

Interreg *M*editerranean



EUROPEAN UNION

*Summary and extracts of the Cooperation
Programmes submitted to the European Commission
in September 2014*

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Programme cofinanced by the European Regional Development Fund
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NOTA BENE

This summary has been produced in order to provide an overview on the Interreg MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 submitted to the European Commission in September 2014.

The Cooperation Programme was approved on 3rd June 2015.

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Framework

The **Europe 2020 strategy**, together with the **Territorial Agenda 2020** provided the overall strategic framework for EU cohesion policy 2014-2020 and as such for the MED Programme.

The regulatory framework is provided by the regulations for cohesion policy 2014-2020. These are accompanied by a Common Strategic Framework (CSF) setting out key actions to address EU priorities and giving guidance to ensure coordination between funds.

For this period, the Commission proposed certain important changes to the way the cohesion policy should be implemented. One important aspect for future project design is the demand for fewer, but more result oriented and high quality projects. More emphasis has to be put on the demand side to clearly identify the real needs of target groups and end-users to ensure a more effective use of projects outputs.

Programme budget and co-financing rate

Available **ERDF funds**: **224 Mio €** Available **IPA funds**: **9 Mio €**

Total programme budget including national co-funding: **265 Mio €**

ERDF co-financing rate (for partners not concerned by state aid): **85%**

ERDF co-financing rate for **economic operators**

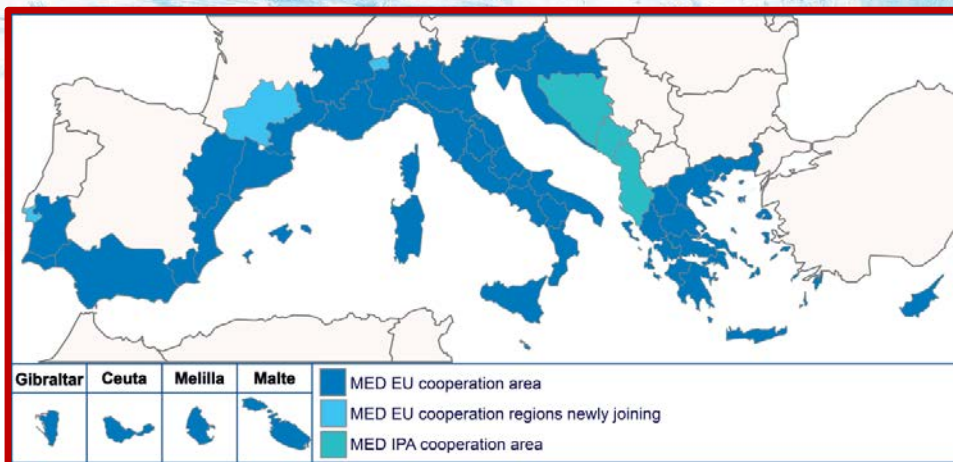
and structures concerned by state aid: **85%** or **50%**

The **integrated management of ERDF and IPA funds** will be further implemented.

Territorial approach

Cooperation area

The MED cooperation has been slightly changed: Three new regions will join the programme, namely Lisbon (Portugal), Midi-Pyrénées (France), Valle d'Aoste (Italy). The “Mediterranean dimension” of applicants has been a key argument for their selection, as well as the contribution they could bring to the setting-up of future macro regional and sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean. This makes **totally 57 regions** divided among **10 EU Member States and 3 IPA countries**.



Specific territories in focus

As mentioned above, specific focus will be put on a territorial, and more specifically on a macro-regional dimension. From a territorial and geographical point of view, the programme grants a specific attention to four types of areas that represent important challenges due to their resources, their development potential or the economic difficulties they are confronted to.



Coastal areas with high level of attractiveness, important concentration of activities and fragility of natural and cultural resources



Urban areas as centers of innovation and socioeconomic activities and which are confronted to strong environmental challenges with pollution and GHG emissions



Islands that cover 4% of the Mediterranean and represent a major economic, environmental and cultural dimension of the MED area



Rural areas characterised by rural activities and low density of population. Their development is hampered by geographical isolation and/or demographic and environmental changes

Programme language

The programme languages will be equally kept as in the previous programming period: **ENGLISH** and **FRENCH**.

