



BASHKITË PËR NË EVROPE
Një projekt i financuar nga BE

A GUIDE TO EU FUNDING

A local perspective

second edition



A guide to EU Fundings – Local Perspective

2nd Edition

November 2024

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared with the aim to provide an overview of the EU funding opportunities for the local government authorities in Albania. Its preparation has been financed by the “Municipalities for Europe Project”, an EU funded project.

The information and views set out in this study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union Delegation in Albania.

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

The project "Municipalities for Europe" funded by the European Union is pleased to introduce you to some of the important financial instruments created by the European Union, from which various actors, focused on these programs, can benefit. Primarily, we have focused on Local Government Units, specifically "Municipalities," to which this publication is addressed.

This publication is the second one produced by the project and aims to guide you to get to know IPA, "the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance," as well as some of the European Union programs in which Albania participates. These programs, and the financing opportunities that they offer, are briefly described in this brochure, but detailed information is available on the European Commission's website.

The funding opportunities offered by the EU demonstrate the added value of the EU budget in various areas, from research to employment, regional development, and cooperation for education, tourism, culture, environment, humanitarian aid, energy, local and rural development, among many others.

We hope that this publication will help you to get basic information on where to apply and find EU funding for your projects

I. OVERVIEW OF THE EU FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The most well-known financial instrument of the European Union in the Western Balkans is the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance, also known as IPA Funds. IPA has been active since 2007. **Since January 2007 onwards, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance has replaced several European Programs and financial instruments for candidate countries or potential candidate countries, namely, PHARE, PHARE CBC, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS, as well as the financial instrument for Turkey.** Currently, the Western Balkans and other beneficiary countries of IPA fall under the **IPA III 2021-2027 Perspective.**

The Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the tool through which the EU supports reforms in “countries of expansion” with technical and financial assistance. IPA funds build the capacities of countries throughout the accession process, resulting in positive and progressive developments in the region. For the period 2007-2013, IPA had a budget of 11.5 billion euros, its successor, IPA II, had 11.7 billion euros for the period 2014-2020, and for the period 2021-2027, IPA III has an increased budget of around 14.5 billion euros.

The current beneficiaries are: **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.**

While the most important innovation of IPA II was its strategic focus, the Country Strategy Papers were strategic planning documents developed for each beneficiary for the 7-year period. IPA III, on the other hand, is a policy-driven instrument based on the Policies - Political Framework. IPA III represents a policy-driven, sustainable approach, strategically and dynamically using aid, with the fundamental requirements for accession at the heart of the instrument. By further focusing EU financial assistance on key priorities, IPA III will leverage support for reforms that encourage sustainable socio-economic development and bring partners closer to European Union values and standards.

IPA III offers financial support in 5 main Windows, divided in sectors, as follows:

- Window 1: Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy;
- Window 2: Well governance, approximation with EU acquis, good neighboring relations and strategic communication;
- Window 3: Green agenda and sustainable connections;
- Window 4: Competitiveness and inclusive growth;
- Window 5: Territorial and cross border collaboration.

These five windows, which generally correspond to the specific objectives of the Regulation, are all aspects of the EU enlargement policy and are interconnected. IPA III builds on past achievements, as all actions designed to support a specific sector will be financed under the same window.

II. EU FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ALBANIA

Albania is one of the benefiting countries OF THE Instruments of the pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) and this support has continued since 2007, year when the IPA I started.

IPA I - 2007 – 2013 (TAIB and CBC)

IPA II - 2014 – 2020 (7 priority areas)

IPA III - 2021 – 2027 (5 programming windows in key areas)

2.1 Financial Framework Partnership Agreement

The basic legal document that sets out the principles for cooperation between Albania and the European Commission in the implementation of IPA is the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement for 2021-2027. The Partnership Agreement is **the basis for establishing the necessary structures and authorities** in Albania for managing the IPA assistance. The Framework Agreement defines the conditions for efficient financial management of EU assistance and describes the respective obligations related to the proper implementation of IPA-funded projects.

The Partnership Agreement of the Financial Framework between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the European Commission on the Rules for Cooperation regarding EU Financial Assistance in the Republic of Albania under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Albania through Law No. 65/2022, dated 15.9.2022.

In accordance with the Framework Agreement (Article 6, Principle of Ownership), the ownership of the programming and implementation of IPA III assistance primarily belongs to the IPA III beneficiary. The Agreement explains that the IPA III beneficiary (Albania) **appoints a National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC)**, serving as a counterpart structure to the Commission for the entire process of strategic planning, programming coordination, implementation monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of IPA III assistance. According to the Framework Agreement, NIPAC is the high-level representative of the government or national administration of the IPA III beneficiary, with the necessary authority. In the case of Albania, the National Coordinator of IPA is *the General Director of the State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)*.

Due to the challenges faced by Albanian beneficiaries in the last years of IPA support, a special fund is be allocated in the state budget of each respective year to support the public central and local institutions in the framework of the projects financed by the EU and other donors in the framework of pre-financing, co-financing and payment of VAT and other customs duties.

From January 1st, 2023, the EU contractors are VAT exempted according to Law no. 82/2022 "On some additions and changes to law no. 92/2014, "On value added tax in the Republic of Albania", as amended" that will contribute to a smooth implementation of IPA support to Albania.

Another initiative to support EU beneficiaries is the framework service contract managed within SASPAC's budget for the preparation of project proposals following the announcement of calls from donors for the projects with foreign funding. The aim of this initiative is to support government institutions in applying for project proposals in the context of donor calls in order to increase the absorption of funds.

The Decision on establishing the structures and authorities, as well as the mutual relations for the indirect management of the financial assistance under the annual and multi-annual programmes granted by the European Union to the Republic of Albania under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) (2021 -2027) can be downloaded here:

<https://www.kryeministria.al/newsroom/47343-2/>

III. POLITICAL TERRITORIAL AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION SCOPE VIEWED FROM THE ALBANIAN POINT OF VIEW

In the period 2021-2027, the European Union funds a number of programs for Cross-Border and Territorial Cooperation (cross-border, Interreg, and transnational cooperation programs). This cooperation aims to promote understanding and good neighbouring relations and encourage sustainable local development by increasing opportunities to improve well-being in remote and rural areas. Cross-border programs aim to address common challenges in the fields of economic competitiveness, social inclusion, environmental protection, and cultural heritage, as well as promote tourism.

The Territorial Collaboration programs are grouped as follows:

- Bilateral Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programs – in general, these programs involve two countries that share a common border. Programs can be joint between: i) two IPA countries; ii) one IPA country and one EU member country; iii) two EU member countries (ERDF funds).
- Trilateral Cross-Border Cooperation Programs – Three countries that share a common border participate in these projects, and there should be at least one partner from each country.
- Transnational Programs – These are large-scale programs with more than five participating countries. In each case, they involve a mix of EU member states and non-member states (ERDF+IPA).

Territorial Cooperation Programs are developed by the participating states themselves and approved by the European Commission. The programs have a 7-year duration, and each program has an Operational Document outlining areas where the project implementation is allowed, financial allocations, program management authorities, implementation details, as well as potential priorities for funding.

After the program is developed and approved by the European Commission, it opens the way for launching calls for projects for each priority. In this way a program generates a significant number of projects to be implemented.

Albania also participates in cross-border programs with EU Member States and in transnational and regional programs, which are financed by contributions from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and IPA III. This is an opportunity for Albanian applicants (e.g., local and regional institutions, civil society organizations, universities, etc.) *to familiarize themselves with the rules and procedures of territorial cooperation initiatives and to expand the network of potential partners for regional cooperation activities.*

More specifically, Albania participates in three cross-border programs under IPA III with other IPA III beneficiaries, namely with Montenegro, Kosovo*1, and North Macedonia. Regarding programs with EU Member States, Albania takes part in a trilateral cross-border program with Italy and Montenegro and a bilateral program with Greece.

