



TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION PROJECTS

GEAR-UP! Project – Reference: EuropeAid/173998/DH/ACT/Multi

European Commission's DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising) Programme
(EU DEAR Programme).

Objectives of the calls

The Call is announced by the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (hereafter AIE) as a partner in the international GEAR UP! project, supported by the European Commission's DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising) Programme.

The **overall objective** is to build a shared vision of the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCE), mostly aimed at young people (15-30 years old) living in the involved territories, as transversal element to achieve the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda increasing the sensitivity towards climate change, sustainable development, gender equality and to create a strong and lasting cooperation between European Local Authority (LAs) and Civil Society Organisation (CSOs). The cooperation will boost civil participation, European citizenship and engagement so that the capability of the actors involved will be acting as a multiplier effect between and beyond the involved territories.

The **specific objective** addressed by this ToR will be directly achieved through Third Parties financial support aimed at co-finance projects and thematic campaigns linked to GCE, SDGs, sustainable development, gender equality and awareness raising. The support will be granted to LAs and CSOs that do not have sufficient financial, administrative and management skills to apply directly for EU funds.

The use of the financial mechanisms of Third Parties support will help the consortium to directly reach a high number of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations and mobilize, activate and engage more EU citizens, especially youth, on global topics.

The projects must be in line with the objectives of the Call and also take into account at least one of the thematic priorities listed below. The thematic priorities are:

- Sustainable Development and SDGs¹
- Agenda 2030
- Youth engagement/participation ²
- Global citizenship education
- Social or environmental justice
- Gender equality³ and non-discrimination principles and intersectionality
- Awareness and critical understanding of global issues
- Global-local interconnectedness

Projects must relate exclusively to activities carried out in one of the following IPA Countries: **A. Albania or B. North Macedonia or C. Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

A. Albania is deeply committed to fostering a well-informed, socially responsible, and globally minded citizenry and this commitment is reflected in the national vision for Global Citizenship Education (GCE), which emphasizes equipping individuals, particularly the youth, with the skills and knowledge necessary to address global challenges such as climate change, social justice, inequality, and human rights violations. A primary goal of GCE in Albania is to help students comprehend the interconnectedness of global systems and the impact of local actions on global outcomes. Albania envisions an education system where students are not only academically competent, but also socially and ethically responsible. The long-term aim is to cultivate a generation of Albanians who are capable of leading sustainable and equitable development initiatives both nationally and globally. The integration of GCE in Albania's education system aims to prepare citizens to actively participate in the global community and to help students comprehend the interconnectedness of global systems and the impact of local actions on global outcomes. Albania's legislative framework demonstrates the commitment to integrating GCE into the national education system. Key policies include the National Education Strategy 2021-2026, the Sustainable Development Goals Roadmap, and specific GCE guidelines that outline objectives and implementation strategies across various educational levels.

Funded activities in Albania encompass curriculum development, teacher training, public awareness campaigns, educational materials production, and organizing workshops and seminars for educators and students.

¹ May address only one of the Objectives, or multiple Objectives;

² A process that has participatory elements and can be designed and led by the applicant and involve other actors.

³ Gender equality is a compulsory cross-cutting theme for each project, but it can also be the main theme of the project.

B. GCE in ***North Macedonia*** is designed to prepare students to engage as informed, empathetic, and active global citizens, aligning with international standards set by UNESCO and other global bodies. This approach integrates a global perspective into the educational system, aiming to foster a generation equipped to address global challenges.

North Macedonia's aspiration for EU membership influences its educational policies, incorporating GCE to align with EU values such as democracy, human rights, and sustainable development. The national curriculum, managed by the Ministry of Education and Science, supports the integration of GCE elements, ensuring that students develop global competencies, critical thinking, and effective communication skills.

GCE in North Macedonia aims to develop essential skills, values, and active participation among students and youth in general. Its primary goals include fostering global competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication to address global challenges. GCE also promotes respect for diversity, human rights, and cultural heritage, encouraging empathy and responsibility towards others and the planet. Another key objective is to inspire active citizenship, equipping learners to engage in democratic processes and advocate for sustainable development and social justice.

