from protection measures against non-climate related natural risks and risks related to human activities</i>						
		RCR 79	<i>Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations</i>						

2.1.2.3 The main target groups

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iii), Article 17(9)(c)(iv)

Text field [7000]

The main target groups of specific objective 1.2 “Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience” are:

- The local population and the local communities of the cross-border eligible area.
- National, regional and local authorities of the cross-border eligible area.

2.1.2.4 Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.1.2.5 Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(v)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.1.2.6 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(vi), Article 17(9)(c)(v)

Table 9: Dimension 1 – intervention field (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches	035-Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: floods and landslides (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem based approaches)	
	IPA III	1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches	036- Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: fires (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem based approaches)	
	IPA III	1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches	038- Risk prevention and management of non-climate related natural risks (i.e. earthquakes) and risks linked to human activities (e.g. technological accidents), including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem based approaches	
	IPA III	1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches	026- Energy efficiency renovation or energy efficiency measures regarding public infrastructure, demonstration projects and supporting measures	

Table 10: Dimension 2 – form of financing (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based	01-Grant	

		<i>approaches</i>		
--	--	-------------------	--	--

Table 11: Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus- *(to be updated)*

Priority No	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
<i>Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions</i>	IPA III	<i>1.2 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches</i>	48: No territorial targeting	

2.1.3 Specific objective 1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)

2.1.3.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(i), Article 17(9)(c)(ii)

Water management is still a concern for the cross-border area. Effective utilization of water resources and water quality are a common need for cross-border regions. For rural areas in Albania there is an increased need for investments in water supply and sewerage as there is a weak service coverage offered to citizens. Ensuring water quality and prevention of water pollution from human activity is a common challenge for the programme area. The development of studies and exchange of know-how through cooperation can support the implementation of wastewater treatment plants in order to prevent the disposal of wastewater directly into rivers or the sea.

Water redistribution, storage and saving and a sound demand side management are some of the main priorities for water policy in Greece. Additional pressures in water quality arise from agricultural activity, while surface run-offs and wastewater discharges create intense pressures on the quality of water resources. Operations for the prevention and improvement of water quality are considered important for the programme area. Climate change is another factor that can impact the water cycle, affecting the most vulnerable regions, including the coastal areas and islands. Investments for enhancing water sustainability and responsible use of water resources can address

the challenges that arise from increased water demand, especially during the summer season when agricultural activity and tourism create additional pressure on local communities.

Type of actions (non-exhaustive list)

- Development of infrastructure in rural areas, as well as the Ionian Islands for the improvement of water management and efficient water utilities coverage for local communities.
- Foster an efficient use of water resources by citizens, industry and agriculture, throughout the whole water cycle by promoting water saving and reuse, water-efficient technologies in all sectors, as well as by supporting ecosystem-based measures.
- Enhanced addressing of water quantity issues especially in areas dealing with water scarcity (insular complex of Ionian Islands, rural areas with inadequate water supply coverage), e.g. by supporting hazards prevention and climate-change adaptation measures based on an ecosystem restoration approach in a cross-border context.
- Introduction of smart technologies to increase resource efficiency in the water sector.
- Monitoring systems for controlling water supply networks.
- Investment into measures at source to counteract pollution (e.g. in industry, agriculture).
- Design and implement coherent and tailored-made wastewater management plans.
- Development of studies and exchange of know-how and technology for wastewater management plants.
- Raising awareness about water reuse and dealing with water scarcity in the cross-border regions.
- Small-scale investments on wastewater treatment systems based on environmentally friendly processes.

Type of actions contributing to the EUSAIR

The type of actions supported by specific objective 1.2 “Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience” can contribute to Pillar III “Environmental Quality” of the EUSAIR. Actions implemented under this specific objective can be complementary to the EUSAIR flagship for “Promotion of sustainable growth of the Adriatic-Ionian Region by implementing Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) also to contribute to Common Regional Framework (CRF) on ICZM of Barcelona convention and the monitoring and management of marine protected area” by implementing actions for improving water quality and reducing water pollution.

2.1.3.2 Indicators

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(ii), Article 17(9)(c)(iii)

Table 12: Output indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
Priority Axis 1-Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	RCO 30	Length of new or upgraded pipes for the distribution systems of public water supply			
		RCO 32	New or upgraded capacity for waste water treatment			

Table 13: Result indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Priority Axis 1-Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	RCR 41	Population connected to improved public water supply						
		RCR 42	Population connected to at least secondary public waste water treatment						

2.1.2.3 The main target groups

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iii), Article 17(9)(c)(iv)

Text field [7000]

The main target groups of specific objective 1.3: “Promoting access to water and sustainable water management” are:

- The local population and the local communities of the cross-border eligible area.
- National, regional and local authorities of the cross-border eligible area.