During the period 2021-2027, Albania continues to participate in the transnational program EuroMED – Mediterranean, Adriatic-Ionian (ADRION), and has also joined two new programs, Interreg URBACT and Interreg Europe. All four programs have a broad geographical scope, including multiple countries, and cover the entire territory of Albania as an eligible area for financing.

As part of Territorial Cooperation and the new perspective of IPA III 2021-2027, Albania participates in nine territorial cooperation programs as follows:

Three IPA-IPA CBC programs:

- IPA CBC Montenegro – Albania;
- IPA CBC Northern Macedonia – Albania;
- IPA CBC Albania – Kosovo.

Two cross-border collaboration programs with Member States:

- Interreg IPA CBC Greece – Albania;
- Interreg IPA South Adriatic (Interreg IPA CBC Italy – Albanian - Montenegro).

Four transnational programs:

- Interreg IPA ADRION (Adriatic – Ionian);
- Interreg Euro MED
- Interreg URBACT

* This definition is not a judging the position on the status and is in line with the UNSCR 1244/1999 and with the ICJ Opinion on the independence declaration of Kosovo

– Interreg Europe

The new programs focus on financing projects that will contribute to the implementation of political, economic, and institutional reforms in Albania, simultaneously helping Albania progress in the European integration process within its neighboring countries. In this regard, cooperation with EU member states is particularly valuable.

An overview of each of these programs is explained below as follows.

3.1 IPA CBC Montenegro-Albania Program 2021-2027

Cross-Border
Cooperation



Funded by
the European Union

Montenegro – Albania

The amount of the general program Budget is 13,790.000 euro, including the co-funding.

The Overall program scope is to promote good neighbourly relations, foster Union integration and contribute to social, economic and territorial development by improving the quality of life of the population in the programme cross-border area by tourism development based on cultural/natural heritage and by protecting the environment.

This can be achieved through joint projects as part of the Program **Thematic Priorities (TP)** (*Program thematic priorities, TP*):

TP1: Tourism and cultural and natural heritage

TP2: Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management

Specific Objectives:

1. Cross border territory is more environmentally sustainable and resilient;
2. Cross border tourism and cultural/natural heritage contributes more to cross border economic development;
3. To upgrade the competitiveness of the service providers/SME in the tourism sector

Eligible areas:

In Montenegro, the areas cover the following municipalities: Andrijevica, Bar, Berane, Budva, Cetinje, Danilovgrad, Gusinje, Kolašin, Petnjica, Plav, Podgorica, Rožaje, Tuzi, Ulcinj and Zeta.

In Albania it includes: The regions of Shkodra (which includes the municipalities of Shkodra, Malësi e Madhe, Vau i Dejës, Puka and Fushë-Arrës), and Lezha (municipalities of Lezha, Mirditë and Kurbin), and the municipality of Tropoja.



Program Management Structures

Intermediate body for financial management (**Contracting Authority**)

The contracting authority for the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Montenegro-Albania 2021-2027 is the Ministry of Finance of Montenegro, specifically Directorate for Finance, Contracting and Implementation of EU Assistance Funds (CFCU).

Managing Structures

The Montenegrin Structure consists of the **Managing Authority** and the Contracting Authority. The Managing Authority is located in the Ministry European Affairs, and the Contracting Authority is in the Directorate for Finance, Contracting and Implementation of EU Assistance Funds (CFCU)..

The Albanian Structure consists of National Authority in the State Agency for Strategic Planning and Foreign Assistance Coordination (SASPAC). The Control Body is an integral part of the control and management system, and its tasks are assigned to the Ministry of Finance and Economy (CFCU): lindita.rizvanolli@financa.gov.al).

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)

The Joint Technical Secretariat (SPT/JTS) is the administrative body responsible for the daily management of the Cross-Border Cooperation Program (CBC) Montenegro-Albania. The JTS is responsible for assisting potential applicants in finding partners, building their capacities in project development, ensuring close cooperation with the **Structures**, assisting the **Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)** by serving as a Secretariat, monitoring, supporting, and advising grant beneficiaries, conducting informational campaigns, and other activities aimed at increasing public awareness of the Cross-Border Cooperation Program.

The main offices of the Technical Joint Secretariat are in Podgorica (contact person: sanja.todorovic@jts-mne-alb-mne-kos.org), while the antenna is placed Shkodra (contact person: nersada.mandija@saspac.gov.al)

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)

The Joint Monitoring Committee is responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of the program and consists of representatives from both beneficiary countries, Montenegro and Albania, who have equal status in the JMC.

Who can apply?

In case some institutions or organizations want to apply for a project under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Montenegro-Albania, they must be part of the list of eligible partners, as follows:

Who can apply?

In case some institutions or organizations want to apply for a project under the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Program Montenegro-Albania, they must be part of the list of eligible partners, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministries, Public Agencies, Regions, Municipalities, local directorates of ministries, universities, hospitals, etc.);
- Public entities (such as port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.),
- Private non-profit organizations (civil/social organizations, non-governmental organizations, business associations, etc.)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. For-profit entities such as SME's or companies also cannot apply for such fundings. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested actors falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with at least one Montenegrin partner.

Program internet page: <https://www.cbc-mne-alb.org/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://www.cbc-mne-alb.org/calls-for-proposals>

Example of a project financed from EU under the IPA CBC MNE-AL Program

Project Title: New Reality of the Heritage Sites
Implementation date: 01.03.2023 -30.08.2025
Beneficiaries: Municipality of Tropoja and others
Total project amount: 533,024.94 Euro
Value of Municipality benefits: 205,351.00 Euro

Description: The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the development of tourism, culture and heritage in Montenegro and Albania. Specifically, the project will improve, widely acknowledge and promote cross border culture heritage of Bar and Tropoja through the creation of modern tourism presentation. Restauration/Revitalisation and adaptive reuse of one cultural heritage site in Bar and one in Tropoje (Old City of Bar and the "Bajram Curri" Museum); New tourism routes created: The cultural routes signage and interpretation in Bar and Tropoje are in place and improved; New touristic offers created: fortresses of Tropoje and Bar presented in Augmented Reality system; Relevant stakeholders from Bar and Tropoje, are trained in the field of adaptive reuse of cultural heritage buildings, interpretation of heritage sites and new touristic offers are presented to the wider population.

3.2 IPA CBC North Macedonia – Albania 2021-2027

The overall budget of the program is **13.700.000 Euros**, including co-financing.

**Cross-Border
Cooperation**



Funded by
the European Union

North Macedonia – Albania

The Cross-Border Cooperation Program between North Macedonia and Albania is implemented under the framework of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, IPA III.

This Cross-Border Cooperation Program covers the period 2021-2027 and is developed based on a detailed analysis of the situation in the program area.

The **general scope** of the program is to promote/strengthen good neighborly relations and socio-economic development of border regions, by leveraging their potential, achieving sustainable economic development from an environmental perspective, and promoting social inclusion, while respecting common cultural and natural heritage.

The program focuses on two thematic priorities identified through the analysis of needs and opportunities. They are as follows:

- TP1. Promoting tourism, cultural and natural heritage;
- TP2. Environmental protection, promotion of adaptation and climate change mitigation, risk prevention and management;

Specific objectives:

1. Increase of the capacities of the public services dealing with disasters;
2. Improvement of the environment protection in the cross-border areas;
3. Strengthening of the sustainable tourism, of the natural and cultural heritage in the program areas;
4. Strengthening of the cultural cooperation, protection and improvement of the cultural and natural heritage.

Eligible areas:

The eligible areas of the program are as follows:

In Northern Macedonia: - **Pelagonia region**, including 9 municipalities: Manastir, Murgashova, Dollnen, Krivogashtan, Krusheva, Mogilla, Novaca, Perlepi and Resnja; - **Pologut region**, including 9 municipalities: Bogovina, Bervenica, Gostivari, Jegunoci, Mavrove and Radostusha, Tearca, Tetova, Vrapcisht dhe Zhelina; - **South-western Area**, covering 9 municipalities: Centar Zupa, Dibër, Deberces, Kercova, Brodi Macedonia, Ohri, Pllasnica, Struga and Vecan.

