

PROJECT TITLE “CULTURE BRANDING - STRENGTHENING
EXTROVERSION”

PROJECT ACRONYM “**CULTURE PLUS**”

ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

External Expertise for:

Scientific Support on the Elaboration of Studies for Activities 3.1, 4.1 & 4.2

In “CULTURE PLUS” Project

“The Project is co-funded by the European Union and by national funds of the countries participating in the “Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation” Programme “Greece – Albania 2014 – 2020””

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner country

Albania

1.2. Contracting authority

Studies and Development Center - Albania (Partner)

1.3. Country background

Albania transitioned from being one of the poorest countries in Europe in the 1990s to gaining middle-income status in 2008. Albania was granted EU candidate status in June 2014. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, Albania's growth decelerated, with growth rates as low as 1.9 percent in recent years. However, growth strengthened to 3.4 percent in 2016 and is projected to average 3.5 percent during 2017-2019. Continued growth, and job creation are expected to sustain poverty reduction in the coming years. GDP per capita was 4,078 US\$ in 2016, and the poverty rate was 7.7 percent, while 39.1 percent of population lives below the upper middle-income poverty rate of US\$5.5 (2012 figures). All figures show a steady decline in poverty rates. Growth has been supported by robust domestic demand. Services were the main driver for growth, followed by construction and agriculture. Average annual inflation has fallen to 1.3 percent in 2016. However, higher food prices lifted inflation to 2.2 percent in the first half of 2017.

Albania's main exports are minerals, fuel and electricity (40.4%), textiles and footwear (28.2%) and construction materials and metals (14.7%). The main trading partner is the EU with a traditional surplus in favour of the EU. The overall industrial and trade performance is characterised a lack of competitiveness of the economy. Competitiveness is hampered by deficiencies in the rule of law, including enforcement of contracts, unclear property titles, lack of specialised and skilled labour force, and a large informal economy.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015–2020 was approved in May 2016. The NSDI rests on four pillars: (a) ensuring fiscal, macroeconomic and financial stability, (b) Enhancing competitiveness, (c) making public services transparent and accountable, and (d) Promoting efficient use of natural resources. The operation therefore remains relevant in this Context and supports the NSDI pillars. Recent elections in 2017 did not change direction and the Government continues its strong commitment to the sector.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

Albania has considerable investment needs, for instance in transport, environment or energy infrastructure. To illustrate: Albania had in 2011 113 km of roads and 14 km of rail per 100 000 inhabitants which represent 13.8 % and 32% of the EU-27 average of 821 km and 43 km per 100 000 inhabitants of roads and rail respectively. A similar picture exists in other sectors requiring infrastructure investments. In particular, water treatment and waste management are at early stages of their development.

The country is susceptible to effects of climate change, in particular flooding and drought, as well as possible electricity shortages due to a high dependence on hydro-power which requires seasonal energy imports.

Services constitute the largest sector of the Albanian economy. They contribute about 53% to gross value added (agriculture 22.9%, industry 13.2% and construction close to 10.5%).

Therefore, their importance and potential for further development should be recognised in meaningful strategies and not be given less attention than the industrial or agriculture sectors.

In this context, it is important to underline that the export of services is in surplus and that tourism already has a high economic impact in Albania, even though it performs below potential. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP, including indirect effects, is estimated at around 20%. However, the sector faces numerous challenges linked to the lack of skills of tourism professionals, widespread informality, low accessibility of tourism services, the absence of a sustainable natural and cultural offer, and the lack of coordination and planning both within the sector and with other relevant sectors such as vocational education and training.

Albania is still challenged by low productivity of agriculture and underdeveloped rural areas. Farmers and agri-business operators are not yet sufficiently prepared to manage the opportunities and challenges originating from the integration in EU agricultural markets and policies. Currently, agriculture is mainly subsistence-oriented and average farm sizes are small due to fragmentation. Farming is labour intensive with low levels of labour productivity and efficiency as a result of low level of technological advancement and insufficient adoption of know-how. The overall investment in agro-food sector is limited. Advisory and extension services are weak, and agriculture-related information systems are not well developed (land register, functional farm and animal registers). Further harmonisation with EU legislation in order to optimise the access to EU market opportunities is not yet ensured with respect to food safety, veterinary, and other related areas. The country lags behind in having in place functioning quality policy legislation (organic farming, protection of geographical indications).