2.1.2.4 Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.1.2.5 Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(v)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.1.2.6 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(vi), Article 17(9)(c)(v)

Table 14: Dimension 1 – intervention field- (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	039 Provision of water for human consumption (extraction, treatment, storage and distribution infrastructure, efficiency measures, drinking water supply)	
	IPA III	1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	040 Water management and water resource conservation (including river basin management, specific climate change adaptation measures, reuse, leakage reduction)	

Table 15: Dimension 2 – form of financing (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	01-Grant	

Table 16: Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus (to be updated)

Priority No	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
-------------	------	--------------------	------	--------------

Priority Axis 1- Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III	1.3: Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	48: No territorial targeting	
--	---------	--	-------------------------------------	--

2.2 Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area

Reference: Article 17(4)(d)

Text field: [300]

This is a priority pursuant to a transfer under Article 17(3)

2.2.1. Specific objective 2.1: Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)

2.2.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(i), Article 17(9)(c)(ii)

The cross-border area is covered by maritime transport and road networks and it presents a low quality and density of infrastructure, while there is no optimized system of connections between the available modes of transportation. Accessibility is mainly provided by the regional road network, which follows the topography of river valleys and mountain passes, hence leaving smaller inner regions relatively isolated. The availability of the road network is also problematic with certain connections closing on a seasonal basis, due to weather conditions. Investments for the improvement of road networks, focusing on a better road connectivity and road safety measures are necessary for overcoming significant gaps between rural and urban areas. Improvement of transportation is essential for inhabitants of cross-border remoted and sparsely populated areas, as it can improve quality of life, facilitating also accessibility to health services especially for vulnerable social groups. Investments for the improvement of quality connection across the borders of Greece and Albania (Ioannina-Kakavia and Igoumenitsa-Sagiada-Mavromati) shall be combined with investments for the improvement of cross-border cooperation and the enhancement of the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders in the transport sector.

The operation of the ports of Corfu, Igoumenitsa, Kefallinia and Zakynthos in Greece and the operation of the ports of Vlorë and Saranda create an advantage for the maritime transport of the Programme area. The modernization and rehabilitation of the ports infrastructure in the cross-border area will increase cooperation and integration in the regional port systems of the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea. Actions for promoting a better management of ports footprint on the environment can contribute to more climate resilient maritime transport. Support of a better connectivity between the island communities of the programme area can lead to improvement of accessibility and reduction of commuting distances, especially for remote small islands. Taking into consideration the dependence of coastal areas and islands' economy on tourism, the improvement of ferry connectivity will lead to a more balanced allocation of passengers and reduce the congestion of road transport and at ferry ports during peak periods. Cruise tourism is another important activity of cross-border coastal communities that could be further enhanced through the improvement of infrastructure and cruise facilities in ports, contributing also to Pillar 4 of the EUSAIR "Sustainable Tourism".

Fostering multimodality is an important factor for the improvement of accessibility in the cross-border area. Currently multimodality between the available transport means of the cross-border area (ferry, rail, airport, intercity bus and urban transport) is limited. The development of platforms providing information on cross-border land and maritime transport services, available in Greek and Albanian, could facilitate visitors and citizens of the border regions, given the high level of interaction and interdependencies in the cross-border territory.

During the current programming period the development of a strategic investment plan for the rail connection of the two countries, through the construction of the railway section "Krystallopigi-Pogradec", of a total length of approximately 130 km in both Greek and Albanian territory was supported. The promotion of follow-up actions is important for supporting a future railway connection of the cross-border area.

Actions for addressing cross-border obstacles and missing links in the cross-border connectivity and transport such as the promotion of joint mobility plans and solutions, especially for supporting citizens of remote or sparsely populated areas in the border regions can be supported under specific objective 2.1 contributing also to the improvement of cross-border governance and cooperation.

Type of actions (non-exhaustive list)

- Identifying and addressing the missing links in road and rail infrastructure: studies, strategies, joint solutions.
- Planning, construction and rehabilitation of border crossings; planning, construction and rehabilitation of road network.

- Improving and expanding road infrastructure: studies regarding road traffic, awareness campaigns, connectivity/mobility studies for understanding freight and passenger flows, commuting etc.
- Studies, equipment and IT solutions for increasing predictability, reliability and efficiency of available transport (road, maritime, rail) in the cross-border area.
- Development of cross-border transportation plan for facilitating remote and sparsely populated areas population, focusing on improving access of vulnerable social groups from remote areas to health services, markets and public services located in urban and sub-urban areas.
- Improving and expanding road infrastructure - Works for road infrastructure modernization, safety measures (equipment/signaling).
- Improving access to port and ferries through modernization and upgrade of port infrastructure and facilities.
- Development of cross-border information platform for land and maritime transport, overcoming linguistic barriers and fostering multimodality.
- Improvement of ferry connectivity between the island communities of the cross-border regions.
- Support of 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.

Type of actions contributing to the EUSAIR

Actions of specific objective 2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility” can contribute to Pillar II “Connectivity” of the EUSAIR. Investments for the improvement of cross-border connectivity and mobility can contribute to the EUSAIR flagship of the “Adriatic-Ionian Multi-modal corridors”, supporting the identification of multimodal corridors alongside the TEN-T network, including also the maritime connections between the coasts of the Ionian Sea.