The new project design

Future MED projects will be regrouped in “modules” and these modules will be combinable with each other.

○ Module 1 – STUDYING

A module dedicated to the design of common approaches and the elaboration of common strategies, models, rules and norms at transnational level, analyses, state of the art, sharing of information and establishment of networks. Projects focused on this module will analyse an intervention field, complement data, networks, references and elaborate shared methodology, models, and strategies.

These activities can be the main objective of the project or constitute the first phase of a broader project that will use these networks, models and strategies to launch pilot activities or launch a wider process of capitalisation, dissemination and transfer of experiences and results.

○ Module 2 - TESTING

A module dedicated to pilot activities where project partners will have the possibility to test processes, technics, and models, in order to create solutions applicable to a wider set of users and territories. Pilot activities can be set up when the context, data and actors are already well identified and when technical and institutional conditions are favorable. In case of short feedback loops, the pilot activity can include both the preliminary work of analysis and the implementation of the pilot activity.

◎ Module 3 - CAPITALISING

When methodologies, practices, and intervention tools have been tested and implemented by stakeholders at local or regional level and provided they represent a strong interest for wider dissemination in the MED eligible area, projects can propose capitalisation and dissemination activities. A specific attention will be paid to the transfer of results towards regional and national ERDF programmes and to the involvement of end users in the dissemination processes. At this stage, applicants are encouraged to use results of former projects (from ETC or other EU programmes) and work on outputs of other modules.

To ensure high quality of results, the final objective will not only consist in “disseminating information”. It will be also necessary to ensure that tools, practices and methodologies are effectively taken on board by all actors concerned, and applied at local, regional, national or transnational level as broadly as possible and free of charge.

◎ Horizontal projects

Horizontal projects ensuring synergy building, capitalisation and joint communication within specific programme themes will be carried out.

Programme objective and backbone pillars

The overall objective of the MED Programme is to promote sustainable growth in the Mediterranean area by fostering innovative concepts and practices and a reasonable use of resources and by supporting social integration through an integrated and territorially based cooperation approach.

Coordination and Complementarity as success factors

The programme aims to strengthen transnational and regional intervention strategies in fields of Mediterranean importance where transnational cooperation can **contribute to improve regional and territorial practices**.

Hence the MED Programme will grant a specific attention to the **coherence, complementarity and transfer of experiences and practices with ERDF regional and national programmes** that can feed transnational actions and benefit of their results.

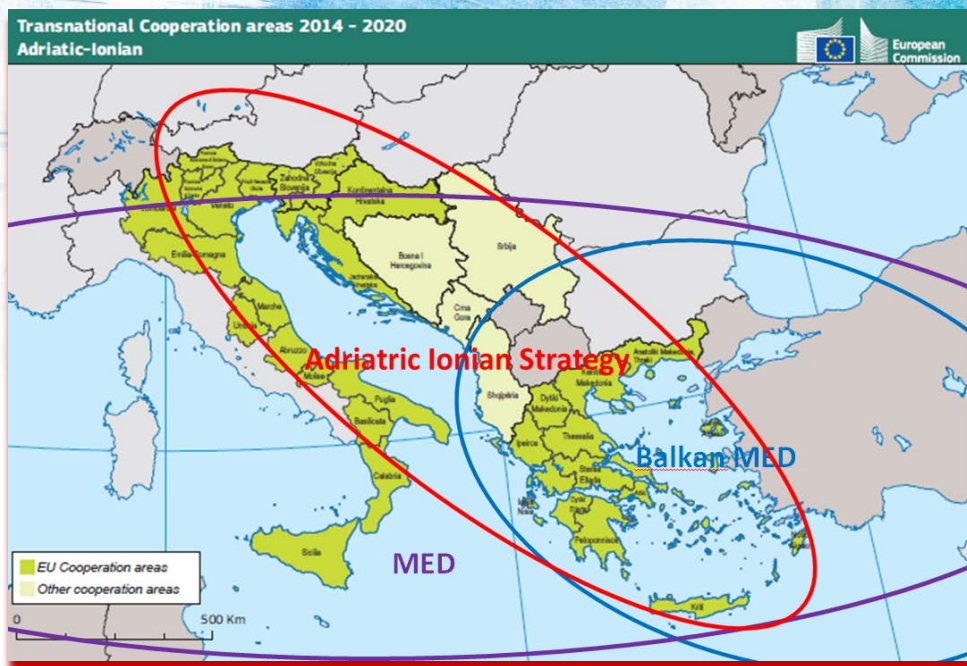
This will be done taking into account the potential and challenges of specific sectors related to the **blue and green growth** such as tourism, agriculture and agribusiness, marine and environmental industries, energy, transports but also creative industries and social economy that are especially important for the MED area. In these different sectors, the objective is to **better identify development potential and challenges at the transnational level**, to support stakeholders promoting innovation and help them organise and share experiences and knowledge with structures from other regions and countries.