The vision for GCE is to ensure inclusive and quality education at all levels, fostering intercultural understanding and peace. It aligns particularly with SDG 4.7, aiming to integrate these principles into educational practices to support environmental sustainability and social responsibility, thereby preparing students to contribute positively to a more equitable world.

C. The policy context and legislative framework for GCE in ***Bosnia and Herzegovina*** are influenced by international commitments, national strategies, and the country's unique administrative structure. The country consists of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Republika Srpska (RS), along with the autonomous Brčko District. Each entity has its own education ministries, leading to a decentralized and multifaceted education system. BiH, as a member of UNESCO as well as the UN, is committed to the principles of GCE, which aims to empower students to engage and take active roles in both addressing global challenges and contributing to peacebuilding and reconciliation. The legislative framework for GCE in BiH includes various education laws and policies that reflect the country's commitment to integrating GCE into its education system.

GCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) focuses on fostering informed, responsible, and active global citizens through a variety of funded activities. These include curriculum development, teacher training, student engagement, resource provision, awareness campaigns, and research.

Key funded activities include integrating GCE principles into the national curriculum, supported by collaborations among educators and policymakers. Teacher training programs, such as workshops and seminars, equip educators with the necessary skills to deliver GCE content effectively. Funding also supports the production and distribution of educational materials, including textbooks and digital resources.

Student engagement is promoted through projects like Model United Nations simulations, international exchange programs, and community service initiatives. Public awareness campaigns, school workshops, and community events highlight the importance of global citizenship. Additionally, a significant portion of the funding is allocated to research and evaluation efforts, which are crucial for assessing the impact of GCE programs and informing the development of future initiatives.

For all projects, it is a requirement to take gender equality into account as a cross-cutting theme.

Background

GEAR-UP!, Global citizenship Education Actions to strengthen youth engagement through local support to LAs and CSOs, to accelerate progress towards sustainable development, is a project co-financed by the EU Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) Programme, that promotes and enables active engagement of EU citizens, especially young people, in development issues and addressing global challenges at local and global levels.

Coordinated by the Marche Region (IT), the project involves 10 partners including: Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation – LAPAS (Latvia); Eine Welt Netzwerk Thüringen – EWNT (Germany); Adriatic Ionian Euroregion – AIE (Croatia); Zaragoza City Council – ZCC (Spain); Czech Forum for Development Cooperation – FoRS (Czech Republic); Région Hauts-de-France – HDF (France); Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid – HAND (Hungary); Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity – CROSOL (Croatia); City of Zagreb (Croatia); CONCORD Italia – CONIT (Italy); and 6 Associates Partners: BUD9 – Budapest Capital City IX District, DIBA – Province of Barcelona, DPZ – Province of Zaragoza, RCM – Riga City Municipality, RER – Emilia Romagna Region, TR – Thuringia Region.

GEAR UP! aims to implement GCE actions related to sustainable development with a special attention to participation and engagement of young people through financial support to Third Parties.

Through the proposal, small and medium sized regionally and/or locally operating Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations (LAs/CSOs), which face financial and administrative difficulties in applying for EU funds, will be supported through sub-granting opportunities, capacity building and networking activities. The financed organisations in each involved territory will tackle one (or more) of the project's main issues such as Sustainable Development, gender, SGDs, in relation to active citizenship.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the GEAR-UP project are:

- ❖ To implement initiatives of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations in 8 EU countries and 5 IPA countries through financial support instruments, to raise awareness and critical

understanding of global agenda on development and global/local interdependencies, and to empower them to take part in participatory processes and in local decision making;

- ❖ To strengthen skills, competences, exchange processes and resources of LAs and CSOs concerning GCE, through capacity building and networking activities, on regional and European level;
- ❖ To increase awareness and sensitivity towards Sustainable Development and global challenges among young people aged 15-30 living in the 8 EU involved territories, through their involvement in DEAR actions promoted by LAs and CSOs;
- ❖ To increase knowledge and awareness on gender and non-discrimination field, as a key concern among policy makers, associations, networks and young people in 8 EU countries, strengthening partnerships for the advancement of gender equality and intersectional approach and ensuring a balanced application in the implemented activities in terms of practices and policies.