2.2.1.2 Indicators

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(ii), Article 17(9)(c)(iii)

Table 17: Output indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
<i>Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area</i>	<i>2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility”</i>	<i>RCO 116</i>	<i>Jointly developed solutions</i>			
		<i>RCO 54</i>	<i>New, designed or modernised intermodal connections</i>			

Table 18: Result indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
<i>Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area</i>	<i>2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility”</i>	<i>RCR 104</i>	<i>Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations</i>						
		<i>RCR 55</i>	<i>Annual users of newly built, reconstructed</i>						

2.2.1.4 The main target groups

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iii), Article 17(9)(c)(iv)

Text field [7000]

The main target groups of specific objective 2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility” are:

- The local population and the local communities of the cross-border eligible area.
- Commuters and visitors of the eligible cross-border area.
- Port/ferry operators
- Enterprises transporting passengers/freight

2.2.1.5 Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.2.1.6 Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(v)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.2.1.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(vi), Article 17(9)(c)(v)

Table 19: Dimension 1 – intervention field (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area	IPA III	2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility”	078- Multimodal transport (TEN-T)	
	IPA III	2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility”	079-Multimodal transport (not urban)	

Table 20: Dimension 2 – form of financing (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
-------------	------	--------------------	------	--------------

Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area	IPA III	2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility”	01-Grant	
--	---------	---	----------	--

Table 21: Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus (to be updated)

Priority No	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 2: Improving accessibility in the cross-border area	IPA III	2.1 “Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility”	48: No territorial targeting	

2.3 Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development

Reference: Article 17(4)(d)

Text field: [300]

This is a priority pursuant to a transfer under Article 17(3)

2.3.1. Specific objective 3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)

2.3.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(i), Article 17(9)(c)(ii)

Tourism is a key sector for the cross-border area, providing a stimulus for the creation of small-scale businesses, offering potential for creation of a larger number of tourism-related SMEs and thus, providing a broader-based and potentially more sustainable source of employment in the border area. Tourism holds great potential for the programme area, thus investing in the improvement and

expansion of the cross-border tourism branding can contribute towards the extension of the tourist areas and seasons, benefiting rural and less-known destinations as well.

The cross-border area includes regions in economic transition, which need to develop sustainable economic activities, supporting the creation of new job positions, the enhancement of working skills and social innovation. Long-term sustainability requires a balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability. A holistic approach in tourism interventions is necessary, ensuring that all the various impacts of tourism are taken into account including its impact on society and the environment. Tourist activities in the cross-border area should not create additional pressures to the environment and cultural heritage, but contribute in their preservation and restoration. Eco-tourism can support the biodiversity conservation providing revenues for the management of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas. Supporting the capacity of local and regional stakeholders for the adaptation of measures that contribute in the promotion of responsible tourism models considering minimization of resource use, proper waste management.

Innovation and digitalization are the two concepts that need to be supported through cross-border cooperation. Strengthening efforts for the digital transformation of the tourism sector will provide innovation capabilities for better organization management and destination marketing. Although the programme area presents a rich cultural and natural heritage, little progress has been recorded in the digitalization of information on natural, cultural and historical heritage, which hampers the access of the general public and tourists. The development of innovative digital tools that provide accessibility to integrated tourism information will improve experience for visitors and contribute in better branding of destinations in the cross-border area.

The common cultural and historical assets of the cross-border eligible area are interlinked with tourism, which is identified as one of the main sectors expected to foster economic growth. Cultural heritage is a valuable cross-border asset which is in need of proper conservation, preservation and restoration. The support of the cultural and creative industry in the programme area is important for the integrated preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Supporting creativity and cultural expression through the development of creative hubs, cultural networks and incubators will contribute in the efforts of the cultural industry to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Strengthening capacity of cultural organizations in the valorization of new technological means and digital tools will make them more resilient and adjust to the new digital era.

Tourism and cultural heritage in the framework of this specific objective are supported with a view to foster social and economic development in the cross-border area. Emphasis is being put on diversifying the touristic destinations in the Programme area, while increasing accessibility and visibility of less developed tourist areas in the cross-border regions. Supporting tourism activities,

connected sectors and industries as a means for economic diversification and job creation in the programme area is considered important, especially for regions in transition such as the Region of Western Macedonia. The development of cultural and historical, leisure, religious, agro-tourism, eco-tourism, culinary and wine tourism and sport tourism, could create new areas of economic activity for local communities.

Enhancement of cross-border cooperation by investing in the development of joint recovery plans and solutions in the fields of tourism and culture, minimizing the spill-over effects of the COVID-19 crisis can be promoted through specific objective 3.1.

Type of actions (non-exhaustive list)

- Support to diversification of the tourism by investing in lesser-known destinations and diverse forms of tourism (cultural, rural, agro-tourism, sport, health/medical tourism); consequently, contributing to the livelihoods of local and regional communities.
- Valorization of historical centers, villages and sites, such as: castles, fortresses, churches, monasteries, palaces, etc.
- Improvement of accessibility in historical monuments and sites of cultural heritage.
- Support the capacity of local and regional stakeholders to valorize potentially valuable touristic objectives /sites / experiences, by creating sustainable tourism trails, or developing quality labels for excellence in services, promoting and marketing the touristic offer etc.
- Natural sites: definition of trails / paths, waste disposal, security, signaling etc.
- Interconnection between cultural and creative industry with tourism and agriculture through development and implementation of measures to protect, develop and promote cultural heritage and cultural services.
- Support for both public and private organizations to reinforce the resilience of these sectors through training and employment support, digitalization, social innovation and transition to circular business models.
- Support for SMEs, including social enterprises (such as social cooperatives) and social innovation in tourism and culture - development of existing or new tourism and culture businesses.
- Development of innovative solutions and new business models in culture and tourism.
- Development of new tourism products models based on the social distancing (incl. quality tourism and remote micro destinations – mountains, islands, sparsely and rural areas).
- Development of joint recovery plans and solutions in the fields of tourism and culture, minimizing the spill-over effects of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Enhancement of the valorization of technology and digital tools for the promotion of tourism destinations, natural and cultural resources of the cross-border area.

