

INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia CBC Programme

1st Set of Calls for Project Proposals

Call Announcement

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A. INTRODUCTION

The INTERREG V-A Italy – Croatia 2014 – 2020 Cooperation Programme (hereinafter Programme), set up in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) - one of the objectives of the Cohesion Policy - is launching its first set of calls for proposals (hereinafter 1st CfP) and invites all interested eligible public and private applicants to submit project proposals.

The detailed conditions for the 1st CfP can be found in the following documents, altogether referred to as “Application package first calls”, which constitute an integral part of these calls announcement and are available for download (as separate documents or as a single zipped file) from the Programme website www.italy-croatia.eu:

- INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia cross-border Cooperation Programme adopted by the European Commission with Decision C(2015) 9342;
- Programme factsheets;
- Data set of the information requested (Off-line Application Form and annexes);

This set of calls is open to “Standard” and to “Standard+” projects.

Each beneficiary can participate both in “Standard” and “Standard +” project proposals, taking into account the limitations set further in the text.

For a summary of requirements of “Standard” and “Standard +” projects see paragraph N below.

“Standard” projects

“Standard” projects typically originate from the acknowledgement of a problem or a need and a testing of a potential solution. They should be developed on the basis of an innovative project concept, although capitalisation of previous programming periods’ projects and results is certainly encouraged.

“Standard+” projects

“Standard+” projects are operations stemming from existing cooperation potentials of the area – capitalising the achievements of the previous programming period - by means of piloting, testing or implementing in the CB area solutions developed in a larger scale context and in the framework of a 2007 – 2013 ETC Programmes in which Italian and Croatian partners already worked together (Adriatic IPA CBC, SEE and MED).

A specific original project can generate only one “Standard+” proposal: it is a responsibility of the partnership to make sure that this requirement is met. In case more “Standard+” project proposals capitalising the same original project are submitted, all proposals will be rejected.

It is not possible to submit the same project proposal both in “Standard” and “Standard+” calls for proposals. The same organisation can be involved in both types of calls for proposals, according to eligibility and restrictions specified in paragraph F below.

B. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The overall objective of the Programme is *“to increase the prosperity and the blue growth potential of the area by stimulating cross-border partnerships able to achieve tangible changes”*.

The Programme will pursue its overall objective through the financial support granted to genuine CBC projects contributing to its specific objectives.

The first set of calls for proposals is open to the following Programme priority axes and specific objectives, summarised below:

PRIORITY AXIS 1: Blue Innovation

- Specific Objective 1.1: Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area

PRIORITY AXIS 2: Safety and resilience

- Specific Objective 2.1: Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area
- Specific Objective 2.2: Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster

PRIORITY AXIS 3: Environment and cultural heritage

- Specific Objective 3.1: Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development
- Specific Objective 3.2: Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity
- Specific Objective 3.3: Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches

PRIORITY AXIS 4: Maritime transport

- Specific Objective 4.1: Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area

The Programme priority axes encompass a wide range of themes to be tackled through a wide array of instruments and possible actions, reflecting the diverse needs of the cooperation area. Specific information on the expected results, indicative actions to be supported, indicative types of beneficiaries and target groups is available in SECTION 2 of the Cooperation Programme and represented in a summary table in factsheet n. 1 “Introduction and Background” and in its annex.

Under the terms of these calls, a project proposal, both “Standard” and “Standard+”, must focus on **one Priority Axis and on one of its related Specific Objectives**.

C. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The Italy – Croatia Programme will allocate EUR 78.200.000 ERDF to the 1st CfP, broken down in funds as follows:

Priority Axis (PA)	“Standard” projects - ERDF	“Standard+” projects - ERDF	Tot ERDF/PA
PA1	11.470.000,00	4.200.000,00	15.670.000,00
PA2	9.200.000,00	2.600.000,00	11.800.000,00
PA3	29.700.000,00	4.200.000,00	33.900.000,00
PA4	12.830.000,00	4.000.000,00	16.830.000,00
TOT	63.200.000,00	15.000.000,00	78.200.000,00

Upon completion of the assessment, the submitted applications will be ranked separately by type of project and priority axis, and will be co-financed according to the EU resources available for each priority axis.