In the Republic of Albania: - **Dibër region**, including 4 following municipalities: Bulqiza, Klosi, Mati and Dibra; - **Elbasan region**, covering 7 municipalities: Belsh, Cërrik, Elbasan, Gramsh, Librazhd, Peqin, Përrenjas; - **Korca region**, including 6 municipalities: Devolli, Korça, Kolonja, Maliqi, Pusteci and Pogradeci.



Program Management Structures

Contracting Authority

Contracting authority for the Program of Northern Macedonia – Albania 2021-2027 is the EU Delegation in Skopje (contact email address: elvis.ali@eeas.europa.eu)

Operating Structures

Macedonian Operating Structure is the at the Ministry of Local Self Governing

Albanian Operating Structure is located at the State Agency of the Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC).

The Joint Technical Secretariat (*The Joint Technical Secretariat, JTS*)

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) is the administrative body responsible for the day-to-day management of the Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Program between Northern Macedonia and Albania. The JTS is responsible for assisting potential applicants in finding partners, enhancing their capacities in project development, ensuring close cooperation with the *Operating Structures (OS)*, supporting the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) through its secretariat role, monitoring, assisting grant beneficiaries, conducting information campaigns, and other activities aimed at increasing public awareness of the CBC program.

The headquarters of the JTS are located in Struga (contact email address: jts_mkal@yahoo.com), while Antenna is located in Elbasan.

Joint Monitoring Committee, JMC

The Joint Monitoring Committee, JMC, is in charge of the monitoring of the implementation of the program, and consists of representatives from the two benefiting countries, with equal status in the JMC.

Who can apply?

In case some institutions or organizations will wish to apply for a project under the Program, they must be on the list of **eligible partners**, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministries, Public Agencies, Regions, Municipalities, Local Directorates of Ministries, Universities, Hospitals, etc.);
- Public entities (Port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.);
- Non-profit private organizations (civil society organizations, NGOs, business associations, etc.)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. For-profit entities such as SME's or companies also cannot apply for such fundings. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested actors falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with at least one Macedonian partner.

Program internet page: <https://ipacbc-mk-al.eu/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://ipacbc-mk-al.eu/calls-for-proposals/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the IPA CBC NMK-AL Program

Project title: Discovering Hidden Attractions-DHA

Implementation period: 01.12.2019-31.07.2021

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Klos and others

Total budget: EUR 455 633.00 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 147,015.00 Euro

Description: The overall objective of the project Discover Hidden Attractions is to promote cultural and natural heritage of the CB target destinations a touristic attraction. The specific objectives: increase of the touristic attractiveness of the cross-border target destination; development of joint cross-border cultural and tourism products; diversification of the cross-border target area touristic offer by SMEs innovations; uplift skills of persons engaged in rural and active tourism. The project specifically worked towards developing rural and eco-tourism business while at the same time preserving traditional ways of life, the quality of the natural surroundings and quality of life, as preconditions for a scaled-up tourist offer in rural areas.

3.3 IPA CBC Albania – Kosovo 2021-2027

Overall Budget of the Program (including the co-financing amount): **9,730.000 Euro.**

**Cross-Border
Cooperation**



Funded by
the European Union

Albania-Kosovo

General Scope of the program is to promote/strengthen good neighborly relations and socio-economic development of border regions, by leveraging their potential, achieving sustainable economic development from an environmental perspective, and promoting social inclusion, while respecting common cultural and natural heritage.

The program aims at approximating of the cross-border collaboration assistance to the Priority Themes, as follows: (TP)

TP1. Promoting tourism, cultural and natural heritage;

TP2. Environmental protection, promotion of adaptation and climate change mitigation, risk prevention and management;

Specific Objectives:

1. Harnessing, protection and preservation of the environmental resources in the cross-border areas;

2. Development of the sustainable tourism, of the natural and cultural heritage, as contributors in the cross-border economic development;

Eligible areas:

Albania: Lezha Region (municipalities of Kurbin, Lezhë and Mirditë) and Kukës Region (municipalities of Has, Kukës and Tropojë);

Kosovo: Western & South Economic Regions

Eligible areas cover a territory of 8,335 km². Eligible areas of the program have an overall population of 936,761 inhabitants.



Program Management Structures

Contracting Authority

Contracting authority for the Program of Albania – Kosovo 2014-2020 is the EU Delegation located in Tirana (contact email address: Carla.SEZOES-FOLGOA@eeas.europa.eu).

Operating Structures

Albanian Operating Structure is located at the State Agency of the Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC).

The Kosovar Operating Structure is the at the Ministry of Local Government Administration

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) is the administrative body responsible for the daily management of the Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Program Albania-Kosovo. The JTS is responsible for assisting potential applicants in finding partners, building their capacities in project development, ensuring close cooperation with Operating Structures (OS), assisting the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) through its secretariat role, monitoring, supporting, and advising grant beneficiaries, implementing information campaigns, and other activities aimed at increasing public awareness of the CBC Program.

The headquarters of the JTS are located in Lezha (contact email address: jts.alks@gmail.com), while the Antenna is located in Prishtina.

Joint Monitoring Committee, JMC

Joint Monitoring Committee, is in charge of the monitoring of the implementation of the program, and consists of representatives from the two benefiting countries, Albanian and Kosovo, with equal status in the JMC.

Who can apply?

In case some institutions or organizations will wish to apply for a project in the framework of the IPA CBC Albania-Kosovo, they must be on the list of **eligible partners**, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministries, Public Agencies, Regions, Municipalities, Local Directorates of Ministries, Universities, Hospitals, etc.);
- Public entities (Port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.);
- Non-profit private organizations (civil society organizations, NGOs, business associations, etc.)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. For-profit entities such as SME's or companies also cannot apply for such fundings. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested actors falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with at least one Kosovar partner.

Program internet page: <http://albaniakosovocbc.org>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <http://albaniakosovocbc.org/project/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the IPA CBC AL-KS Program

Project title: Mirdita Junik

Implementation period: 15/01/2024-15/01/2026

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Mirdita and others

Total budget: 1,270,588.24 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 530,970.49

Description: The overall objective of the project Mirdita Junik is to create a sustainable tourism infrastructure in the cross-border area between Kosovo and Albania that contributes to the economic growth of the local communities, provides job opportunities for citizens, and preserves and promotes the region's cultural and natural heritage. The proposed action aims to create a sustainable tourism infrastructure in the cross-border area between Kosovo and Albania while preserving and promoting the region's cultural and natural heritage.

3.4 Interreg IPA CBC Greece-Albania 2021-2027

Overall Budget of the Program is 26,650,000 Euro, an EU contribution.

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

IPA Greece – Albania

Eligible areas:

In Greece: EL53 – Western Macedonia; EL531 – Grevena, Kozani; EL532 – Kastoria; EL533 – Florina; EL54 – Epirus; EL541 – Arta, Preveza; EL542 – Thesprotia; EL543 – Ioannina; EL62 – Ionian Islands; EL621 – Zakynthos; EL622 – Corfu; EL623 – Ithaca, Cephalonia; EL624 – Lefkada

In Albania: Vlora Region, Gjirokastra Region, Korça Region, Berat Region and Fier Region.

General Scope of the program is to rise the living standard of the population living in the cross-border areas, by promoting the sustainable economic development.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- **Priority Axes 1:** Promoting of the sustainable environment, transportation & public infrastructure through:

Specific Objectives:

- 1.1 Increase of the capacities of the cross-border public infrastructure of transportation, management of the water resources and waste management;
- 1.2 Increase of the environmental protection and energetic resources efficiency;
- 1.3 Improve the fire hazard prevention efficacy and disasters management, with enhanced focus of the fires in forest areas;

- **Priority Axes 2:** Increase of the local economy

Specific Objectives:

- 2.1 Protection of the cultural and natural resources, as a pre-condition for the development of tourism in the cross-border areas;
- 2.2 Improvement of the cross-border capacities in supporting the entrepreneurships, survival of businesses, and competitiveness.