- Development of cooperation networks in the cultural and creative industry, support of the development of creative hubs and incubators in order to foster creativity and cultural expression.
- Support of capacity building in the tourism sector, promoting social innovation, improvement of working skills in the sector and social inclusion.
- Promotion of responsible tourism models for preventing and minimizing the impact on the environment and local communities (use of natural resources and tourism waste production).
- Supporting the capacity of the stakeholders involved in the local cultural and creative industries for the valorization of technology and digital tools.

Type of actions contributing to the EUSAIR

The type of actions supported by specific objective 3.1 “Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security, in areas other than urban areas” are expected to contribute to Pillar IV of the EUSAIR. Investments for the development of touristic routes in the cross-border area can contribute in the EUSAIR flagship:

- “AIR Cultural Routes” by supporting the diversification of products; supporting: development of creative and cultural industry and SMEs, synergies between creative and cultural industries and the hospitality sector and sustainable tourism valorization.
- “CRUISAIR -Expanding the tourist season to all-year round” supporting the preparation of sustainable tourism destinations and focusing on the tourism branding of specific territories in the cross-border area (seaside-coastal cross-border areas, lakes in cross-border regions, e.g., Great Prespa Lake, Little Prespa Lake, cross-border rivers).
- “DesAir- Training and skills in the field of tourism businesses (vocational and entrepreneurial skills)” by implementing actions for exchanging and promoting new knowledge, training and skills in the field of tourism for businesses of the cross-border regions, with special focus to areas in economic activity transition (e.g., Region of Western Macedonia).

2.3.1.2 Indicators

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(ii), Article 17(9)(c)(iii)

Table 22: Output indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final target (2029) [200]
Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	RCO 77	Number of cultural and tourism sites supported			
		RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed			

Table 23: Result indicators (to be updated)

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation than urban areas	RCR 77	Visitors of cultural and tourism sites supported						
		RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations						

2.3.1.4 The main target groups

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iii), Article 17(9)(c)(iv)

Text field [7000]

The main target groups of specific objective 3.1: Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security, in areas other than urban areas are:

- The local population and the local communities of the cross-border eligible area.
- Visitors of the eligible cross-border area.
- Public authorities and local stakeholders representing the public and private sector.

2.3.1.5 Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools- (to be updated)

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable.

2.3.1.6 Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(v)

Text field [7000]

Not applicable

2.3.1.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: Article 17(4)(e)(vi), Article 17(9)(c)(v)

Table 24: Dimension 1 – intervention field (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development	IPA III	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	128- Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets and tourism services	
	IPA III	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	129- Protection, development and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural services	
	IPA III	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	101-Support for social economy and social enterprises.	

	IPA III	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	135- Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement territorial cooperation projects and initiatives in a cross-border, transnational, maritime and inter-regional context	
--	---------	---	--	--

Table 25: Dimension 2 – form of financing (to be updated)

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development	IPA III	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	01-Grant	

Table 26: Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus (to be updated)

Priority No	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority Axis 3: Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social development	IPA III	3.1: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	48: No territorial targeting	

3. Financing Plan (to be updated)

3.1 Financial appropriations by year (to be updated)

Reference: Article 17(4)(g)(i), Article 17(5)(a)- (d)

Table 30

Fund	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
IPA III CBC ⁴²								
Total								

⁴² Interreg A, external cross-border cooperation

3.2 Total financial appropriations by fund and national co-financing (to be updated)

Reference: Article 17(4)(g)(ii), Article 17(5)(a)-(d)

DRAFT 2

Table 31

PO No or TA	Priority	Fund (as applicable)	Basis for calculation EU support (total or public)	EU contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total (e)=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)	Contributions from the third countries (for information)
						National public (c)	National private (d)			
PO2- A greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management	Priority 1 Supporting transition to greener and more resilient cross-border regions	IPA III CBC ⁴³	Total						85.00%	
PO3- a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks	Priority 2 Improving accessibility in the cross-border area	IPA III CBC	Total						85.00%	
PO4- a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	Priority 3 Fostering sustainable cross-border economic and social	IPA III CBC	Total						85.00%	

⁷ **When ERDF resources correspond to amounts programmed in accordance with Article 17(3), it shall be specified.**

⁴³ **Interreg A**, external cross-border cooperation

	<i>development</i>									
	<i>Total</i>	<i>All funds</i>	<i>Total</i>							

4. Action taken to involve the relevant programme partners in the preparation of the Interreg programme and the role of those programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Reference: Article 17(4)(h)

Text field [10 000]

Programming Committee

The setup of the Programming Committee (PC) of the Interreg IPA III CBC Programme “Greece-Albania 2021-2027” was approved in July 2020 with a task to prepare the new cross-border cooperation programme for the 2021-2027 period. The Programming Committee is a collective body, which consists of members appointed by the partner states, representing the relevant authorities of the Programme’s eligible territory in a balanced and effective manner. Representatives of the Programming Committee come from both national and regional authorities.

