

INTERREG V A Italy-Croatia CBC Programme

Restricted Call for Proposals (IT-HR Clusters)

Call announcement

Version of 5 October 2021

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A. INTRODUCTION

The INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia 2014 – 2020 Cooperation Programme (hereinafter IT-HR Programme), set up in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) - one of the two goals of the EU Cohesion Policy - is launching the Restricted Call for Proposals (IT-HR Clusters) and invites interested eligible applicants to submit project proposals. The detailed conditions for the Call can be found in the following documents, altogether referred to as “Restricted Call for Proposals (IT-HR Clusters) application package”, which constitute an integral part of this Call announcement and are available for download (as separate documents or as a single zipped file) from the Programme website www.italy-croatia.eu:

- Call announcement;
- Factsheet nr. 3 "Project Development";
- Factsheet nr. 4 "Project Submission via SIU";
- Factsheet nr. 5 "Project Selection" and Annexes - Selection criteria;
- Lead partner declaration form and project partner declaration form;
- Template of subsidy contract.

Please note that also Factsheet nr. 6 “Project Implementation”, Factsheet nr. 7 “Project closure” and Factsheet nr. 8 "Project Communication" are all available on the Programme website and should be taken into account as useful references for drafting the proposals.

The Call is governed by EU Regulations, the Cooperation Programme and the present document. Italian legal framework shall be applied wherever applicable.

B. AIM OF THE CALL

The general objective of the call is to maximize the experiences and results achieved by the IT-HR Programme through the implementation of Standard+ and Standard Projects.

These projects have represented and still represent a positive example of cross-border cooperation, through which the beneficiaries from Italy and Croatia were able to activate and improve cooperation dynamics that made it possible to produce significant outputs.

Thanks to this Restricted Call for Proposals (IT-HR Clusters), the IT-HR Programme intends to fully exploit and consolidate the results achieved and increase the knowledge base on the addressed topics in preparation for the next programming period.

Indeed, **the Call is aimed at financing “IT-HR Cluster projects” in 5 different thematic areas** (one cluster project per topic is expected to be financed) aiming to allow real synergies between projects and to provide a better visibility and transferability of results. The cluster projects will gather results achieved and in progress and facilitate transfer from the projects to other

communities (institutional, scientific and thematic European networks/stakeholders, EUSAIR) within and beyond the Programme area.

In particular, Applicants are requested to submit project proposals able to ensure the following goals for the outputs produced and the best practices tested during the implementation of Standard+ and Standard Projects:

- innovative schemes for the sustainability of results;
- transferability of results beyond the IT-HR Programme Area;
- activation of coordination processes with other Interreg (e.g., ADRION Thematic Clusters) and EU initiatives (e.g., EUSAIR governance);
- involvement in ongoing communication and dissemination activities of other Standard and Strategic IT-HR projects operating in the same thematic areas;
- development of project ideas in line with Interreg IT-HR Programme 2021-2027, identification of cross-border obstacles to be solved, proposals to contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR flagships;
- addressing as target groups "policy makers" relevant for the Programming Period 2021-2027.

C. THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE 5 CLUSTERS

The "IT-HR Clusters" project proposals submitted by applicants shall be consistent with all the requirements set out in this Call and described in detail in Factsheet n. 3 "Project Development". The project proposals shall foresee a clear contribution to the achievement of goals declared under paragraph B "Aim of the Call".

The following Clusters are defined:

- IT-HR CLUSTER n. 1: Connectivity from the sea: data driven solution in the sea economy
- IT-HR CLUSTER n. 2: Adaptation to climate changes: governance and capacity building
- IT-HR CLUSTER n. 3: Joint development of thematic cultural routes
- IT-HR CLUSTER n. 4: Marine monitoring as a tool in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)
- IT-HR CLUSTER n. 5: Improving quality, efficiency and environmental performance of Adriatic ports

Detailed description on how to build the Work Plan can be found in FS3 par. D.

D. AVAILABLE BUDGET AND CO-FINANCING

The IT-HR Programme will allocate an indicative amount of EUR 2.550.000,00 ERDF to the "IT-HR Clusters Projects" restricted Call for proposals, as follows:

Cluster n.	Cluster	Maximum ERDF budget (EUR)	Maximum budget for national co-financing (EUR)	Maximum total budget (EUR)
1	<i>Connectivity from the sea: data driven solution in the sea economy</i>	510.000,00	90.000,00	600.000,00
2	<i>Adaptation to climate changes: governance and capacity building</i>	510.000,00	90.000,00	600.000,00
3	<i>Joint development of thematic cultural routes</i>	510.000,00	90.000,00	600.000,00
4	<i>Marine monitoring as a tool in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)</i>	510.000,00	90.000,00	600.000,00
5	<i>Improving quality, efficiency and environmental performance of Adriatic ports</i>	510.000,00	90.000,00	600.000,00

The ERDF contribution of the Italy – Croatia Programme is limited to a co-financing rate **equal to 85%** of total eligible costs of the projects. The share of expenditure (at least 15% of total eligible costs of the project) not covered by ERDF funds shall be ensured by national co-financing sources.