The action will be developed in Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Latvia, Croatia and Hungary, as well as in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, through previously established co-operation and networking of co-applicants. For the IPA countries, the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, which has ongoing partnerships with various CSOs and LAs networks active in Western Balkans, will facilitate capacity building and sub-granting processes in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia.

Possible types of activities

Funds from this Public Notice may finance/co-finance projects that include the following activities:

- ❖ awareness raising campaigns, training, seminars in the field of GCE, Sustainable Development, Youth engagement/participation, gender equality;
- ❖ interactive and educational round tables / workshops;
- ❖ capacity building activities, public/cultural events (one-off, series or recurrent);
- ❖ cultural and artistic initiatives (co-financing of theatre performances, exhibitions);
- ❖ activities to promote a correct and broad information and awareness on issues related to GCE and the 2030 Agenda;
- ❖ formal education activities to enhance GCE in teaching and school curricula;
- ❖ non-formal education initiatives to promote a change of perception and behaviour through participation and forms of active citizenship that foster the dissemination of GCE values;
- ❖ production and distribution of teaching and learning materials on the topic of GCE;

which aim to reach the main target group of young people aged 15-30.

The activities may include project days in schools with the involvement of students, other events in line with the objective of this Call and the GEAR UP! Project.

Please note that they are not admissible:

- Activities that discriminate against persons and groups of persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, belief, non-belief or (perceived) ethnic origin.
- Activities that directly support political parties or involve proselytism for religious purposes.

Beneficiaries

- ❖ **Small or Medium-sized Civil Society Organizations - CSOs (including Youth Organization, Non-Profit Organisations, Voluntary Organizations, Associations for Social Promotion, Foundations)** active in the field of Global Citizenship Education (GCE), Sustainable Development, Gender equality, awareness raising and Youth participation and youth involvement in public affairs;
- ❖ **Small or Medium-sized Local Authorities (LAs)**, and Institutions established by Local Authorities, such as schools, libraries, initiatives organised by these Bodies;
- ❖ **Consortia** of Non-Profit Organizations and other Local Authorities with a clearly identified Lead Organization⁴,

provided that they have their legal and operational headquarters in one of the following IPA Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina or North Macedonia, and that they have been active for at least one year prior to the date of publication of this Public Notice.

Eligibility, Experience and required skills of the Applicant

To be eligible for the grant competition, Applicants shall meet the following criteria:

- ❖ be a legal entity registered/operating in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina or North Macedonia, or a Local Public Authority or an Entity established by a Local Government, and provide the organization's registration certificate and statute. **Please note that each Applicant may only participate in the Call (first or second round of funding) dedicated to the Country where it has its registered and operational headquarters, and the activities must take place in their respective Countries.**
- ❖ fulfils the condition of having been registered for at least 12 months prior to the date of publication of this Public Notice, in at least one of the thematic areas of this Public Notice, according to its Statutes;

⁴ In the case of Consortia, the partners may include an organisation without legal personality. In such a case, the lead applicant must declare that it takes responsibility for the reporting, including the handling of the accounts, on behalf of the partner (e.g. school and student association/student parliament, youth association, etc.).

- ❖ against the Applicants, no charges shall be pending such as disqualification, prohibition, suspension or decadence, or even indictments, pending convictions and / or preventive measures, pursuant to current legislation;
- ❖ the Applicant **must guarantee proficiency in written and spoken English**.

Applicants, at the same time as submitting their project, **must submit, under penalty of exclusion, a copy of their Statutes and annual activity report** with specific reference to the thematic areas of this Call.