The Programming Committee met several times during the preparation process to discuss and decide on the progress of the programming process. The meetings due to the COVID-19 restrictions were organized online. During the first meeting held on June 2020, the Programming Committee discussed the programme area and the need to include the Regional Unit of Kozani in the eligible area. In the second Programming Committee meeting, held on March 2021, the territorial analysis of the programme area and the proposed Programme Strategy were presented. Taking into consideration the analysis, it was stressed out that PO 2 (A greener Europe) and PO 3 (A more connected Europe) are important for addressing the needs of the programme area. Considering the two EUSAIR labelled projects related to connectivity, implemented in the framework of the Interreg IPA II CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2014-2020, members of the Programming Committee underlined that it is important the new programme to support the improvement of cross-border connectivity. The inclusion of the Region of Fier in the eligible Programme area was discussed. During the 3rd Programming Committee meeting the results of the second public consultation phase were presented along with the first chapters of the Interreg IPAIll CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027. The selected Policy Objectives were discussed with a view to confirm the specific objectives. Issues regarding the requirements for the implementation of Policy Objective 5 “A Europe closer to its citizens” and the ways in which culture and tourism actions can benefit from funding under specific objective 4.5 of Policy Objective 4 “A more social Europe” were discussed. The elaboration of a justification letter about a proposal to support tourism and cultural heritage actions under PO4 “A more social Europe”

instead of PO5 “a Europe closer to citizens” was agreed, as well as the integration of actions from Interreg Specific Objective 1, as cross-cutting themes to be supported by the other selected Policy Objectives.

In the framework of the drafting of the Cooperation Programme three public consultation phases were conducted. The consultations involved stakeholders from the programme area with the aim to get a feedback from relevant national and regional key players.

Public consultation

The first consultation phase with stakeholders was launched in December 2020 and closed on January 2021. An online survey was designed and distributed to relevant Programme area stakeholders through e-mail and the programme website. The online public consultation survey was completed by 123 individuals and organizations from Greece and Albania. During the first consultation phase, stakeholders identified the main needs and challenges of the cross-border area and provided a first estimation for the priorities and specific objectives for the Programme Strategy. The main needs identified by the stakeholders regarding the programme area were connected with Policy Objective 2 “a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management” and Policy Objective 4 “a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights”.

The second phase of public consultation was organized in April 2021 and included dedicated online workshops and targeted interviews with stakeholders from the programme area. Along with the workshops online polls were prepared for stakeholders to provide according to their identified needs and challenges of the cross-border area indicative type of interventions and their main objectives. Targeted interviews were also carried out with decision-making stakeholders. The workshops contributed to a bottom-up approach for the identification of the Cooperation Programme strategy, as participants reviewed the proposed programme strategy and provided their feedback on the key priorities according to their intervention area and field of activity. During the second phase of consultation stakeholders identified as key priorities for the cross-border area environmental protection and reduction of pollution, climate change adaptation and risk prevention, water management, sustainable tourism and cultural heritage, transport and cross-border mobility. Among the main actions identified by stakeholders according to the needs of their operation area were: a) creation of cultural routes, promotion of cultural heritage and eco-tourism, b) promotion of recycling and improvement of waste management, c) improvement of water management and d) improvement of connectivity and accessibility of road transport networks of South Albania and Northern Greece.

The third phase of consultation was launched(to be developed once the third phase of consultation is completed).

Role of programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

As a general principle, the programme bodies will be in line with the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds. This relates in particular to the «main principles and good practices concerning the involvement of relevant partners in the preparation of the partnership agreement and programmes » (Articles 8 and 9) and the «good practices concerning the formulation of the rules of membership and internal procedures of monitoring committees» (Articles 10 and 11).

The composition of the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg IPA III CBC Programme “Greece-Albania 2021-2027” ensures a balanced representation of the relevant authorities and intermediate bodies of the partners states and the regional authorities of the eligible programme area. The Managing Authority of the Programme is responsible for publishing a list of the members of the Monitoring Committee on the programme website⁴⁴. The main tasks of the Monitoring Committee include the examination of the progress of the programme implementation and any issues that affect its performance. Among the responsibilities of the Monitoring Committee is to examine the progress of programme evaluations, the implementation of communication and visibility actions and the progress in the implementation of the programmes’ strategic projects. The Monitoring Committee selects the programmes’ projects according to its strategy and objectives, ensuring that non-discriminatory and transparent criteria and procedures are applied. The Monitoring Committee will approve the evaluation plan for the programme, as well as the final performance report⁴⁵.

The Managing Authority which is responsible for managing the programme establishes and applies transparent and non-discriminatory criteria and procedures for the selection of the programme’s projects. The Managing Authority supports the work of the Monitoring Committee by providing the necessary information to carry out its tasks and ensuring the follow-up of the decisions and recommendations made by the Monitoring Committee⁴⁶. During the implementation of the Programme the Managing Authority will promote the strategic use of public procurement to support Policy Objectives (including professionalization efforts to address capacity gaps). Beneficiaries should be encouraged to use more quality-related and lifecycle cost criteria. When feasible, environmental

⁴⁴ Article 29 (2), ETC

⁴⁵ Article 30, ETC.

⁴⁶ Article 67, CPR

(e.g. green public procurement criteria) and social considerations as well as innovation incentives should be incorporated into public procurement procedures. The Joint Secretariat of the cooperation programme assists the Managing Authority in carrying out its tasks.