The above mentioned amounts are indicative, i.e.:

- the Monitoring Committee of the Programme reserves the right not to commit all available resources, depending on the quality of submitted applications;
- in case the ERDF availability of the last financeable project will cover more than 30% of the requested ERDF contribution, the Monitoring Committee reserves the right to allocate additional ERDF resources to ensure the full budget coverage;
- in case the ERDF available for a PA and type of project will not be exhausted the Monitoring Committee reserves the right to shift available resources to the ranking list of the other type of project within the same PA, if the quality of submitted applications justifies this decision.

D. TIME SCHEDULE AND SUBMISSION

The first calls for proposals will be open:

- For the “**Standard+**” project calls: 45 days
- For the “**Standard**” project calls: 60 days

Standard+: the opening period starts from the 27/03/2017 and ends on 10/05/2017 at 5.00 p.m.

Standard: the opening period starts from the 21/04/2017 and ends on 19/06/2017 at 5.00 p.m.

The 1st CfP will follow a single step procedure, i.e. full information on the scope, objectives, activities, budget, partnership and supporting documents will have to be submitted by the indicated deadline.

Project proposals must be submitted in English language and only through the web-based electronic management and monitoring system (SIU) available at www.italy-croatia.eu.

In case the SIU systems undergoes any malfunctioning which prevents proper submission of the applications during the opening of the 1st CfP, the Managing Authority (MA) reserves the right to postpone the call deadline of a number of days equal to the days of malfunctioning.

Lead applicants need to be registered on the SIU to be able to create and submit valid application forms.

The Lead applicant shall be in charge for the submission of the application on behalf of all the partners.

The only valid application form will be the one created and submitted via the SIU.

Lead applicants are strongly recommended to proceed with the online registration at least 15 days before the Call deadline, in order not to incur in technical malfunctions.

Full information on the application and selection procedure is detailed in the factsheets n. 4 “Project Application” and factsheet n. 5 “Project Selection”.

E. ADDRESSED AREA

The 1st CfP is addressed to the whole Programme area; specific territorial priorities are defined in the selection criteria.

The Italy - Croatia Programme includes the following administrative units at the NUTS III level:

- in Italy - administrative units (*province*) of Teramo, Pescara, Chieti (Abruzzo), Campobasso (Molise), Brindisi, Lecce, Foggia, Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani (Puglia), Venezia, Padova, Rovigo (Veneto), Pordenone, Udine, Gorizia, Trieste (Friuli Venezia Giulia), Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini (Emilia Romagna), Pesaro e Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, Fermo (Marche);
- in Croatia - administrative units (*županija*) Primorsko-goranska, Ličko-senjska, Zadarska, Šibensko-kninska, Splitsko-dalmatinska, Istarska, Dubrovačko-neretvanska (Adriatic Croatia region), Karlovačka (Continental Croatia region).

Specific restrictions apply to art. 20 of ETC Reg. as partners located outside the Programme area are not eligible (exception in case of Assimilated Partners, see factsheet n. 3 “Project Development”).

F. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

EU financing is provided to partners located in the Programme area. Exceptions are possible only for the Assimilated Partners as detailed in factsheet n. 3 “Project Development”.

Each “**Standard**” project has to involve at least **four partners**, located in each of the two countries of the Programme area (at least one per country).

Each “**Standard+**” project has to involve at least **three partners**, out of which:

- at least one Croatian partner that was member of the partnership of the previously financed project;
- at least one Italian partner that was member of the partnership of the previously financed project.

Additional information on the type of partners is available in factsheet n. 3 “Project Development”.

All bodies/institutions interested in being part of a project proposal must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be established under the national law of Italy or Croatia (Nationality will be determined on the basis of the organisation's statute/articles of incorporation which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the internal law of Italy or Croatia).
- Have their official seat and their seat of operations in the part of the country included in the Programme area (with the exceptions of “Assimilated Partners”);
- Be endowed with legal personality.

Additional information on the eligibility of applicants is detailed in Factsheet n. 3 “Project Development”.