Financial allocation and size of grants

The tender has a maximum budget of € 125.000.00

How much can be applied for:

- ❖ Individual Applicant: **min 6.000,00 € max 10.000,00 €⁵**.
- ❖ The grant amount will cover **100% of the project budget**. Applicants providing their own contribution in the form of a co-financing of at least 10% of the submitted project budget may receive extra points in the selection process.
- ❖ In case of grant award and signing of the contract, the amount requested with the first report will be transferred to the beneficiary's account only after approval of the individual half-yearly report, according to the procedures set out in the paragraph "Terms for disbursement of the contribution".
- ❖ The grant funding can be used for both the project activities and management of the people who implement the project.
- ❖ This Public Notice cannot finance projects and activities that are co-financed and already fully approved for funding by the EU, Public or other sources of funding.

Information on how to apply

- ❖ Number of applications: each Organization can submit a maximum of **one (1) project proposal per call**. If more than one application is submitted these shall not be considered;
- ❖ Application method: using the prescribed forms, according to the instructions given therein, which can be downloaded from the Euroregion website <https://www.adriaticionianeuroregion.eu/>

⁵ The budget proposal will be in EUR, as will all project reporting (with six-monthly reporting and also at the end of the project).

- ❖ Language: the grant application (online form and content section), and any report⁶ (Activity Report and Financial Report) and all the attachments must be submitted in **English (EN)**.

Information on the implementation of the project

- ❖ By obtaining a grant, the Applicant commits to cooperation and regular communication with the AIE project manager (or other AIE GEAR UP! project team members) as well as to engage in activities aimed at supporting the capacity building of the organization through mentoring, participation in training seminars, experience sharing and networking.
- ❖ The grantee will commit to carry out monitoring and evaluation of the project according to predefined instructions, with the support of the AIE Project Manager.

Timeframe

This Public Notice has 2 deadlines: the first round is exclusively for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the second round is exclusively for Albania and North Macedonia.

Instruction to Proposers	Specific Requirements
Info day for potential candidates from Bosnia and Herzegovina	5 March 2025, in Sarajevo (BiH)
First round of Project Applications is open only for potential candidates from Bosnia and Herzegovina	from 15.04.2025 to 15.05.2025
The application deadline for the first funding round (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	15.05.2025 - by 12:00 AM (Zagreb/Rome - time GMT+1). No applications will be accepted after this date and time
Decision expected	14.06.2025
Eligible project costs	from 15 June 2025
Maximum number of projects eligible for funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina	4
Language for submitting the application	English only

Info day for potential candidates from Albania and North Macedonia	5 June 2025 in Tirana (Albania)
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⁶ For projects with a duration of more than 6 months, a report is submitted every six months and at the end of the project final report is submitted.

Second round of Project Application is open only for potential candidates from North Macedonia and Albania	from 15.07.2025 to 31.08.2025
The application deadline for the second funding round	31.08.2025 - by 12:00 AM (Zagreb/Rome time GMT+1). No applications will be accepted after this date and time
Decision expected	30.09.2025
Eligible project costs	from 1st October 2025
Maximum number of projects eligible for funding	Albania: 5 North Macedonia: 3
Language for submitting the application	English only

Duration

Project implementation	October 2025 – December 2026
Project duration	min. 6 months, max. 12 months

Target Group

Young people between 15 and 30 years of age

Eligible expenses and starting date

This Public Notice may finance **direct and indirect costs** related to the implementation of project activities in the intervention area. Eligible costs are costs incurred by the beneficiary of funding that meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the implementation period of the project in accordance with the contract;
- must be listed in the project cost estimate;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the project for which the financial resources have been allocated;
- can be identified and verified and are recorded in the grantee's accounts in accordance with the accounting rules applicable to non-profit Organizations;
- they must be moderate, justified and consistent with the requirements of rational financial management, in particular with regard to economy and efficiency.