Management verifications will be done through the identification by each Partner State of a body or person responsible for this verification on its territory (the 'controller') according to Article 46 (4) of the ETC. The audit authority of the Cooperation Programme will be responsible for carrying out system audits and audits on operations in order to provide assurance to the Commission about the legality and regularity of the expenditure included in the accounts submitted to the Commission and the effective functioning of the management and control system. The group of auditors is composed of a representative from each Partner State and is chaired by the audit authority of the programme.

Technical assistance (to be updated)

According to Article 27 (2) of the ETC Regulation, Technical Assistance of the Interreg IPA III CBC Programme Greece-Albania 2021-2027 will be reimbursed as a flat rate of 10% to the eligible expenditure included in each payment application pursuant to [points (a) or (c) of Article 85(3)] of Regulation (EU) [new CPR] as appropriate.

Aim of the technical assistance is to provide effective administration and programme management, including the support of communication and visibility actions. The activities of the technical assistance shall support the operation of the Joint Secretariat of the cooperation programme and the Managing Authority activities for the development, monitoring and evaluation of the programme implementation. Technical assistance will cover the actions related to the effective implementation of the communication and visibility of the programme according to the measures and tools that will be applied for the dissemination of the objectives, activities, funding opportunities and implementation of the cooperation programme. The actions covered by technical assistance are presented below:

- Support to managing authority and joint secretariat for the preparation of the relevant documents, selection of projects, monitoring and evaluation, control and audit activities.
- Joint secretariat staff costs.
- Support to the functioning of the antenna office (antenna staff costs).
- Travel costs covering the expenses of both countries' participants (representatives of managing authority, joint secretariat, Joint Monitoring Committee, antenna office, operating structure, etc.) in relevant meetings.
- Administrative costs concerning the joint secretariat, antenna office (furniture and equipment, electricity, heating, consumables etc).
- Support to the managing authority, joint secretariat, joint monitoring committee (ad-hoc, mid-term and ex-post evaluations).

-
- External expertise for development of programme implementation and monitoring procedures, information system for programme administration, preparation of specific studies and surveys, etc.
 - Technical support to the eligible regions (if and as needed) for development of programme implementation and monitoring procedures, information system for programme administration, preparation of specific studies and surveys, organization of information and outreach events in order to mobilize the regional partners to network and submit applications, training on the implementation provisions, etc.
 - Training for managing authority, operating structure, joint secretariat and Antenna staff.
 - Support of the managing authority and the joint secretariat for the implementation of communication and visibility actions of the programme, including expenditures for website and social media, publicity on mass media and press, dissemination and promotion materials including posters, brochures, folder, pens, etc.
 - Organization of public events such as conferences, workshops, info-days, discussions including expenditures for renting of venue, equipment, catering, interpreters. Support of the online organization of events and meetings including technical support for the use of web-meeting platforms.

The main target groups of the actions supported by technical assistance are primarily the management and monitoring authorities of the Cooperation Programme. Potential beneficiaries and organizations implementing operations in the framework of the programme will be the main recipients of the communication and visibility actions of the programme, as well as of the studies, evaluations, documents and tools developed for the programme.

5. Approach to communication and visibility for the Interreg programme (objectives, target audiences, communication channels, including social media outreach, where appropriate, planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation)

Reference: Article 17(4)(i)

Text field [10 000]

5.1 Programme communication and visibility objectives

Communication and visibility actions will be implemented in order to ensure that the programmes objectives, activities, available funding opportunities and achievements are adequately

communicated to the public and the targets groups identified by the cooperation programme. The Managing Authority of the Programme is responsible for the implementation of the communication and visibility actions. A communication officer will be assigned who will be in charge of the implementation of harmonized communication and visibility actions, working closely with the beneficiaries of the programme as well. A programme communication strategy will be developed defining the necessary information and publicity measures and the indicators for the communication of the Cooperation Programme.

The main communication objectives of the programme include:

- Increasing the awareness about the programme, its priorities and specific objectives to potential applicants in all the regions of the programme area.
- Awareness activities for ensuring that the programmes' funding opportunities are communicated to applicants.
- Supporting beneficiaries in implementing and communicating their project activities and results, as well as the positive impact of the EU to their target audiences. Particular attention will be given for the communication of strategic operations.

5.2 Target audiences

The audience of the programmes' communication activities will include:

- Potential beneficiaries of the eligible programme area, both geographically and thematically: public authorities and institutions, NGOs, public sector and community institutions and organizations, etc.
- Final beneficiaries and Lead beneficiaries of approved operations.
- Internal public: the staff of the programme management authorities (MA, JS, Antenna officer, Monitoring Committee, FLCs, Audit authority).
- General public and stakeholders of the programme area other than those participating as beneficiaries.
- EUSAIR national coordinators and pillar coordinators, EUSAIR Facility Point project partners from Greece and Albania, other related Interreg Programmes: Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro, Interreg Greece-Italy, Interreg IPA CBC Greece – Republic of North Macedonia, IPA-IPA Programme North Macedonia-Albania.
- European Union's institutions and bodies, as well as Europe Direct Information Centres and other relevant networks, educational and research institutions.
- Relevant regional and local mass-media and social media multipliers.

5.3 Means of communication

The main communication channels that will be used for the dissemination of the programmes' objectives are:

The programme website: The website will include the presentation of the programmes' priority axes and specific objectives and dedicated sections for calls of proposals and projects, as well as other activities.