Program Management Structures:

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) is established by the participating countries in the program on an equal basis, with the aim of effectively monitoring the implementation of the cross-border program. The JMC approves the list of successful projects.

The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for the management and implementation of the Cross-Border Program in accordance with the principle of effective financial management and for performing the functions outlined in the EU Regulations. The Managing Authority of European



Territorial Cooperation Programs of the Ministry of Economy, Development, and Tourism in Thessaloniki, Greece, has been designated as the Managing Authority of the Interreg IPA III CBC Program "Greece-Albania 2021-2027" Contact email address: interreg@mou.gr

The Joint Secretariat (JS) assists the Managing Authority, National Authority/Operating Structure, Joint Monitoring Committee, and, when necessary, the Audit Authority and Certifying Authority in performing their respective tasks. The Joint Secretariat is based in Thessaloniki, and the contact email address is as follows jts_gral@mou.gr. JS is the main structure to be contact by the applicants and beneficiaries.

The Joint Secretariat has an Antenna Office that serves as a point of contact for applicants and beneficiaries. The Antenna Office is located in the city of Fier (Albania) and operates under the responsibility of the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination in Albania.

Furthermore, in Albania, the **First Level Control Office (FLC)** operates, which verifies and confirms the expenses of Albanian beneficiaries.

Contact email address of the FLC Office is: amalinda.bediava@saspac.gov.al

Who can apply?

In case some institutions or organizations will wish to apply for a project under the Interreg IPA CMC Greece-Albania Program framework, they must be on the list of **eligible partners**, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministries, Public Agencies, Regions, Municipalities, Local Directorates of Ministries, Universities, Hospitals, etc.);
- Public entities (Port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.);
- Non-profit private organizations (civil society organizations, NGOs, business associations, etc.)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. For-profit entities such as SME's or companies also cannot apply for such fundings. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested actors falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with at least one Greek partner. Currently, the Program has announced four Call for Proposals.

Program internet page: <https://greece-albania.eu/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://greece-albania.eu/calls/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the Interreg IPA GR-AL Program

Project title: Sustainable and almost zero-emission communities and the role of public buildings

Implementation period: 12.01.2029 – 0.06.2023

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Devoll and others

Total budget: 1,166,649.00 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 346,350.00 Euro

Description: The overall objective of the project was protecting the environment & promoting climate change adaptation & mitigation, risk prevention & management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness.

3.5 Interreg IPA South Adriatic Program 2021-2027 – Interreg IPA Italy-Albania-Montenegro



Overall budget of Program is 81.258.768,19 euro (including the co-financing amount). The program is co-financed by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) at a level of 85% and requires a national co-financing distribution of 15%.

The program “Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania -Montenegro” is a trilateral cross-border cooperation program co-financed by the European Union, which, for the financial period 2021-2027, has been named Interreg IPA South Adriatic.

The overall scope of the program is to promote economic growth and enhance cooperation in the lower Adriatic region, within the framework of developing SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises), promoting tourism, and improving air quality. This involves implementing joint actions between institutional and non-profit actors at both national and regional levels.

Eligible areas of the Program include:

Italy: Puglia Region: provinces of Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani, Brindisi, Foga, Lece, Brindisi, Taranto

Molise Region: Provinces of Campobasso and Isernia

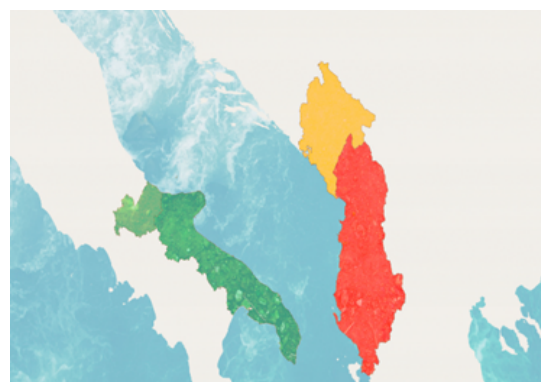
Albania: The entire country

Montenegro: The entire country

Priorities and Specific Scope of the Program:

Priority 1. Competitiveness of the SME's.

OS 1.1. Improvement of the suitable conditions for the development of the cross-border markets of the SME's.



Priority 2. Tourism and Culture.

OS 2.1: Enhancement of the attractiveness of natural and cultural assets, to improve sustainable and smart economic development;

OS 2.2: Increasing cooperation among key actors in the region to provide innovative and creative culture

Priority 3: Environment and Energy

OS 3.1 Creation of the cross-border cooperation in relation to the water landscapes;

OS 3.2 Promoting of the innovative instruments to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficacy;

Priority 4: Sustainable Transport

OS 4.1 Increase of the coordination between the interested stakeholders in order to enhance sustainable cross-border connectivity on the collaboration areas.

Program Management Structures:

Program Management Authority (AM/MA) deals with the overall implementation of the program on behalf of the three countries. The Managing Authority fulfills its tasks for the benefit of the entire program and, in line with its coordinating role, ensures further that all program structures coordinate and work together. The Managing Authority of the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro Program is located in the Italian region of Puglia. Contact email address: area.economia@regione.puglia.it and d.laforgia@regionepuglia.it

The Joint Secretariat provides information to applicants about funding opportunities, assists with project applications, and supports beneficiaries in the implementation of their projects. It ensures that the selection of projects is fair and transparent, collects and processes data for program monitoring, and coordinates and promotes program events. It also assists the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee in carrying out their tasks. The Joint Secretariat is located in the city of Bari. Contact email address: js@italy-albania-montenegro.eu;

National Information Points play an important role in identifying key actors, distributing information about the program, and supporting beneficiaries at the national level. The NIP in Albania is coordinated by the State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination. Contact email address: arvit.osja@saspac.gov.al

Furthermore, in Albania is in operation the **First Level Control Office (FLC)** which verifies and confirms the expenses of Albanian beneficiaries. The contact email address for the FLC Office is as follows: evlis.mehaj@saspac.gov.al

If some institutions or organizations will wish to apply for a project under the Interreg MED Program, they must be on the list of **eligible partners**, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministry, Public Agency, Regions, Municipality, Local Directorates of Ministries, Universities, Hospitals, etc.);

- Public entities (Port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.);
- Non-profit private organizations (civil society organizations, NGOs, business associations, etc.)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. For-profit entities such as SME's or companies also cannot apply for such fundings. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested actors falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with at least two other partners (one from Italy and one from Montenegro)

Program internet page: <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/programme/south-adriatic-2021-27/south-adriatic-docs>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://www.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/programme/south-adriatic-2021-27/south-adriatic-calls>

Example of a project financed from EU under the Interreg IPA South Adriatic Program

Project title: Sustainable Mobility in the Port Cities of the Southern Adriatic Area (SuMo)

Implementation period: 02.01.2020-06.06.2023

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Vlora and others

Total budget: 1,019,617.5 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 254,400.00 Euro

Description: The SuMO project aims to increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the Cooperation area. Improving the intra and interregional connectivity and to better organize the use of existing transport infrastructures and marine connection. Supporting the development of innovative and sustainable transport support structures and services. Creation of suitable solutions related to sustainable transportation in involved city port areas through the realization of territorial guide lines (Sustainable Mobility Urban Plans, one per involved territory and cross-border guide lines)

3.6 Interreg IPA ADRION 2021-2027

The total budget for the program is 160,810,020.00 euro.