Specifically:

1. Direct project costs:

1. Human resources: costs of employees or persons engaged in the project corresponding to the effective expenses for salaries/other income allowances and taxes and contributions;
2. Travel: Travel, food and accommodation expenses related to project activities;
3. Service costs: (e.g. translation services, interpreters, publications, photocopying services, catering services, e.g. non-alcoholic beverages and food for event participants, conference room rental), provided they are directly and exclusively linked to the project;
4. Costs of equipment used exclusively for the project;

Subtotal Direct costs of the project: sum of items 1. to 4.

2. Indirect costs of the project:

Indirect eligible costs are costs which are not directly linked to the implementation of a Programme or project but which contribute indirectly to the achievement of its objectives.

Eligible indirect costs of the project are the costs of carrying out the main activity, (max. 7% of direct costs, points 1-4 of direct project costs), e.g:

- a) Office rental;
- b) Office supplies (small office equipment such as toner, paper, stationary);
- c) Other services costs (telephone, internet, electricity, heating, maintenance, cleaning, insurance);
- d) Additional costs incurred for the implementation of the project: bank costs, postal costs, costs related to audits.

Subtotal Indirect costs of the project: sum of items a) to d).

The **Total Eligible Cost** of the Project is the result of the sum of the direct and indirect cost items.

VAT is eligible for funding only if it is genuinely and definitively borne by the Applicant.

When compiling the budget estimate, all costs must be explained in such a way that, for each cost, the link of the cost to the project, the quantity and unit price, as well as the amount requested from the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion is clearly expressed.

Expenditure is considered **eligible for co-financing from 15/06/2025 for Bosnia Herzegovina and from 01/10/2025 for Albania and Montenegro, and until 31/12/2026 for all Countries** (any extension of the project may not exceed this term); the final date of eligibility coincides with the date of the end of the project.

All expenses eligible for final reporting must be supported by invoices and/or accounting documents of equivalent probative value. All invoices and/or accounting documents must specify in detail the subject of the service to which they refer, the name of the financed project (or the project id) and also indicate the equivalent value in Euro.

SUBMISSION MODALITIES OF APPLICATION

The Applications must be sent **no later than 15/05/2025 for the first funding round (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and no later 31/08/2025 for the second funding round (Albania and North Macedonia)** and must be completed **in accordance with Annex 3 (Grant Application Form)**. Failure to indicate the essential elements required in the Application Form (name of the legal representative, registered and operative office, tax code) will be considered sufficient grounds for exclusion from this Notice. **Application Form (Annex 3) and all related annexes must be sent in PDF format (signed and stamped), exclusively by email to the following address: secretariat@adriaticionianeuroregion.eu with the indication of the subject: "Grant Application for Territorial Projects for Global Citizenship Education".**

APPLICATION CONTENT

The Application Form (Annex 3) – duly filled in on the computer, PDF signed and stamped - must be accompanied by:

- ❖ Annex 2, *Request for contribution Form*, filled in on the computer (PDF signed);
- ❖ Annex 4, *Project Budget Form*, completed (Excel unsigned and PDF signed);
- ❖ Annex 5, *Partnership Form*, completed (Excel unsigned and PDF signed);
- ❖ Annex 6, *Declaration of non-double financing* (PDF signed);
- ❖ Annex 7, *Declaration on exclusion criteria by the third party* (PDF signed);
- ❖ Annex 8, *Action Plan* (Excel unsigned and PDF signed);
- ❖ Copy of the identity document of the legal representative;
- ❖ Organization's registration certificate (Extract from the Public Registry);
- ❖ Statute of the Applicant (English version);
- ❖ Annual activity report (in English) with specific reference to the thematic areas of this Call.

AIE reserves the right to request additional information to the Applicants.

All documents must be submitted in English.

In the event of minor deficiencies in the application that do not affect the essential content for the evaluation of the Application, the Applicant will be asked to supplement or correct the Application with the necessary requested information or annexes within 5 days from the date of notification.

The Application will be considered complete if Applicants submit the requested information or annexes within the specified deadline and in an appropriate manner.