Social media: The programme will use its accounts on Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) for communicating programme activities and funded projects activities and results.

Public relations: Networking activities in order to foster relations and build synergies with partner states in the same geographical area and their points of contact, the European Commission and the European Parliament, national networks, other Interreg Programmes).

Events: Online and in-person events will be organized by the programme authorities in order to inform, engage or train audiences. Events will include organization of info-days, conferences and seminars for beneficiaries and special events in the framework of the European Cooperation Day.

Publications: For the effective communication of programme activities publications (online/print) will be used including key documents of the programme. Audio-visual material may as well be produced for the effective dissemination of the programmes' objectives and activities.

Press and electronic media coverage: Publication of brief informative articles in professional magazines and electronic media in order to inform about the main stages and results of the Programme.

5.4 Planned budget

A total planned budget for communication and visibility purposes, from 2021 until 2029, will be at least ...% of the total programme budget/expenditure. The activities financed in the framework of communication and visibility actions will be related to the use of the technical assistance budget for the Programme.

5.5 Monitoring and evaluation of communication activities

Specific indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of communication activities will be defined in the communication strategy of the programme. The Communication Strategy of the Cooperation Programme will be developed by the Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat and the National Authorities of the partner states and it will be approved by the Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authority will be responsible for the implementation of the Cooperation

Programme communication strategy. The Joint Secretariat will support the Managing Authority in the implementation of the communication and visibility actions with specific tasks that will be defined in the communication strategy. The Monitoring Committee will be responsible for examining the progress of the communication and visibility actions implementation in line with Article 30 (1) of the Regulation. The Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat shall inform once a year the Monitoring Committee about the progress in the implementation of the communication and visibility actions, including the analysis of the results and the information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year. At the request of the EC, the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat will inform in writing during the review phase on the progress in the implementation of the communication and visibility actions. All communication and visibility actions will be regularly evaluated according to the data deriving from surveys, internal statistics or website analytics. Indicators will be related with the communication channels (publications on social media, views, interaction with social media users, website visitors, number of participants in events and surveys). Evaluation of the communication strategy will be part of the overall programme’s evaluation measures. An annual internal review will be prepared by the Managing Authority in order to assess the achievement of the communication indicators and the measures taken.

6. Indication of support to small-scale projects, including small projects within small project funds

Reference: Article 17(4)(new j), Article 24

Text field [7 000]

In the context of the Programme, projects of limited financial volume pursuant to Article 24 (ETC) can be supported under all Priority Axes and specific objectives. The purpose and the target groups for the limited financial projects shall therefore correspond to the indicators and to the target groups identified for each specific objective.

7. Implementing provisions

7.1. Programme authorities (to be updated)

Reference: Article 17(7)(a)

Table 32

Programme authorities	Name of the institution [255]	Contact name [200]	E-mail [200]
-----------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------	--------------

Managing authority	“Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes” Ministry of Development & Investments	Bouziani Aggeliki	interreg@mou.gr
National authority in Greece	Ministry of Development and Investments / Special Secretariat for the ERDF & CF programmes	Zervos Georgios	sec.erdf_cf@m nec.gr
National authority in Albania	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs	(to be updated)	
Audit authority	Financial Control Committee (EDEL) Ministry of Finance –General Accounting Office of the State, Greece		audit51_erdf_cf@edel.gr
Group of auditors representatives			
Body to which the payments are to be made by the Commission	Ministry of Development and Investments/Certifying Authority, Unit A, Greece.		

7.2. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

Reference: Article 17(7)(b)

Text field [3 500]

The JS undertakes the day-to-day implementation of the Programme and assists the MA and the MC carrying out their duties. The functions and role of JS are determined its RoPs. Arrangements for the Joint Secretariat of the Programme are already in place since they are kept from the 2014-2020 programming period. The Joint Secretariat is set up by the Managing Authority after consultation with the Partner States. The JS recruitment is activated by a joint recruitment committee and on the basis of the principles of transparency, equal opportunity and gender equality and non-discrimination. The staff of the Joint Secretariat were selected and recruited by the MA according to the European and Greek public procurement rules. The daily function of all JS structures is set up in agreement with and under the supervision and guidance of the MA. The JS supports the MA and reports to it. The location of the Joint Secretariat is in Thessaloniki, Greece.

7.3 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Reference: Article 17(7)(c)

Text field [10 500]

The Partner States shall ensure the legality and regularity of expenditure included in the accounts submitted to the EC, taking all the required actions to prevent, detect, correct and report irregularities and fraud. If the managing authority/joint secretariat, the audit authority, any Partner State becomes aware of the irregularities, it shall without any delay inform the liable partner state, audit authority or the managing authority/joint secretariat. Each Partner State shall investigate irregularities committed by the beneficiaries located on its territory. The partner State shall make the financial corrections in connection with individual or systemic irregularities detected in operations or operational programme.

Financial correction shall consist of cancelling all or part of the public contribution to an operation or to the operational programme. Financial corrections shall be recorded in the annual accounts by the managing authority for the accounting year in which the cancellation is decided.

The managing authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the project via the lead partner. Project partners shall repay the lead partner any amounts unduly paid. The managing authority shall also recover funds from the lead partner (and the lead partner from the project partner) following a termination of the subsidy contract in full or in part based on the conditions defined in the subsidy contract.