The programme will grant a specific attention to the setting up of favorable conditions for transnational discussions and transnational decision making processes. This shall be supported in

particular in the perspective of the development of **macro-regional strategies** in the

Mediterranean. The MED Programme shares large parts of its cooperation area with the upcoming EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Together with the Adriatic-Ionian Programme, the MED Programme 2014-2020 may contribute to **the implementation** of

the Action Plan of the EUSAIR Strategy: synergies and coordination activities between programmes are envisaged on the different priority axes and investment priorities.



The MED Programme will also ensure coherence and complementarity with **EU thematic programmes**, such as Horizon 2020, LIFE +, COSME or the Programme for Social Change and Social Innovation and **other cooperation programmes** such as ENI MED and Balkan MED. This will be done by getting informed of their activities and, when relevant, adapting thematic calls, targeted calls or strategic calls launched by the MED Programme to generate synergies.

Following an ecosystemic approach

The MED Programme and its projects will follow an 'ecosystemic' or 'integrated' approach: a final result shall not be a series of isolated proposals working on limited aspects of tourism, transports, creative industry, but a global coordination effort making these domains contribute to the sustainable development of territories (taking into account available means, existing public policies, conflict of use, jobs creation, involvement of public and private operators, etc.). Partners will have to make relevant actors from environment protection, transport, tourism etc. work together. **With this approach, transnational cooperation will contribute to develop strategic planning aspects.**

Priority axis

The **Common Strategic Framework** with pre-defined thematic objectives and investment priorities provided the orientation for the programme strategy: In total, four priority axis have been selected, among those three thematic and one more strategic. A fifth programme axis concerns the Technical Assistance (not further specified below). The programme integrates six investment priorities (five thematic, one strategic) and seven specific objectives (six thematic, one strategic).

The three thematic priority axis



Derived from Common Strategic Framework:

Thematic Objective 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

Investment Priority 1B: Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development (...)

PRIORITY AXIS 1: Promoting Mediterranean innovation capacities to develop smart and sustainable growth

Specific Objective 1.1: To increase transnational activity of innovative clusters and networks of key sectors of the MED area

Innovation and competitiveness is highlighted in the strategy UE 2020. It is a major challenge in MED regions facing international competition, and contributes to overcome the economic crisis. In this cooperation area, a specific attention must be paid to the fields of blue and green growth that represent significant development perspectives.

Available ERDF budget: **72 Mio €**

Available IPA budget: **3 Mio €**

32% of ERDF and IPA budget

private co-financing for ERDF partners

Thematic keywords:

Blue and green growth, creative industries and social innovation

Types of actions:

The development of clusters and networks, development of models and tools, transfer of knowledge, as well as awareness-raising and capitalisation activities

Key target groups:

SMEs, economic operators and structures accompanying them; public authorities and research structures



Derived from Common Strategic Framework:

Thematic Objective 4: Supporting the shift toward a low-carbon economy in all sectors

Investment Priority 4C: Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use (...)

Investment Priority 4E: Promoting low-carbon strategies (...), in particular for urban areas (...)

PRIORITY AXIS 2: Fostering low carbon strategies and energy efficiency in specific MED territories: cities, islands and remote areas

Specific Objective 2.1: To raise capacity for better management of energy in public buildings at transnational level

Specific Objective 2.2: To increase the share of renewable local energy sources in energy mix strategies and plans in MED territories

Specific Objective 2.3: To increase capacity to use existing low carbon transport systems and multimodal connections among them

Low carbon economy is a key issue for territorial sustainable development and for EU objectives. In the MED area, the challenge is to develop solutions adapted to various regional contexts from densely urbanised areas with dense transport networks to remote areas and islands with more limited access to energy resources. The Axis includes three distinctive domains of activity: energy efficiency, renewable energy production and use, and low carbon mobility.