Applications will not be considered if:

- have not been submitted after the prescribed deadline for the submission of applications;
- have not been submitted in accordance with the procedures set out in point “*Submission modalities of Application*” of this Public Call;
- are incomplete, i.e. don't contain all the information or all the completed documents and forms referred to in point “*Application Content*” of this Public Call;
- the evidence, documents and forms submitted are not readable; or the Application has not been supplemented or corrected with the required information or annexes within the additional time limit and in the prescribed manner;
- don't satisfy the conditions prescribed in point “*Beneficiaries*” of this Public Call.

Evaluation of Applications

- ❖ Applications will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee composed of AIE representatives and possibly of external evaluators without conflict of interest. The evaluation will be based on the Evaluation Criteria available (**Annex 1**). There is no legal entitlement to be awarded a grant.

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECT EVALUATION

- ❖ The preliminary activities and evaluation of the projects will be carried out by the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, which will avail itself of an Evaluation Committee, to be set up specifically within the structure, possibly assisted by the support of other external experts.
- ❖ The projects will be assessed on the basis of the **criteria** set out in this Notice (**Annex 1**);
- ❖ The ranking list of eligible projects will be drawn up on the basis of the points obtained by applying the evaluation criteria set out in this Notice. The ranking list will consider the projects that have reached the minimum score and will be financed up to the maximum number envisaged for each Country (as indicated in the “*TIMEFRAME*”). **In the event of economies or additional funds becoming available, the ranking list will be scrolled.**
- ❖ In the event of a tie between two or more projects with the same score, priority will be given to the

project with the highest score for the evaluation criterion “*Relevance of the project*” and, in the event of a further tie, priority will be given according to the order in which the projects are received.

- ❖ Projects that do not achieve the minimum threshold of **60 points** by applying the evaluation criteria set out in this Call for proposals **will not be eligible for funding**.

APPROVAL OF RANKING LIST AND GRANTING OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- ❖ The preliminary activities must be concluded with the drawing up of **the final ranking list within 30 days from the deadline for the submission of applications**.
- ❖ The Evaluation Committee of the AIE – by its own act - approves the final ranking list, lists the projects admitted and not admitted, grants the contributions to the beneficiaries.
- ❖ The person in charge of the procedure communicates by email the grant of the contributions to the beneficiaries.
- ❖ Unsuccessful Applicants will not be contacted.

CONCLUSION OF THE GRANT AGREEMENT

- ❖ The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion will sign a **Grant Agreement** for the project with the winning Applicants.
- ❖ The financing agreement will contain the amount of the financial resources approved for the project, the deadlines for payment of the approved funds and the obligations of the provider and beneficiary of the financial resources.
- ❖ The beneficiary of the financial resources is obliged to use the approved funds for the intended purpose and in accordance with the agreement.
- ❖ The beneficiary of the financial resources is obliged to submit a Report on the implementation and results of the project.

TERMS FOR DISBURSEMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION

The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion provides the contribution in **several payments**:

- a pre-financing payment of maximum 30% of the total grant, aimed at providing the beneficiaries with a float, immediately after the signature of the contract;
- an interim payment of maximum 30% of the total grant, following the submission of the six-monthly report and on the basis of the request for interim payment;
- a balance payment of maximum 40% of the total grant, following the submission of the final report and on the basis of the request for the payment of the balance.

The financial statements on which the requests of payments are based must be real, accurately recorded and eligible. All invoices and receipts must be declared properly.

Please, note that the pre-financing payment will be deducted from the requested amount with the interim payment. The amount due as the balance will be determined by deducting the total amount of pre-financing and interim payment (if any) already made from the final amount of the grant.

Before the balance payment, a financial audit by the GearUP external auditor will be performed as a pre-condition for releasing the payment. Beneficiaries will be responsible for providing all the necessary supporting documents to prove the costs declared, such as contracts, invoices and accounting records. In addition, the beneficiaries' usual accounting and internal control procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the amounts declared with the amounts recorded in its accounting statements and with the amounts indicated in the supporting documents.