In addition to what above, eligible partners shall be:

1. **National, regional and local public bodies** (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 - see the “European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation”) and associations formed by one or several of such public bodies;
2. **Bodies governed by public law**, and associations constituted by one or several bodies governed by public law, as defined in Article 2(4) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement, i.e. bodies that have all of the following characteristics:
 - a. they are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
 - b. they have legal personality; and
 - c. they are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.
3. **Private bodies**, including private companies, having legal personality and being operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature (restrictions apply for PA1, PA2 and PA3);
4. **International organisations** acting under the Italian or Croatian national law and being operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

The following Public Institutions will be considered as per “department”:

- Ministries
- Regions/ Counties
- Universities

Each single department within the institution will thus be considered as a separate potential applicant; department is understood as an organisational unit with financial and administrative autonomy and having technical and administrative staff to ensure its functioning.

Specific restrictions for eligibility of private partners under this 1st CfP for both “Standard” and “Standard+”:

- For PA1 and PA3 private bodies are eligible but enterprises are eligible only in case of SMEs as defined by EU recommendation 2003/361;
- For PA2 private bodies are eligible but enterprises are not eligible;
- For PA4 all private bodies are eligible including enterprises, irrespective of their size.

Specific restrictions only for “Standard”:

- one institution cannot be lead applicant in more than 2 proposals per each Programme Specific Objective. If more than 2 proposals are submitted by the same Lead Applicant in the same Specific Objective, all submitted proposals will be rejected.

Specific restrictions only for “Standard+”:

- one institution cannot be lead applicant in more than one “Standard+” proposal. If more than one proposal is submitted by the same Lead Applicant, all submitted proposals will be rejected;
- for project proposals with small scale infrastructures and construction works all the necessary authorisations and permissions have to be available at the moment of the application.

Further details in terms of eligibility of partners is detailed in the factsheet 3 “Project Development”.

G. LEAD APPLICANTS

Only the following bodies located in Italy or Croatia shall be considered as eligible lead applicants:

- **Public bodies** (national, regional or local level) including associations constituted by one or several regional or local public authorities;
- **Bodies governed by public law**, including associations constituted by one or several bodies governed by public law.

H. CO-FINANCING RATE AND ADVANCE PAYMENT

The ERDF contribution of Italy – Croatia Programme will be limited to a co-financing rate equal to 85% of eligible costs for all partners. The share of expenditure (at least 15%) not covered by ERDF funds shall be ensured by national co-financing sources.

It is possible for approved projects to receive an advance payment from the ERDF up to 10% of the overall contribution.

As stated in Factsheet 3 (see paragraph F for reference) in-kind contributions are not eligible within the Programme, therefore their use of as a source of co-financing is not permitted.

Additional info is available in Factsheet n. 3 “Project Development”.

I. PROJECT SIZE

The financial size of the projects submitted within the framework of the Programme 1st CFP must be between a minimum and a maximum ERDF contribution:

		“Standard” projects	“Standard+” projects
Min contribution	ERDF	EUR 500.000,00	EUR 500.000,00
Max contribution	ERDF	EUR 3.000.000,00	EUR 1.000.000,00

N.B. The table above specifies the ERDF allocations per typology of project; consequently, it shall be underlined that the total budget of the projects shall also include the amounts corresponding to the co-financing of LP and PPs. For instance, for a “Standard” or “Standard+” project requesting EUR 500.000,00 of ERDF (minimum contribution) the corresponding total budget will be EUR 588.235,29; for a “Standard+” project requesting EUR 1.000.000,00 of ERDF (maximum contribution) the corresponding total budget will be EUR 1.176.470,58; for a “Standard” project requesting EUR 3.000.000,00 of ERDF (maximum contribution) the corresponding total budget will be EUR 3.529.411,76.

The ERDF contribution requested by each project applicant (partner in the proposal) shall be not lower than EUR 50.000,00.

J. PROJECT DURATION

The project implementation shall not be longer than:

	“Standard” projects	“Standard+” projects
Max duration	30 months	18 months

Applicants shall indicate the start and end date in the AF, taking into account the necessary time for the assessment process and contracting procedures.

The starting date indicated in the AF of approved operations could be modified in agreement with the Lead Partner before the signature of the Subsidy Contract if deemed necessary by the Managing Authority. The preparatory phase for the elaboration of the project proposal and the time needed for project administrative and financial closure shall be separately considered, i.e. added to the implementation period.