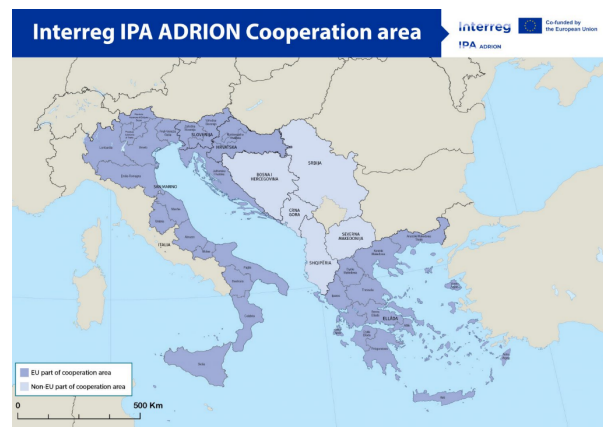
The IPA ADRION Program is a transnational European program that invests in regional innovation systems, cultural and natural heritage, environment, sustainable transport, and mobility. Bringing together eight partner countries, IPA ADRION aims to act as a policy driver and innovator in governance for the benefit of more than 70 million people in the Adriatic and Ionian region.



The main goal of the program is to serve as a policy and innovative governance facilitator by promoting European integration between member and non-member countries. It provides innovative support, climate support, creates favorable conditions for carbon neutrality, and supports governance in the Adriatic and Ionian region.

The participant countries are: EU Member countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia), IPA III benefitting countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) and a third country - San Marino. **Albanian is participating in the Program with its entire territory.**

In general, the IPA ADRION grants help the beneficiaries through the calls for project-proposals. When a call for proposal is launched, the interested applicants will submit their project proposals, in line with the program requests and the application form.



The Priority Axes of the Program

Priority 1: Support for an Innovative and Smart Region

OS 1.1. Development and improvement of research and innovative capacities, as well as the acquisition of advanced technologies

OS 1.2. Development of skills for smart specialization, industrial transition, and entrepreneurship

Priority 2: Support for green and climate-resistant initiatives

OS 2.1. Promotion of climate change adaptation and risk prevention from disasters, and sustainability, considering ecosystem-based approaches.

OS 2.2. Promotion of the transition towards a circular and resource-efficient economy.

OS 2.3. Enhancement of nature protection and conservation, biodiversity, and green infrastructure, including urban areas, and reduction of all forms of pollution.

OS 2.4. Promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility as part of the transition to a zero-carbon economy.

Priority 3: Region Connected/Connectivity and carbon neutrality

OS 3.1 Sustainable, climate-resilient, smart, and intermodal development and improvement of regional and local mobility, including enhanced access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility.

Priority 4. The Support of the Adriatic-Ionian regional governing

OS 4.1 Other activities in support of a better governing (all initiatives)

Program Management Structures

The Managing Authority (MA) is in charge of the overall implementation of the Program in on behalf of the Partner Countries. The Managing Authority organizes calls for proposals, coordinates the evaluation of submitted applications, and monitors those that are financed. It is responsible for the efficient financial management of the program. The Managing Authority of the ADRION

Program is the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna. Contact email address: adrion@regione.emilia-romagna.it

The Joint Secretariat provides information to applicants about financing opportunities, assists during project applications, and supports beneficiaries in the implementation of their projects. It ensures that project selection is fair and transparent, collects and processes data for program monitoring, and coordinates and promotes program events at the transnational level.

The Joint Secretariat is located in Bologna. Contact email address: info@interregadrion.eu.

National Contact Point plays a crucial role in identifying the target audience, distributing information about the program, and supporting beneficiaries at the national level.

Each Partner Country has established a National Contact Point, whose main tasks are:

- To assist the Joint Secretariat in the implementation process of the program;
- To contribute to information and publicity actions together with the respective countries;
- To serve as a contact point for applicants, partners, and other interested parties of the project at the national level, providing assistance for project generation.

The National Contact Point for Albania in the IPA ADRION Program is the State Agency for the Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC), is: Raimond.Cimbi@saspac.gov.al

Furthermore, in Albania is in operation the **First Level Control Office (FLC)**, which reviews and confirms the expenses of Albanian beneficiaries. The FLC Office is located in the State Agency for Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC). The contact email address for the FLC Office is as follows: Mira.Topciu@saspac.gov.al

Who can apply?

If some institutions or organizations will wish to apply for a framework ADRION Interreg project they must be on the list of **eligible partners**, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministries, Public Agencies, Regions, Municipalities, Local Directorates of Ministries, Universities, Hospitals, etc.);
- Public entities (Port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.);
- Non-profit private organizations (civil society organizations, NGOs, business associations, etc.)
- Private for-profit organizations (mainly SME, companies)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested stakeholders falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with other countries of ADRION.

Program internet page: <http://www.adrioninterreg.eu/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/index.php/call-for-proposals/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the Interreg IPA Adrion Program

Project title: Adriatic Landscape Interpretation (ADRILINK)

Implementation period: 31/08/2018- 31/01/2023

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Tepelena and others

Total budget: 2,409,446.7 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 181,407.00 Euro

Description: The overall objective of ADRILINK project is to promote Landscape Tourism in Adriatic Region through the creation of a network of Landscape Interpretation Centres, conceived as nodal points of selected thematic paths and routes, digitally connected through an ICT platform, ensuring the integrated management of tourist services, fostering innovative solutions. The project provides new models of sustainable tourism management aimed at reducing tourism seasonality through the valorization of natural and cultural landscapes as common assets that can be visited throughout the year. By promoting activities for valorising European natural and cultural heritage as key layer of human well-being, the project contributes to strengthen the Adriatic Region Identity as unique touristic destination.

3.7 Interreg Euro-MED 2021-2027 (Euro-MEDiterranean)

Overall Budget of the Program is 293,624,033 euro.

**Interreg
Euro-MED**



Co-funded by
the European Union

The EuroMED transnational program supports the exchange of experience, knowledge, and the improvement of public policies among national, regional, and local authorities, as well as other territorial actors in the beneficiary regions of the Euro-MED area.

Eligible areas of the programme:

The program includes 69 regions from 10 different EU countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain), as well as 4 candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Northern Macedonia).

. Its overall objective is to find, transfer, and implement solutions to identified priorities in the fields of innovation, economy, and the environment among various public and private cultural actors based on the needs of the Mediterranean territories and populations.



The Program focuses on the **following themes**:

Priority 1: A Smarter Region

SO1. Development and growth of innovative research capacities within the framework of technology development.

Priority 2: Promoting of the adaptation to climate change and prevention of the risk of disasters, with sustainability in mind, considering ecosystem-based approaches.

SO2. Increasing capacities to use low-carbon transport systems and multimodal connections between them;

SO3. Reduction of all forms of pollution and preservation of nature;

Priority 3: Better governing

SO4. Other activities in the governing improvement framework in the benefitting areas.

Program Management Structures:

Member States and partners of MED have designated the **Managing Authority (MA)** of the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Region (France), which is responsible for the management and implementation of the Program in accordance with the principle of effective financial management.

The Monitoring Committee (MC) consists of Member States and Partner Countries. In this context, regular meetings have been organized together with the Managing Authority, the Certification Authority, and the Audit Authority. This Transnational Committee is responsible for the efficient and quality implementation of the Program: it mainly decides on the calls for project proposals and selects the projects. Decisions are made on a consensual basis.

The Joint Secretariat (JS) is composed of a transnational team that assists the Managing Authority, the MC and the Audit Authority in the implementation of the Programme. It receives project applications and instructs applicants, provides information to applicants and beneficiaries. He establishes and maintains contacts with the Principal Partners and their partnerships. Also, JS ensures transnational coordination, follow-up and promotion of activities and provides technical support for the preparation of meetings and events at the program and project level. Contact email address of JS: programme_med@regionpaca.fr

National Contact Points, (NCP), that are established by each Member State in coherence with their administrative system, may be individuals or administrative units. Their role is to ensure the transnational nature of the program and help integrate projects. They are in direct contact with stakeholders at the national level and provide information on the programme, on calls for projects and on administrative requirements for submitting applications.

The Albanian National Point of Contact for the EuroMED Program is the State Agency for the Strategic Program and Aid Coordination, contact Raimond.Cimbi@saspac.gov.al

In addition, the **First Level Control Office (FLC)** also operates in Albania, which verifies and confirms the expenditures of Albanian beneficiaries, which is located in SASPAC. The contact email address for the FLC Office is as follows: Mira.Topciu@saspac.gov.al

Who can apply?