Available ERDF budget: **45 Mio €**

Available IPA budget: **1,8 Mio €**

20% of ERDF and IPA budget

private co-financing for ERDF partners

Thematic keywords:

Reduction of Green House Gas emissions, increase energy efficiency and promotion of renewable energy

Types of actions:

Strategy building, capacity building, awareness raising, training and changing practices; Feasibility studies and analyses, elaborating policy plans, services and tools; Possibility for small-scale investments and pilot projects

Key target groups:

Public authorities, research structures, enterprises, NGO's/civil society structures (end user role)



Derived from Common Strategic Framework:

Thematic Objective 6: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources

Investment Priority 6C: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

Investment Priority 6D: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services (...)

PRIORITY AXIS 3: Protecting and promoting Mediterranean natural and cultural resources

Specific Objective 3.1: To enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area

Specific Objective 3.2: To maintain biodiversity and natural ecosystems through strengthening the management and networking of protected areas

The axis is especially focused on the protection of natural and cultural heritage, biodiversity, the development of human activities in coherence with environmental change which represent enormous challenges to the MED area. The protection of the environment is a major challenge with strong attractiveness of coastal areas, environmental strain of urban development, geographical constraints (coastal areas, islands, mountains) and environmental consequences of climate change. This intervention field represents also a potential of new employment creation for the future.

Available ERDF budget: **76 Mio €**

Available IPA budget: **3,1 Mio €**

34% of ERDF and IPA budget

private co-financing for ERDF partners

Thematic keywords:

Strong attractiveness of coastal areas, environmental strain of urban development, geographical constraints (coastal areas, islands, mountains) and environmental consequences of climate change; Potential of new employment creation for the future.

Types of actions:

Analysis, studies, policy-planning and strategy development, but also on transfer of practices and policy implementing measures

Key target groups:

Public authorities, but also associations and NGO's, research bodies, and to some extent enterprises

Strategic approach and priority axis

The MED Programme gives also the possibility, through the axis 4, to support the development of multilateral coordination frameworks with the macro-regional approach. In these territories, beneficiaries must promote an ecosystemic intervention logic based on the coordination between different fields of intervention relevant to their project (economic development, environmental impact, tourism, management of natural resources, energy, transport, etc.).



Derived from Common Strategic Framework:

Thematic Objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity

Investment Priority 11: Enhancing governance in the Mediterranean

PRIORITY AXIS 4: Enhancing Mediterranean Governance

Specific Objective 4.1: To support the process of developing multilateral coordination frameworks and strengthening the existing ones in the Mediterranean for joint responses to common challenges

This priority axis is experimental and challenging, but the necessity of better coordination between the authorities of the programme area is incontestable. Moreover, part of the programme space is already concerned by a **macro-regional strategy**. Taking into account the experimental nature of this priority, and also the possibility to finance earmarked 'macro-regional' pilot projects via thematic priorities (especially within the priority axis 3), this axis will support only a limited number of **integrated** cooperation projects. They should involve regional, national and international bodies to improve decision making processes and foster **common views and strategies in the MED area**.

Available ERDF budget: **18 Mio €**

Available IPA budget: **0,7 Mio €**

8% of ERDF and IPA budget

no co-financing for private ERDF partners!

Types of actions:

Thematic concentration, consultation processes and studies, networks of public authorities to improve decision making processes and foster common views and strategies

Key target groups:

Projects financed should involve various regional, national and international bodies

Horizontal dimensions

Apart from thematic orientation, the MED Programme **addresses horizontal thematic aspects** highlighted in the EU regulations: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women.

Besides the thematic concentration and the choice of thematic objectives, specific issues will be addressed in a cross-cutting way in the different investment priorities of the programme contributing to the overall objective of the programme:

Information and Communication Technologies

The development of ICT products, services and applications constitutes a relevant support for socioeconomic development, governance, networking, etc. As a tool, ICT can be used in a transversal way to reach the objectives of several investment priorities.