K. SELECTION PROCEDURE

As laid down by art. 12 of Regulation (UE) No. 1299/2013, the MC is in charge of the selection of the operations for funding. In order to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and rapidity to the selection process, applications for participating to the selection are submitted through the SIU system and the assessment of the applications is performed by the JS under the responsibility of the MA. In order to ensure equal, fair and transparent approach, the project proposals are assessed according to a set of criteria and sub-criteria for the selection of the operations previously approved by the MC according to the information included in the Cooperation Programme . The results of the assessment are reported in a project assessment grid to be prepared for supporting the MC decision.

Any modification which might affect the assessment of submitted proposals should be communicated without delay.

The assessment of the applications is carried out in different steps:

1. **Admissibility check:** the admissibility check is aimed at ensuring the respect of the minimum requirements of the application from an administrative perspective. It verifies the adequacy of AF submission and the completeness of LP data/documents. Only those applications which successfully pass this check are allowed to progress to the eligibility check.

The verification of all the requirements is performed by the JS, with some check which are done automatically by the SIU system.

Results of the admissibility check shall be communicated to the MC for information.

All lead applicants shall be informed about the results of the admissibility check.
2. **Eligibility check:** the eligibility check is aimed at ensuring the respect of the minimum project requirements as regards to partnership, duration, budget, priority axis/ specific objective, horizontal principles and cooperation. In addition, the eligibility check includes the verification of additional requirements per Specific Objective aimed at verifying the respect of legislation, plans and programmes which are thematically relevant.

Only those applications which successfully pass these checks are allowed to progress to the quality check.

MA/JS might contact the Lead Applicant in case additional information is needed for clarifying nationality and status of the applicants.

The verification of all the requirements is performed by the JS, with some check which are done automatically by the SIU system.

Results of the eligibility check shall be communicated to the MC for approval.

All lead applicants shall be informed about the results of eligibility check.
3. **Quality check:** only those applications which have passed the admissibility and eligibility checks shall be assessed from a quality point of view. The goal of the quality assessment

is to provide the MC with an overall picture containing the relevant information in order to allow the approval of the ranking list.

The quality assessment shall be performed by the JS. As mentioned above, the assessment is performed according to a list of criteria and sub-criteria and their fulfilment by the project proposal. The quality assessment criteria are divided into three groups:

- Strategic assessment criteria - whose main aim is to determine the extent of the project's contribution to the achievement of Programme objectives (contribution to Programme expected results), by addressing joint or common target group needs.
- Operational assessment criteria - whose main aim is to assess the viability and the feasibility of the proposed project, as well as its value for money in terms of resources used vs. foreseen achievements.
- SO tailored assessment criteria – whose main aim is to give priority to those project proposals supporting selected cross-cutting elements or following specific guiding principles as indicated in the Cooperation Programme.

There are some minimum quality thresholds to be reached both to the strategic and operational checks of project. Only those project proposals reaching the strategic criteria threshold will be subject to the operational assessment, and only those proposals reaching the operational criteria threshold will be subject to the criteria per S.O. assessment and therefore fully appraised.

After the closure of the quality check each application shall get a final score. A distinct ranking list will be produced for each call, i.e. for each type of project and Priority Axis. Each ranking list will be subdivided in:

- applications not reaching the minimum threshold for funding and not recommended for selection;
- applications reaching the minimum threshold for funding but not in a ranking position useful for selection on the basis of the budget available for the specific call;
- applications reaching the minimum threshold for funding and in a useful ranking position, thus recommended for funding.

Applications recommended for funding shall thus be assessed in order to verify the compliance of the proposal with the European State Aid legislation according to Article 107(1) of the Treaty.

4. **State Aid check:** only those applications that are recommended for funding following the quality assessment shall also undergo the State Aid assessment, which is carried out by JS with the support of external experts. The goal of the State Aid assessment is to verify the compliance of the applications with the European State Aid legislation according to Article 107 of the Treaty.