If the lead beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries or if the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead beneficiary, the partner State on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the managing authority the amount unduly paid to that beneficiary. Once the Partner State reimburses the managing authority the unduly paid amounts to a beneficiary, it can continue or start the recovery procedure against the beneficiary under its national law. The Managing Authority in accordance to Article 52 of the ETC Regulation, is responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union.

8. Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs (to be updated)

Reference: Articles 88 and 89 CPR

Table 33: Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

<u>Intended use of Articles 88 and 89</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
<u>From the adoption programme will make use of reimbursement of eligible expenditure based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates under priority according to Article 88 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 1)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>From the adoption programme will make use of financing not linked to costs according to Article 89 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 2)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Map of the programme area

Appendix 2: Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates

Appendix 3 Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs

Appendix 3a: List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable

Reimbursement of eligible expenditure from the Commission to the Member State based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates

Template for submitting data for the consideration of the Commission

(Article 88 CPR)

Date of submitting the proposal	
Current version	

A. Summary of the main elements

Priority	Fund	Estimated proportion of the total financial allocation within the priority to which the SCO will be applied in % (estimate)	Type(s) of operation		Corresponding indicator name(s)		Unit of measurement for the indicator	Type of SCO (standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates)	Corresponding standard scales of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates
			Code	Description	Code	Description			

B. Details by type of operation (to be completed for every type of operation)

Did the Managing Authority receive support from an external company to set out the simplified costs below?

If so, please specify which external company: Yes/No – Name of external company

Types of operation:

1.1. Description of the operation type	
1. Specific objective(s) concerned	
1.3 Indicator name ⁴⁷	
1.4 Unit of measurement for indicator	
1.5 Standard scale of unit cost, lump sum or flat rate	
1.6 Amount	
1.7 Categories of costs covered by unit cost, lump sum or flat rate	
1.8 Do these categories of costs cover all eligible expenditure for the operation? (Y/N)	
1.9 Adjustment(s) method	
1.10 Verification of the achievement of the unit of measurement - describe what document(s) will be used to verify the achievement of the unit of measurement - describe what will be checked during management verifications (including on-the-spot), and by whom - describe what the arrangements are to collect and store the data/documents	
1.11 Possible perverse incentives or problems caused by this indicator, how they could be mitigated, and the estimated level of risk	
1.12 Total amount (national and EU) expected to be reimbursed	

⁴⁷ Several complementary indicators (for instance one output indicator and one result indicator) are possible for one type of operation. In these cases, fields 1.3 to 1.11 should be filled in for each indicator.

C: Calculation of the standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates

1. Source of data used to calculate the standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates (who produced, collected and recorded the data; where the data are stored; cut-off dates; validation, etc.):

2. Please specify why the proposed method and calculation is relevant to the type of operation:

3. Please specify how the calculations were made, in particular including any assumptions made in terms of quality or quantities. Where relevant, statistical evidence and benchmarks should be used and attached to this annex in a format that is usable by the Commission.

4. Please explain how you have ensured that only eligible expenditure was included in the calculation of the standard scale of unit cost, lump sum or flat rate;

5. Assessment of the audit authority(ies) of the calculation methodology and amounts and the arrangements to ensure the verification, quality, collection and storage of data:

*** Justifications on the underlying data, the calculation methodology and resulting rate or amount and related assessment by the audit authority [(in points 1, 3 and 5)] are not required when the simplified cost options submitted in this Appendix are established at Union level [(other policies or through the DA referred to in Article 88(4)].**

Appendix 3: Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs

Template for submitting data for the consideration of the Commission

(Article 89 CPR)

Date of submitting the proposal	
Current version	

A. Summary of the main elements

Priority	Fund	<i>The amount covered by the financing not linked to costs</i>	Type(s) of operation	Conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved	Corresponding indicator name(s)		Unit of measurement for the indicator	[Envisaged reimbursement to the beneficiaries] ⁴⁸
					Code	Description		
The overall amount covered								

⁴⁸ The Council partial mandate added this column in line with CPR Block 6. Without prejudice to further alignment on the outcome of the interinstitutional agreement on CPR Block 6.

B. Details by type of operation (to be completed for every type of operation)

Types of operation:

1.1. Description of the operation type			
1.2 Specific objective(s) concerned			
1.3 Conditions to be fulfilled or results to be achieved			
1.4 Deadline for fulfilment of conditions or results to be achieved			
1.5 Indicator definition for deliverables			
1.6 Unit of measurement for indicator for deliverables			
1.7 Intermediate deliverables (if applicable) triggering reimbursement by the Commission with schedule for reimbursements	Intermediate deliverables	Date	Amounts
1.8 Total amount (including EU and national funding)			
1.9 Adjustment(s) method			
1.10 Verification of the achievement of the result or condition (and where relevant, the intermediate deliverables) - describe what document(s) will be used to verify the achievement of the result or condition - describe what will be checked during management verifications (including on-the-spot), and by whom - describe what arrangements there are to collect and store the data/documents			
1.10a <i>Does the grant provided by Member State to beneficiaries take the form of financing not linked to costs? [Y/N]</i>			
1.11 Arrangements to ensure the			

audit trail Please list the body(ies) responsible for these arrangements.	
--	--

Appendix 3a: List of planned operations of strategic importance *with a timetable* - Article 17(4)

Text field [2 000]