Social cohesion and social innovation

In different fields of intervention, a positive attention will be paid to projects involving partners or taking measures that have positive effects on social cohesion. This is especially the case when involving social enterprises or implementing actions improving the conditions of target groups confronted with economic and social integration difficulties

Data and knowledge management

Each project and each project partner must make available for public the data used for the projects or generated by the project in order to enhance the dissemination of experiences and results. Projects are encouraged to deliver datasets in line with the “free open data” principle to improve the diffusion and reuse of data between public institutions, partners and a wider audience.

Territorial and eco-systemic approach

As already outlined above, each targeted territory (urban, coastal, islands and remote areas), projects will have to mobilise relevant stakeholders of sectors and institutions from the project intervention field. Approaches must be ‘integrated’ or ‘ecosystemic’: Partners will have to explore how to make relevant actors from environment protection, tourism, transport, etc. **work together.**

What type of project will be financed?

Paying attention to the various dimensions of a project (analysis, definition of strategies, implementation of activities and pilot projects, dissemination/transfer of experiences), the programme will give the possibility to **improve expertise, knowledge, networking and support capacity building** for public and private bodies. When relevant, it will support pilot actions to test tools, processes, governance systems contributing to improve public interventions and support long term sustainable development in key sectors of green and blue growth. Transnational projects shall contribute to **exchange and transfer experiences** between regions, support transnational strategies and capacity building.

Among the framework conditions for the implementation of actions, stakeholders must bear in mind that projects are **not aimed to answer to the needs of a limited number of partners but to contribute to better living conditions in MED territories** (economic activities, quality of the environment, safety, etc.).

From the action and output point of view, taking into account its strategy, the MED Programme shall mainly deliver:

- ✓ **Policies and strategies**
- ✓ **Methodologies and tools**
- ✓ **Pilot actions**
- ✓ **Action plans**
- ✓ **Joint management systems and cooperation agreements**

As a transnational cooperation programme, the MED Programme will **neither support heavy investments, development of large infrastructures nor scientific and technology research as such**. Investments in small scales facilities or infrastructures might be supported in the case of pilot projects and territorial experiences. The MED Programme supports in particular intangible or “soft” actions which could potentially have a long term effect and which provide visibility to the programme (studies and research, networking, dissemination of knowledge and data, etc.).

Types of calls

The MED Programme 2007-2013 started with 2 open calls on the 4 priority axes. More than 1000 applications were received and only 10% of them finally selected.

This showed the necessity to adapt the application and selection process with the objective to reduce the number of applications by better focusing the content of the call, to reduce the administrative burden for project promoters and for evaluators, and improve the quality of projects. The method of specific Terms of References has been progressively put in place with the launch of strategic and targeted calls that significantly reduced the number of applications and improved the monitoring of the project contents.

For 2014-2020, the MED Programme will be implemented only through more focused calls for projects on one or several priorities.

A new type of partner

Private structures can be involved in MED projects as partners (not as Lead partners). As a novelty, private co-financing will be eligible.

As far as the first priority axis is concerned, this integration is obvious, since different kind of economic operators are expected to contribute in order to boost innovation in the MED. Also in the second and the third priority axis (low carbon and natural/cultural resources) private partners will be able to participate if relevant. The fourth priority axis on the contrary is not open for private co-financing.

The co-financing rate of private partners (50% or 85%) will depend on the regime to be applied, which is still under discussion within the MED Monitoring Committee.

Key moments of the Programme:

- ★ **September 2014**
Submission of the Cooperation Programme to the EC
- ★ **January 2014**
First feedback from European Commission
- ★ **March 2015**
Submission of revised CP to the EC
- ★ **2 June 2015**
Approval of the Interreg MED Cooperation Programme by the European Commission
- ★ **9th and 10th 2015**
First Meeting of the MED Monitoring Committee
- ★ **22nd and 23rd June 2015**
Kick Off event
Launch of first call for project proposals and start of partner search activities
- ★ **October 2015**
Closure of first call for project proposals and start of the evaluation phase
- ★ **Spring/summer 2016**
First call projects' approval and start

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