At the end of the whole assessment procedure as approved by the MC, the ranking lists of the assessed project proposals with evidence of financed projects shall be published on the

Programme website. In line with Delegated Regulation (EU) No. 821/2014, the list of beneficiaries and the granted public contribution shall be published.

Only approved proposals will be offered to sign the Subsidy Contract with the MA.

Detailed information on assessment criteria is available in Factsheet n. 5 “Project Selection”.

L. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND TIMING

The call is governed by EU Regulations, the Cooperation Programme and the present document. Italian legal framework shall be applied whenever possible.

The length in time of the selection procedure depends on the number of applications. It is estimated that the selected “Standard+” proposals will be contracted by the end of December 2017 while the selected “Standard” proposals will be contracted by end of June 2018.

M. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

More information regarding the Italy – Croatia Programme, conditions for the submission of project proposals, assessment of proposals, the application package as well as other relevant information is available at www.italy-croatia.eu

To contact the Joint Secretariat applicants can use the following e-mail address:

JS.Italy-Croatia@regione.veneto.it

N. SUMMARY: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE TWO TYPES OF CALLS AND PROJECTS

FEATURES	TYPE OF PROJECTS	
	“Standard”	“Standard+”
LP	Public or public equivalent body	Public or public equivalent body
Min. # of Partners	4 Partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)	3 Partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR that were partners of 2007-2013 funded project)
Max duration	30 months	18 months
Priority Axes	PA1, PA2, PA3, PA4	PA1, PA2, PA3, PA4
Additional info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Institution can participate in both “Standard” and “Standard+” proposals An institution can be LP in max 2 “Standard” proposals per Specific Objective Capitalisation from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalisation from 2007-2013 projects funded by Adriatic IPA CBC, SEE and MED is compulsory The 2007-2013 project can generate only one “Standard+” proposal Each institution can be LP only in one “Standard+”

	projects funded within previous programming periods is encouraged	<p>proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For project proposals with small scale infrastructures and construction works all the necessary authorisations and permissions have to be available at the moment of the application
Min ERDF contribution	Euro 500.000,00	Euro 500.000,00
Max ERDF contribution	Euro 3.000.000,00	Euro 1.000.000,00
Min ERDF contribution per PP	Euro 50.000,00	Euro 50.000,00
Restrictions for specific Priority Axes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PA 1 and PA3 private bodies are eligible in case of enterprises they have to be SMEs (EU recomm. 2003/361) In PA2 private bodies are eligible but enterprises are not eligible In PA 4 all private bodies are eligible including enterprises, irrespective of their size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PA 1 and PA3 private bodies are eligible and in case of enterprises they have to be SMEs (EU recomm. 2003/361) In PA2 private bodies are eligible but enterprises are not eligible In PA 4 all private bodies are eligible including enterprises, irrespective of their size
Budget lines available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation costs Staff Office and administration External expertise and services Travel and accommodation Equipment Small scale infrastructures and construction works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation costs Staff Office and administration External expertise and services Travel and accommodation Equipment Small scale infrastructures and construction works

O. OUTLINE OF OPEN CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

CALL	PRIORITY AXIS	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	ERDF ALLOCATED	TIME-FRAME
2017 Standard Axis 1	PA1	SO 1.1	11.470.000,00	from 21/04/2017 to 19/06/2017
2017 Standard+ Axis 1	PA1	SO 1.1	4.200.000,00	from 27/03/2017 to 10/05/2017
2017 Standard Axis 2	PA2	SO 2.1 SO 2.2	9.200.000,00	from 21/04/2017 to 19/06/2017
2017 Standard+ Axis 2	PA2	SO 2.1 SO 2.2	2.600.000,00	from 27/03/2017 to 10/05/2017
2017 Standard Axis 3	PA3	SO 3.1 SO 3.2 SO 3.3	29.700.000,00	from 21/04/2017 to 19/06/2017
2017 Standard+ Axis 3	PA3	SO 3.1 SO 3.2 SO 3.3	4.200.000,00	from 27/03/2017 to 10/05/2017
2017 Standard Axis 4	PA4	SO 4.1	12.830.000,00	from 21/04/2017 to 19/06/2017
2017 Standard+ Axis 4	PA4	SO 4.1	4.000.000,00	from 27/03/2017 to 10/05/2017