Albania cooperates in the development of a regional transport network in line with the multi-annual plan of the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO). Albania is a signatory of the Energy Community Treaty. Albania has signed the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) which prepares the trade policy of the country to meet the standards of EU membership. Finally, Albania participates in the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) and the Rural Development Standing Working Group which enhance regional cooperation in the implementation of environmental and agricultural policies.

Cross border cooperation policy is about establishing links across national boundaries to enable joint approaches to common problems and opportunities. The present Programme constitutes a set of proposals for the interventions envisaged under the terms of the cross - border cooperation of European Territorial Cooperation for the period 2014-2020 and the IPA II specific objectives on the regional integration and territorial cooperation involving EU Member States and IPA II beneficiary countries. Albania is participating in three IPA II cross-border programmes with other IPA II beneficiaries, notably Montenegro, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Each programme focuses on three thematic priorities. Environmental protection, climate change and risk prevention and tourism and cultural and natural heritage are common thematic priorities for the three programmes. The Interreg IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020” has been approved by the European Commission decision C (2015) 5482 final of 30th July 2015.

The cross-border area of Greece-Albania seems to carry a negative image for both countries and generally Europe. This poor image is further undermined by the ongoing economic crisis that currently defines the area. This fact is particularly visible, when comparing Greece-Albania border area to other European border areas with similar geophysical characteristics. The current, rather undermined, image of the area is not compatible with the true qualities and potentials. It is characteristic that areas of pure natural beauty, cultural resources of tangible and intangible heritage have not yet been propelled or exploited.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

Albania is participating in three IPA II cross-border programmes with other IPA II beneficiaries, notably Montenegro, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Each programme focuses on three thematic priorities: Environmental protection, climate change and risk prevention and tourism and cultural & natural heritage are common thematic priorities for the three programmes. In Albania there are different Projects funded by various donors that provide assistance to the sector with focus in Environmental protection, Tourism, Cultural & Natural heritage and sustainable development. Donors are: IFIs with loans from the World Bank, the EIB, the EBRD, and other donors such as Germany, Italy, Japan, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Nations.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be a part is as follows: To achieve the rebranding of the cross-border area of Greece-Albania through the enhancement and the skilful promotion of the eco-cultural resources, placing particular emphasis on the tourist development.

2.2. Purpose

The purposes of this contract are as follows:

- Following the methodology for mapping and assessing the resources, the consultant will provide the collection of necessary data and information
- The consultant will input and translate the collected data and information
- The consultant will analyse and review the available practices of resources management in Albanian project area.
- The consultant will elaborate all the results and provide inputs for finalization of the study on "Methodology building: Mapping and assessing the eco-cultural resources"
- The consultant will provide the collection of best actual practices on Albanian project areas on place branding
- The consultant will gather and review the European best practices on place branding
- The consultant will input, translate and elaborate all the results
- The consultant will provide inputs for finalization of the study on "Methodology building: Recording and assessing the current and the future identity of the project's area"
- The consultant will prepare the data collection strategy (Sample, questionnaire etc.)
- The consultant will create a data base for data entry and data processing
- The consultant will collect, input and translate the data in prepared database
- The consultant will process the data and provide necessary inputs for the final studies report entitled: "Field researches (surveys and interviews with representatives of the bodies involved)"

2.3. Results to be achieved by the contractor

- Providing the collection of necessary data and information;
- Analyse and review the available practices of resources management in Albanian project area;
- Elaborate all the results and provide inputs for finalization of the study on “Methodology building: Mapping and assessing the eco-cultural resources”;
- Provide the collection of best actual practices on Albanian project areas and review the European on place branding;
 - Provide inputs for finalization of the study on “Methodology building: Recording and assessing the current and the future identity of the project’s area”
- Prepare the data collection strategy and create a data base for data entry and data processing;
- Process the data and provide necessary inputs for the final studies report entitled: "Field researches (surveys and interviews with representatives of the bodies involved)"

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

- Excellent and effective cooperation and interaction between partners involved in the project/the contracting authority and the contractor;
- Execution of the tasks according to a timeframe;

3.2. Risks

Risks that could affect the successful and timely completion of the project are:

- Incorrect partnerships;
- Poor communication with and between partners;
- Delay in the delivering of the tender dossiers;
- Delay in the approval of tender documentation;
- Unexpected changes in the Partnership Contract.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Description of the assignment

Cross border cooperation policy is about establishing links across national boundaries to enable joint approaches to common problems and opportunities. The present Programme constitutes a set of proposals for the interventions envisaged under the terms of the cross - border cooperation of European Territorial Cooperation for the period 2014-2020 and the IPA II specific objectives on the

regional integration and territorial cooperation involving EU Member States and IPA II beneficiary countries. The Interreg IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania 2014-2020” has been approved by the European Commission decision C (2015) 5482 final of 30th July 2015.