The AIE will pay the grant based on the approval of the requests for payment and the related supporting documents, checking the compatibility of the reported fulfilled activities to the accounting documents, the technical report, the financial report. Their approval does not imply recognition of the compliance, authenticity, completeness or correctness of their content.

The contributory regularity of the beneficiary will also be checked.

MODALITIES OF REPORTING

Semestral Report

In order to request the interim payment, Beneficiaries are required to submit a six-monthly Progress Report to the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion at the following email address: secretariat@adriaticionianeuroregion.eu

In the event of non-compliance, it will not be possible to approve the six-monthly report and disburse the requested grant amount.

Final Report

Within **30 days** from the conclusion of the project, the Beneficiaries of the grant must submit to the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, at email address: secretariat@adriaticionianeuroregion.eu, the Final Report of the project, which must be written in English and which is composed of the following documents:

- A. Request for payment of the balance;
- B. Final report describing the project implemented, highlighting the activities carried out, the methods and forms of implementation, as well as an assessment of the results of the intervention and the impact that its implementation has had in terms of its real contribution to the economic, social and cultural growth of the area concerned;

C. Summary statement of all expenses and costs incurred for the activity eligible under the Grant, with a true copy of the original invoices and supporting documents for the incurred expenses, accompanied by receipts certifying the payment;

D. Reports, photographic documentation, audio and/or video documentation relating to the implementation of the project on USB support or sent via cloud systems (e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive and similar) repositories;

E. Authorisation to publish material relating to the implementation of the project (reports, photos, videos, etc.) on the Gear-UP! Project webpage, on the EU DEAR Programme website and social media, as well as on AIE's or Gear-UP! Partners' websites and social networks.

The AIE will pay the final contribution normally **within the 60th day following the date of sending the request for payment** and the related supporting documentation. The final payment will be made only after the interim report has been reviewed and approved.

The AIE has the right to verify the validity of what is declared in the final report, including through inspections by its own representatives in the areas where the activities were carried out.

EXTENSION

Any extension, for a maximum of 3 months, of the duration of the eligible project must be requested to the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion at the following email address: secretariat@adriaticionianeuroregion.eu, highlighting and duly documenting the motivations for asking the time extensions.

The request for extension that will become necessary during the implementation of the project will be approved by a communication from the person in charge of the procedure, provided that it does not lead to substantial modifications to the project and respects its objectives.

WITHDRAWAL OF PROJECT FUNDING

Causes of withdrawal

EAI may proceed to reduce or revoke the grant in the following cases:

- renunciation of the beneficiary (in this case the procedure of communication of the start of the revocation procedure is not followed, but the act of revocation is adopted);
- partial implementation of the project, as evidenced by a reduction in the actual expenditure incurred of less than 70% of that originally accepted for receiving the grant;
- deviation from the original project resulting in a different assessment of the project with respect to the

selection criteria originally envisaged;

- failure to submit the financial statements, including the documentation certifying the expenditure, by the deadlines set out in this Call, unless extensions are granted in duly justified cases;
- if checks and/or inspections reveal the absence or loss of eligibility requirements or the presence of irregularities affecting all the expenses reported (e.g. the project is found to be profit-making/commercial);
- non-compliance with the obligations of beneficiaries set out in this Notice.

PROOF OF EXPENDITURE

The expenses incurred by the beneficiaries must be adequately justified through:

- **copy of invoices and expense receipts** (receipts for occasional services, requests for reimbursement of expenses, debit notes, etc.) duly received;
- in all cases in which the expense incurred for the payment of withholdings and contributions is shown, the duly received payment Form must be attached.

The invoices and expense receipts admitted for reporting must have a date between the start of the project activities and the deadline set for its implementation. The name of the financed project or the project id must be legible.

The invoices and the proof of expenditures must be fully paid and received by the deadline for the submission of the final project report, under penalty of inadmissibility.

The invoices and expense receipts must be paid using the following method:

- bank transfer or bank receipt.