If some institutions or organizations will wish to apply for a framework Interreg Euro-MED project they must be on the list of **eligible partners**, as follows:

- National, regional, or local public authorities (Ministries, Public Agencies, Regions, Municipalities, Local Directorates of Ministries, Universities, Hospitals, etc.);
- Public entities (Port authorities, chamber of commerce, etc.);
- Non-profit private organizations (civil society organizations, NGOs, business associations, etc.)

Individual applicants, such as students, farmers, or citizens, cannot apply under this program as sole applicants. For benefit structures, such as SMEs or companies also may apply for such fundings. However, students, farmers, citizens, SMEs, or companies can be part of a targeted group for these funds and are often the end-beneficiaries of projects.

The program announces a **Call for Proposals**, and all interested stakeholders falling into the above-mentioned categories can apply with their project proposals, in partnership with other countries of EuroMED.

Program internet page: <https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/get-involved/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the Interreg EURO MED Program

Project title: INCIRCLE

Implementation period: 01.01.2020 - 6/06/2023

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Himara and others

Total budget: 3,378,770 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 138,283.00 Euro

Description: INCIRCLE aimed at developing regional and municipal strategies for sustainable tourism, applying the principles of the circular economy in tourist destinations located in islands and low-density areas by preserving the quality and availability of natural resources as well as improving the quality of life of residents & tourists.

3.8 URBACT IV Program 2021 -2027

The program is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a **budget of 79,769,000 euros** and by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance with a budget of 5,000,000 euros for the period 2021-2027.

URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

For the first time, URBACT provides support to cities in Western Balkan countries that are candidates for EU membership - Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. Their participation in the URBACT program is financed by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance of the European Union (IPA).

The main purpose of URBACT IV is "to improve the institutional capacity of public authorities." This contributes to the objectives of sustainable urban development and aims to "strengthen the effectiveness of the EU Cohesion Policy." URBACT has an officially recognized role in achieving Policy Objective 5 - bringing "Europe closer to citizens by promoting sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories."

URBACT IV continues the legacy of past programs and provides even more opportunities for cities to make positive changes. The current program integrates the key priorities of the EU, interwoven with digital, green, and gender equality policies, in its activities.

Previous types of successful networks, such as Action Planning and Action Transfer, will continue, while a new type of Network will be developed to strengthen the links between the European Urban Initiative and the URBACT Methodology.

Basic principles of the program:

URBACT promotes integrated development to help cities implement policy integration horizontally and vertically. Positive changes can be better achieved when local authorities collaborate with different levels of governance (regional, national, European) - vertical integration - and when they address challenges and issues in a holistic manner that takes into account environmental, economic, and social dimensions simultaneously - horizontal integration.

URBACT encourages cities to reassess central governance structures and move towards more inclusive and holistic models. URBACT's participatory approach recognizes that sustainable urban development requires action-oriented strategies, co-created with and implemented alongside the local population.

Program Management Authorities:

The European Commission (Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy) monitors URBACT and ensures that its activities continue to play a key role in EU Cohesion Policy.

The Monitoring Committee, represented by EU Member States and Partners, the European Commission, IPA Countries, the European Committee of the Regions, and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, determines the strategic direction of the URBACT program and makes

decisions regarding the activities to be implemented. Members of the Monitoring Committee also build upon the needs of cities, thematic priorities, the program's links to the European Urban Initiative, and alignment with national and European cohesion policies.

The Managing Authority, based at the French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires), is responsible for managing the URBACT program.

The Joint Secretariat of URBACT, based in Paris (FR), implements the decisions made by the Monitoring Committee. The Secretariat designs and implements activities related to the objectives of the URBACT Program

National Contact Point, plays a crucial role in identifying the target audience, distributing information about the program, and supporting beneficiaries at the national level. Each Partner Country has established a National Contact Point. For Albania the national coordinator is the **State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)**.

Program internet page: <https://urbact.eu/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://urbact.eu/get-involved>

Example of a project financed from EU under the URBACT IV Program

Project title: AR.C.H. ETHICS- Architecture, Citizenship, History and Ethics to shape Dissonant Heritage in European cities

Implementation period: 01.06.2023 – 31.12.2025

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Permet and others

Total budget: 848,955.32 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 79,969.94 Euro

Description: The overall objective of ARCHETHICS is to increase " Dissonant heritage" as a driver of sustainable tourism and territorial marketing. Placing "dissonant heritage" in the center as a primary cultural asset to include other forms of integrated tourism (i.e., cultural tourism, historical tourism, slow tourism, culinary tourism, environmental tourism etc). ARCHETHICS network brings together nine European cities that share the presence of heritage linked to a complex and controversial historical past (totalitarian regimes, contentious borders, etc). Architecture, People, History and Ethics will be the four project dimensions to activate urban community labs to transform this heritage, composed of formerly abandoned spaces, into places for locals and visitors for sharing knowledge and coming to multi-perspective understandings of the past and new visions for the future.

3.9 INTERREG EUROPE PROGRAM 2021-2027

Interreg Europe is an interregional cooperation programme, co-funded by the European

Union, with a **budget of 394 million Euro** to help local, regional and national governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy.

**Interreg
Europe**



Co-funded by
the European Union

The programme area consists of the 27 EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland, and 7 EU candidate countries joining the Interreg Europe programme (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine).

The programme contributes to all EU priorities and strives for better regional governance through capacity building.

Programme Priorities:

- 1: A smarter Europe
- 2: A greener Europe
3. More connected Europe
4. More social Europe
5. Europe closer to Citizens
6. Better regional governance

Who can apply:

- national, regional, local public authorities
- other relevant bodies responsible for developing and/ or implementing regional development policies
- authorities responsible for developing and/ or implementing the Investment for jobs and growth programmes

Organisations relevant for regional development policies

- Business support organisations (development agencies, innovation agencies, chambers of commerce, clusters, etc.)
- Environmental organisations (environmental agencies, energy agencies, NGOs, etc.)
- Education and research institutions (universities, research centres, etc.) (the list is not exhaustive)

Programme Management Authorities:

• **Monitoring Committee (MC)** is the central decision-making body for the programme and its overall task is to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the programme's implementation. Project applications are approved (or not) by the monitoring committee. Each country involved in the programme (27 EU member states, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine) is represented on the committee and decisions are made by consensus. The MC meets on a regular basis, twice a year.

• **Audit Authority** (assisted by a group of auditors), the audit authority is responsible for system audits and sample audits of projects. For Interreg Europe, the audit authority is the French

Interministerial Commission for the Coordination of Controls on European Structural Funds (CICC). The audit authority is assisted by a group of auditors comprising representatives of each partner state.

- **Managing authority (MA)** is the body formally responsible for managing the programme on behalf of the participating partner countries. It is the MA that signs the subsidy contracts on behalf of the programme with the selected projects. The managing authority for Interreg Europe is the Hauts-de-France Regional Council, France.

- **Joint Secretariat**, is responsible to carry out the day-to-day operational administration of the programme, including publicizing funding opportunities, supporting applicants, evaluating applications and monitoring projects, as well as managing the technical assistance budget etc. It is staffed by an international team based in Lille, France.

- **National Contact Points**, plays a crucial role in identifying the target audience, distributing information about the program, and supporting beneficiaries at the national level. Each Partner Country has established a National Contact Point. For Albania the responsible institution is **State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)**.

Program internet page: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/>

Calls for proposals are published in the link: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/apply-for-the-call>

IV. EUROPEAN PROGRAMS

4.1 What are the European Programs?

The European Union has established **European Programs** / Union Programmes with the aim of promoting cooperation, primarily among the Member States, in various policy areas of the EU (such as research, competition and innovation, media, education, health, youth, culture, environment, customs policy, combating poverty, combating youth unemployment, etc.).