Upon completion of the assessment, the submitted applications will be ranked separately per cluster (i.e., thematic area) and it is expected that 1 IT-HR cluster project is funded per each cluster.

The abovementioned amounts are indicative, i.e., the total budget of the Call is subject to the availability of funds and will be revised if needed due to de-commitment or other reduction of the financial plan of the Programme. Moreover, the Monitoring Committee of the Programme reserves the right not to commit all available resources depending on the quality of submitted applications or to allocate additional ERDF resources to finance more proposals from the ranking list.

In-kind contributions are **not eligible** within the Programme, therefore their use as a source of co-financing is not permitted. Additional information is available in Factsheet n. 3 “Project Development” (see paragraphs E and G).

E. ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIPS

In order to be an eligible partner/lead partner within each of the 5 Clusters, **an organization has to be already LP or PP (also Assimilated) of one of the Standard+ or Standard projects expressly listed below.** Any other organization which is not a PP or LP of a project listed in that paragraph cannot participate in the specific cluster partnership and will be excluded.

Specific eligibility criteria applicable to the single organizations are recalled in Factsheet n. 3 “Project Development”.

The same organization cannot be PP or LP in more than one proposal. If more than one proposal includes the same organization as its LP or PP, all involved submitted proposals will be rejected. The proposal will be rejected also in case of cluster partnership exceeding the maximum number of partners.

Each project must involve at least three partners, out of which:

- at least one Croatian partner involved in Standard or Standard+ project;
- at least one Italian partner involved in Standard or Standard+ project.

Moreover, the partnership involved shall bring the know-how and experience from **at least 3 different projects** belonging to the same IT-HR Cluster from the list below.

The maximum number of partners per each cluster project is 8.

Eligible partners shall belong to the projects listed in the following table, identified on the basis of their contribution to and compliance with the specific theme of each cluster:

N.	Cluster	Eligible projects
1	Connectivity from the sea: data driven solution in the sea economy	ADRIREEF, BEAT, BLUE KEP, FAIRSEA, INVESTINFISH, ITACA, PRIZEFISH, SUSHI DROP
2	Adaptation to climate changes: governance and capacity building	ADRIADAPT, ASTERIS, CHANGE WE CARE, iDEAL, Joint_SECAP, MoST, READINESS, RESPONSE
3	Joint development of thematic cultural routes	ATLAS, ARCA ADRIATICA, HERCULTOUR, HISTORIC, MADE IN-LAND, REMEMBER, REVIVAL, TEMPUS, UnderwaterMuse, VALUE
4	Marine monitoring as a tool in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)	AdSWiM, CREW, Dory, ECOMAP, ECOSS, ML-REPAIR, Net4mPLASTIC, SASPAS, SOUNDSCAPE, WATERCARE
5	Improving quality, efficiency and environmental performance of Adriatic ports	ADRIGREEN, DigLogs, E-CHAIN, ECOMOBILITY, INTESA, PROMARES, TRANSPGOOD

In line with Standard and Standard+ eligibility rules, eligible partners shall either be:

- National, regional and local public bodies and associations formed by one or several of such public bodies;
- 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:

- They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- They have legal personality; and
- 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.
- Private bodies, including private companies, having legal personality and being operational for at least two fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature; specific restrictions for the participation of private bodies are established.
- International organizations acting under the Italian or Croatian national law, having legal seat in Italy or Croatia and being operational for at least two fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

In addition to the above requirements, only the following bodies located in Italian or Croatian eligible areas 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;

F. PROJECT SIZE, BUDGET LINES AND FINANCING OPTIONS

The financial size of the projects submitted in the framework of the Restricted Call for Proposals (IT-HR Clusters) shall be in line with the available resources.

Considering the available resources, it is planned to finance 5 IT-HR Cluster projects with a financial size equal to € 600.000,00 and an ERDF co-financing rate equal to 85%.

No **preparation costs** are eligible under this restricted Call for Proposals.

No **advance payments** will be granted by the Programme to partners in the current Call.