CONTROL, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All funded projects are assessed, reviewed and evaluated within the framework of the GEAR-UP! MEAL-Plan (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning).

The Beneficiaries undertake to use the GEAR UP! project monitoring and evaluation tools and communication templates for all funded project activities, according to predefined instructions, with the support of the AIE Project Manager. They enable the functionality of GEAR UP! evaluation teams to contact local stakeholders and target groups if necessary.

Monitoring and control of the projects will be guaranteed through the evaluation of the aforementioned tools, of the reports prepared by the Beneficiaries, and through the evaluation of the technical documentation of the project and any periodic inspections carried out by AIE staff at the headquarters of the implementing Body and

at the area where the project is being implemented.

Any key changes to the awarded organization that may affect the implementation of the proposed grant must be notified to the AIE staff immediately and in writing.

The AIE staff will oversee progress by reviewing submitted reports and may, as necessary, conduct on-site visits or request additional records to verify the accuracy of reported information. Additionally, the AIE staff may request further details within one year following the completion of the grant implementation to evaluate the achieved results.

Contracted applicants are required to promptly notify the AIE staff of any anticipated reporting delays as soon as they become aware of them.

Visibility Rules

The beneficiaries of the financing must mandatorily include in all promotional materials, on the project websites and in all other promotional and communication materials that will be created within the scope of the financed project:

- the title of the project admitted to financing and the indication of the proposing entity;
- the logos of the GEAR-UP Project and the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion;
- the indication "*Project co-financed by the European Union*".

The beneficiaries of the funding must also agree, with the AIE staff, on any participation in external initiatives to promote the intervention and must share the related materials (presentation, press conference, etc.) via email and in one month in advance, also for the purpose of their inclusion in the AIE' website (in the Cooperation projects section): <https://www.adriaticionianeuroregion.eu/projects/cooperation-projects/#>

OBLIGATIONS OF BENEFICIARIES

Beneficiaries are required to:

- communicate the start date of project activities;
- send the half-yearly Report;
- send the Final Report;
- communicate the changes and/or extensions of the project;
- respect the deadlines set for the implementation of the project;
- communicate the end date of project activities;
- provide, upon request of the AIE staff, duly documented data relating to the financial and physical implementation of the intervention;

- provide, upon request of the AIE staff, all information necessary to monitoring, control and evaluation;
- allow access by AIE staff for visits and inspections in the areas, plants or premises subject to the intervention.

Submission of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

All questions related to this public Call for Applications can be sent to the email address secretariat@adriaticionianeuroregion.eu, during the time set for sending the applications.

Potential applicants will receive answers to their questions within 5 (five) working days after receiving the requests of information.

Questions may be sent up to 10 (ten) days before the application deadline.

Personal data processing

Personal data contained in the Application and in the requested documents are collected and processed exclusively for the purpose of the implementation of this Public Notice.

By participating in the Public Notice, Applicants expressly consent that AIE, as data controller, may collect, use and process data for the purpose of implementing the Public Notice procedure, in accordance with the provisions of the Albanian and North Macedonian Personal Data Protection Law.

All documents relating to Applications for funding under this Public Notice will be filed and stored in accordance with the regulations on the protection and preservation of documentary and archival material and will not be returned to applicants.

Person in charge of the procedure and contacts

For more information about this ToR, please contact the AIE Secretariat to the following e-mail address: secretariat@adriaticionianeuroregion.eu.

Person in charge for this procedure is Ms. Carmela Vaccaro | EU Senior Project Officer

E-mail: carmela.vaccaro.eu@gmail.com

Ph.: +39 0874 19 61 470

This project is co-financed by the European Union. The contents of this text are the sole responsibility of AIE and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

ATTACHMENTS

1. *Evaluation criteria*
2. *Request for contribution*
3. *Grant Application Form*
4. *Project Budget Form*
5. *Partnership Form*
6. *Declaration of non-double financing*
7. *Declaration on exclusion criteria by the third party*
8. *Action Plan*