European Union Programs are multi-year financial instruments structured to support common internal policies of the EU.

In essence, European Union Programs are defined by the EU policies they support and implement, as well as the budget from which financial resources are allocated. The legal framework is established by the Commission, Parliament, and Council based on these two prerequisites.

In principle, all EU Member States can participate in European Union Programs. Candidate countries in the process of joining the EU can also participate in a specific European Union Program by expressing a letter of interest

4.2 Who manages the European Programs?

European Union Programs are implemented according to the model of centralized implementation, in which financial management and implementation of specific programs fall under the authority of the Directorate-General (DG) of the European Commission that manages each program. Various Directorates-General of the European Commission are responsible for implementing individual European Programs in line with their areas of action.

Each program establishes its own management rules. Each European Programs has a Programs Guide that provides detailed information on eligibility criteria for each of the program's calls. Currently, most of them are designed for a 7-year period in accordance with the Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU for the period 2021-2027.

The Annual Work Plan (in some programs, it is the Work Plan) is an essential document for each European Programs. It is very specific, with descriptions for all calls for proposals and tenders published during the year. Some European Programs have only one annual work plan for the entire program.

4.3 Participation of the EU Candidate Countries and EU Potential-Candidate Countries in the European Programs.

The majority of European Programs are also applicable to countries in the process of integration into the EU. The idea of including Candidate Countries in the European Union Programs was initially presented at the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in June 1993. The work to implement the idea began in 1997. During the European Council meeting in 2003 in Thessaloniki, it was decided that European Programs should be opened to countries outside the EU and the European Economic Area, so that all countries in the Stabilization and Association Process could participate. In all countries, the opening of the opportunity to participate in European Programs was considered the best way for various civil society actors to fully understand the policies and working methods of the European Union, as well as to serve as a useful tool in supporting the efforts of countries on their path to EU membership.

Currently, all Western Balkan countries, including Albania, participate in various European Programs, particularly in programs focusing on education, vocational training, youth, research, energy issues, environment, small and medium-sized enterprises, and public health.

Each non-EU country that sees participation in European Programs as important decides to participate in a specific program, in line with its needs and priorities. Since some programs are quite extensive and have different sub-programs, non-EU countries (eligible to participate in these programs) may sometimes choose to participate only in a specific sub-program or component, and not in the entire program

V. ALBANIAN AND THE EUROPEAN PROGRAMS 2021-2027

During the current period 2021-2027, Albania has expressed interest in the following programs for which the respective agreements are expected to be signed:

- ERASMUS +
- Single Market Program (SMP)
- Horizon Europe (HORIZON)
- European Solidarity Corps (ESC)
- European Social Fund + (ESF)
- Justice Program (JUST)
- Creative Europe Program (CREA)
- Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)
- Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL)
- Customs Program (CUST)
- Fiscalis Program (FISC)

The State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC) serves as the National Coordinator of European Programs (NCEP) in Albania, while ministries or other central institutions have the role of National Coordinators for each specific program. For each European Program, an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding is signed between the Republic of Albania and the European Commission. An institution is designated for the management of each program, and a National Contact Point is appointed. Specifically:

- **The National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI)** at the Ministry of Education and Sports is the contact point for the management of the Horizon Europe (Horizon) and Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL).
- **The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation** is responsible for managing the Single Market Program (SMP) and European Social Fund (ESF).
- **The Ministry of Education and Sports** is the contact point for managing the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programs.
- **The Ministry of Justice** is responsible for participation and management of the Justice Program (JUST).
- **The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation** is responsible for managing the Creative Europe Program (CREAV) and Europe for Citizens Program (CERV).

To find funding for your project from the above list of European Programs, you need to identify a relevant call for proposals or projects announced in the program you are interested in, and carefully follow the specific guidelines on how to apply. Be aware that your project will compete for funding with proposals submitted by other applicants from both EU and non-EU member countries. The funding you may receive if your project is successful will be a direct financial contribution provided

by the European Commission to support projects or organizations contributing to the implementation of a specific EU policy or program. All the mentioned European programs can be accessed through the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

A presentation for each of these programs is outlined as follows:

5.1 ERASMUS + Program for Education, Training, Youth and Sports

Erasmus+ is the EU program designed to support education, training, youth, and sports in Europe. This program addresses contemporary socio-economic challenges in Europe by strengthening education and training systems, youth employment, and policies while promoting lifelong learning. Education, training, youth work, and sports are essential for promoting common European values, encouraging social integration, inclusivity for individuals with disadvantaged backgrounds, fostering intercultural understanding, and preventing violent radicalization. Unlike the 2014-2022 program, the new financial period for 2021-2027 has doubled the overall budget to 26.2 billion euros.



The goals of the Erasmus + program are:

- To support young people in gaining and improving skills through studying and training abroad.
- To enhance the quality of education in the EU and beyond.
- To assist Member States and partner countries in modernizing their education and vocational training systems.
- To promote youth participation in society.
- To support education and research on European integration.
- To promote European sports.

The possibilities for support within the program are divided in three main activities:

Component 1: Learning shifting of the individuals (KA 1)

Component 2: Collaboration between the organizations and institutions (KA2)

Component 3: Support for policies and collaboration reforms (KA3)

Another important component supported by this program is the "**Jean Monnet**" Component.

The Jean Monnet activities aims to:

- To promote teaching and research on European Integration worldwide among specialized academics, students, and citizens, especially through the establishment of Jean Monnet Chairs and other academic activities, as well as by providing assistance for other forms of knowledge-building activities in higher education institutions.

- To support activities of academic institutions or associations active in the field of European Integration studies and support Jean Monnet for excellence. As part of its specific efforts to promote excellence in education and research on integration in the EU, the Jean Monnet Initiative will continue as a special activity within the Program through its mechanisms.

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

Program internet page: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

- EACEA internet page: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/homepage_en
- Internet page of the Erasmus Office in Albania: <http://erasmusplus.al/?lang=sq>
- NCP/MASR internet page: <https://arsimi.gov.al/erasmus-per-arsimin-e-larte-dhe-studentet/>

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

The internet page of the Beyond Barriers organization as a contact point for this component: www.beyondbarriers.org

The internet page of the Youth in Free Initiative organization: <http://www.rsl-al.org/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the ERASMUS + Program

Project title: Hold on

Implementation period: 01.02.2023-01.02.2025

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Shkoder and others

Total budget: 240,605.00 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 27,562.00 Euro

Description: The overall objective of project is to enhance young peoples' access to mental health support services and their proactive engagement in improving mental health outcomes.

This includes, strengthen and encourage young people in supporting others in navigating their mental health challenges through establishing informal peer support services; Equip professionals working with youth with the needed knowledge and skills to create supportive environments for the provision of informal youth mental health services; Promote exchange of good practices in youth mental health support services and foster better and holistic policy response to the young people's mental health needs; Raise awareness on youth mental health and the importance of community response.

5.2 European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps is an initiative of the European Union managed by the General Directorate for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture. The Corps creates opportunities for young people aged 18-30 to volunteer or work on projects benefiting communities and people across Europe. With a dedicated budget of over 1 billion euros for the programming years 2021-2027, the second generation of the European Solidarity Corps program will offer opportunities to at least 270,000 young people to help address social and humanitarian challenges through volunteering or by initiating their solidarity projects.



The European Solidarity Corps supports the European Union's policy priorities and engages organizations and young people in projects to address them. The program promotes inclusion and diversity, aiming to integrate green agenda practices into projects and encourage sustainable and responsible behavior towards the environment among participants. The program advocates for the involvement of young people in democratic processes and civic engagement.

Funding for the European Solidarity Corps is provided in the form of grants to organizations through calls for proposals. Young people wishing to participate in such activities must register on the European Solidarity Corps portal. The "European Solidarity Corps" portal provides a space for young people and organizations that have received a grant to implement activities and find each other

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

https://Evropa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

SALTO (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities for Youth)

SALTO-YOUTH is a network of seven Resource Centers working on European priorities within the youth field.