The following three financial options are available. In the frame of the application process, each project has to choose the most suitable one:

- A. BUDGET WITH REAL COSTS** - Eligible costs are limited to the following budget lines:
- Staff costs,
 - Office administration costs (in the amount equal to 15% of Staff costs),
 - Travel and accommodation costs and
 - External expertise and services costs.
- B. FLAT-RATE (40%) FINANCING FOR COSTS OTHER THAN STAFF COSTS** - flat rate of 40 % of eligible direct staff costs to cover the remaining eligible costs.
- C. FLAT RATE STAFF COSTS AS 20% OF DIRECT COSTS** - staff costs of a project calculated at a flat rate of 20 % of the direct costs other than the staff costs.

Additional information on financial options is available in Factsheet n. 3 “Project Development” (see chapters E, F and G).

G. PROJECT DURATION

The project implementation shall **not be longer than 15 months; in any case the projects’ end date shall be 30/06/2023 at the latest.**

Applicants shall indicate the start and end dates in the application form, taking into account the necessary time for the assessment process and contracting procedures. The starting date indicated in the application form of approved projects cannot be prior to the application form submission and could be modified in agreement with the Lead partner before the signature of the subsidy contract if deemed necessary by the Managing Authority. The time needed for

project administrative and financial closure (max 3 months) shall be separately considered, i.e., added to the implementation period.

All project expenditures shall be reported by 30/09/2023 at the very latest. Extension of project duration, after 30/06/2023, will not be possible.

H. PROJECT SUBMISSION

The Restricted Call for Proposals (IT-HR Clusters) will be open for 45 calendar days from the 20th of October 2021 to the 6th of December 2021 – 12.00 PM CET.

The Call will follow a single step procedure, i.e., full information on the 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.

Applicants are required to submit electronically their application through the SIU system, filling in an on-line template, describing the contents of the actions to be carried out, the partnership and budget.

The Lead partner / Applicant is in charge for the submission of the application on behalf of all the project partners. The only valid application form is the one created and submitted via the SIU. The Managing Authority reserves the right to postpone the Call's deadline in case of duly justified circumstances.

Full information on the application procedure is detailed in the Factsheet n. 4 "Project Submission via SIU".

CONSULTATION WITH THE JS

In order to minimize the administrative burden and to ensure high quality proposals, ***it is mandatory for the Applicants to have a consultation with the JS before the finalization and submission of the proposal.*** The "Online Consultation Meeting" must be requested by the Applicant that has opened an Application Form in SIU via e-mail to JS (JS.Italy-Croatia@regione.veneto.it) with the following subject: "meeting request".

Only one (1) Consultation Meeting per project proposal can be requested.

I. PROJECT SELECTION

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

1) Admissibility check

2) Eligibility check

3) Quality assessment divided into three groups of criteria:

- Strategic assessment criteria
- Operational assessment criteria
- Cluster assessment criteria

4) State Aid assessment

In consideration to the types of activities financed by the present Call, the Programme does not expect any State aid relevant activity, as defined by European legislation and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union governing the matter in Articles 107-108. In order to ensure the compliance with the State aid relevant legislation, the JS will verify the consistency of the actions financed with the requirement of the Call.

At the end of the whole assessment procedure, as approved by the Monitoring Committee, the ranking list 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 Managing Authority.

The length in time of the selection procedure depends on the number of applications received. It is estimated that the selected proposals will be contracted within the 1st quarter of 2022.

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

J. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

To contact the INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia CBC Programme Joint Secretariat:

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Website: www.italy-croatia.eu

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K. SUMMARY: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE CALL

Feature	Summary
Eligible applicants / Lead applicants	<i>LPs and PPs of Standard or Standard+ projects listed in paragraph E of the Call Announcement.</i>
LP	<i>Public body or body governed by public law</i>
Min. n. of Partners	<i>3 partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)</i>
Max. n. of Partners	<i>8 partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)</i>
Minimum n. of Standard or Standard+ projects to be involved	<i>3 projects</i>
Max duration	<i>no longer than 15 months, with latest end date on 30/06/2023 and latest reporting date 30/09/2023</i>
N. of projects expected to be funded	<i>5 (1 for each IT-HR Cluster)</i>
ERDF contribution	<i>In line with the amount set in paragraph D.</i>
Max financial size of each project	<i>Up to EUR 600.000,00 per project and 85% ERDF co-financing rate</i>
Financing options	<p><i>A. BUDGET WITH REAL COSTS (Limited to: Staff costs, Office administration costs, Travel and accommodation costs and External expertise and services costs)</i></p> <p><i>B. FLAT-RATE (40%) FINANCING FOR COSTS OTHER THAN STAFF COSTS</i></p> <p><i>C. FLAT RATE STAFF COSTS AS 20% OF DIRECT COSTS</i></p>