As part of the European Commission's Training Strategy, SALTO-YOUTH provides non-formal (non-university) learning resources for youth workers and youth leaders. It organizes training and activities to establish contacts, support organizations, and National Agencies within the framework of the Youth component of the Erasmus+ program, the European Solidarity Corps, and beyond.



Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

<https://www.salto-youth.net/>

5.3 Citizens, Equity, Rights and Values Programme - CERV

This program aims to protect and promote the rights and values of the European Union outlined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It will contribute to the support and further development of open, rights-based, democratic, equal, and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. The CERV Program has joined the Europe for Citizens Program 2014-2020.



The Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values Program consists of four directions:

- The Union Values

To protect and promote the values of the Union, respecting human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the member states in a society where pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and equality between women and men prevail.

- Equality, Rights, and Gender Equality

Promotion of rights, non-discrimination, equality, including gender equality, and the advancement of gender integration and non-discrimination.

- Civic engagement and participation

To promote the engagement and participation of citizens in democratic life and exchanges between citizens of different member states, and to increase awareness of the common European history. Encouraging exchanges between citizens of different countries, especially through **town twinning** and city networks, to provide them with practical experience of the richness and diversity of the common heritage of the Union and to make them aware that these constitute the basis for a common future.

- Daphne

This component supports projects that combat violence, including gender-based violence. Prevention and combating at all levels and in all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, and violence within the family, also by promoting the standards set out in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention); Preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, young people, as well as violence against other groups at risk, such as LGBTQI individuals and persons with disabilities; Supports and protects all direct and indirect victims of such violence, such as family violence within the family or intimate partner violence, including orphaned children from family crimes, and providing and ensuring the same level of protection throughout the Union for victims of gender-based violence.

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>

Internet page of the NCP/MK: <https://meki.gov.al/>

Example of a project financed from EU under the Europa for Citizens Program

Project title: Solidarity – key to solving social problems and supporting the evolution of Europe in future (KEYtoEU)

Implementation period: 16/11/2020– 21/12/2022

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Elbasan and others

Total budget: 110,160.00 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 12,240.00 Euro

Description: The project aims to apply for resources to manage a project dealing with the question of what role solidarity plays in the EU and why solidarity against the background of a base of common values across all generations and all cultures interpreted and lived differently. To promote awareness of solidarity as a key element of EU social development as well as to produce commonly interpreted and usable products which will give a European dimension to the importance and role of solidarity in the future of the EU,

5.4 Creative Europe

The Creative Europe program provides support for ensuring and promoting European cultural and linguistic diversity and support for strengthening the competitiveness sector. Compared to the 2014-2020 program, which had a budget of 1.47 billion euros, the financial perspective for 2021-2027 has a budget of 2.44 billion euros. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for managing the Creative Europe Program in Albania.



The objectives of the program are:

- Preservation, development, and promotion of European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage
- Increasing the competitiveness and economic potential of cultural and creative sectors, especially the audiovisual sector.

Key innovations of the program are:

- Greater emphasis on transnational creation and innovation
- Easier access to financing through higher levels of co-funding (higher contribution levels from Creative Europe for projects)

- Focus on supporting collaboration at the EU level to make the European audiovisual sector more globally competitive
- Mobility schemes for artists and professionals
- Actions addressing the specific needs of creative sectors such as music, architecture, and cultural heritage.

The program's innovations will contribute to the recovery of these sectors by strengthening their efforts to become more inclusive, digital, and environmentally sustainable.

The program will provide support for the following activities:

- Cross-border cooperation projects between cultural and creative organizations within the EU and beyond.
- Networks that help cultural and creative sectors operate internationally and enhance their competitiveness.
- Translation and promotion of literary works in EU markets.
- Platforms for cultural operators promoting young artists and encouraging European programming of cultural and artistic works.
- Capacity building and professional training for audiovisual professionals.
- Development of artistic products, animations, creative documentaries, and video games for the European cinema, television markets, and other platforms.
- Distribution and sales of audiovisual works within and outside Europe. Film festivals that promote European cinema. Funds for international co-production of films.
- Audience development to encourage film development and increase interest in European films through a wide range of events

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

Program internet page: <https://ec.Evropa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/>

NCP/MK internet page: <https://kultura.gov.al/>

Creative Europe held desk internet page: <http://evropakrijuese.al/>

EACEA internet page: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu>

5.5 European Social Program Plus (ESF+)

For the period 2021-2027, the EaSI program (2014-2020) will become part of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the European Union's primary instrument for investing in people. With a budget of nearly 99.3 billion euros for the 2021-2027 period, ESF+ will continue to make a



significant contribution to EU policies in the areas of employment, social affairs, education, and skills, including structural reforms in these fields.

The Fund will also be one of the cornerstones for the socio-economic recovery of the EU from the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the cohesion policy, ESF+ will continue its mission to support economic, territorial, and social cohesion in the EU by reducing inequalities among Member States and regions.

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

<https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en>

5.6 Horizon Program

Horizon Europe is the European Union's most ambitious program for Research and Innovation for the period 2021-2027, with a budget of 95.5 billion euros.

Its main objectives are:

to strengthen the scientific and technological foundations of the EU and the European Research Area (ERA);

- to increase Europe's capacity for innovation, competitiveness, and job creation;
- to meet the priorities of citizens and support our socio-economic model and values

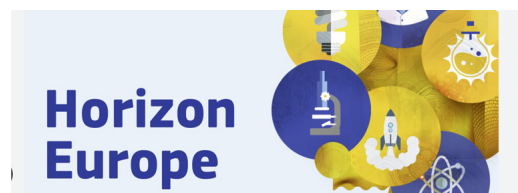
The program focuses on, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Excellent Science (promotion of future and emerging technologies, research infrastructure, including e-infrastructures)
- Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (Nanotechnologies and Advanced Materials, Biotechnology, and Advanced Manufacturing and Processing, Communication and Information Technologies)
- Innovation in SMEs
- Access to Risk Finance
- Societal Challenges (Health, Demographic Change, and Well-being; Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, Marine and Maritime Research, and the Bioeconomy; Secure, Clean, and Efficient Energy; Smart, Green, and Integrated Transport; Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency, and Raw Materials).

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

National contact point for Albania (NCP): www.arsimi.gov.al; www.nasri.gov.al



Example of a project financed from EU under the HORIZON Europe Program

Project title: Food Trails

Implementation period: 1.01.2020 – 06.06.2023

Beneficiaries: Municipality of Tirana and others

Total budget: 11,937,057.00 Euro

Budget for Municipality: 207,012.00 Euro

Description: The project aims to enable cities to reimagine, develop and implement sustainable, healthy and inclusive food policies. Each partner city runs a pilot project, a “Living Lab“, a space for work, dialogue and collaboration to foster innovation, connect local key stakeholders, and collect evidence to support urban policy change in food. Living Labs seek to co-design and co-implement food actions integrated with other local sectoral work and aligned with the Farm to Fork EU Strategy and the priorities of the EU-FOOD2030 Policy: nutrition, climate, circularity and innovation. Food Trails facilitates collaboration among cities and researchers to encourage knowledge sharing, replication and scaling up of best practices.

5.7 Digital Europe Program

The Digital Europe Program is a new EU funding program focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens, and public administrations. This program aims to accelerate recovery and drive the digital transformation of Europe.



Valued at 7.6 billion euros, the program is part of the upcoming long-term EU budget (Multiannual Financial Framework) covering the period 2021-2027. It will provide funding for projects in five key areas: supercomputers, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills, and ensuring the broad use of digital technologies across the economy and society.

The program is well-suited to bridge the gap between digital technology research and its implementation. It seeks to deliver research outcomes to the market for the benefit of European citizens and businesses, especially SMEs. Investments under the Digital Europe Program support the dual objectives of the Union for a green transition and digital transformation, enhancing the resilience and strategic autonomy of the Union.

Internet page for more information and application opportunities:

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>



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