As the successor to the IPA Cross-Border Programme “Greece – Albania 2007-2013” it will attempt to capitalize on the experience gained and the lessons learned by the participants and the implementing structures in order to bring cooperation to a new level. The global objective of the programme is “to find the balance between sustainable regional development and enhancement of cross-border cooperation among local population & regional institutions, in accordance with EU & national policies, in order to address common challenges through joint interventions”.

The specific objectives of this project are: (i) the valorisation of cross border area’s cultural and natural heritage for tourist purposes. (ii) The effective enhancement and promotion of the current tourist image of the area. (iii) The development of an integral and innovative tool for managing place branding. (iv) The resurgence of a conversation concerning the common European identity, which is not yet prominent in the Greek-Albanian cross-border area since Albania is an IPA country. (v) The creation of a new brand based on the detailed record about c-b area’s cultural and natural heritage and (vi) The reinforcement of the Greek-Albanian borders’ conception as an area with similar geophysical and cultural characteristics.

Within this framework, the priorities which constitute the policy outline for the convergence in the area of intervention of the specific Programme are:

- Priority 1: Promotion of the environment sustainable transport & public infrastructure;
- Priority 2: Boosting the local economy;
- Priority 3: Technical Assistance;

Priority Axis 1 will be implemented by two thematic priorities focusing on:

1. Thematic Priority (c): Promoting sustainable transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities;

Specific Objective: 1.1 Increase the capacity of cross border infrastructure in transport, water & waste management.

2. Thematic Priority (b): 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 ;

Specific Objective 1.2: Increase the effectiveness of environmental protection & sustainable use of natural resources.

Specific Objective 1.3: Increase energy-efficiency and the use of RES.

Specific Objective 1.4: Improve the effectiveness of risk prevention and disaster management with a focus on forest fires.

Priority Axis 2 will be implemented by two thematic priorities focusing on:

1. Thematic Priority (d): Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.

Specific Objective 2.1: Preserve cultural and natural resources as a prerequisite for tourism development of the cross border area.

2. Thematic Priority (g): Enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment through, inter alia, promotion and support to entrepreneurship, in particular small and medium sized enterprises, and development of local cross-border markets and internationalisation.

Specific Objective 2.2: Improve cross-border capacity to support entrepreneurship, business survival and competitiveness.

Environmental protection and sustainable development is one of the 2 priority axes of the programme reserving half of the programme's resources. This strategic orientation is also enhanced by selection priorities in the second priority axis which targets the promotion of entrepreneurship. Even though the second axis refers to all economic activities, it concentrates on a priority basis on two sectors which are very important for the cross-border area economy:

- ✚ the agro-food industry; and more importantly
- ✚ on sustainable tourism, which is supported through 3 different intervention groups.

Furthermore, sustainable development is promoted through the guiding principles for the selection of operations under the second priority axis which include among others:

- ✚ contribution to resource efficiency (e.g. energy efficiency, renewable energy use, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, efficient water supply, waste-water treatment and water reuse, waste avoidance and recycling etc.).
- ✚ contribution to a sustainable environment (operations under this IPA programme will not harm the environment)
- ✚ major infrastructure initiatives will be accompanied by a solid environmental impact analysis.
- ✚ contribution to the compliance with air quality legislation and, in particular, air quality measures under Directive 2008/50/EC (e.g. reductions of PM and NO₂, which, in contrast to carbon dioxide, are directly harmful to the health of citizens, ecosystems, crops and buildings).

The estimated budget allocation corresponds to the importance of each thematic priority for the cross border area, as it was adjusted in order to account for the varying cost of typical interventions under each specific objective. More specifically:

Priority axis 1. Promotion of the environment, sustainable transport and public infrastructure (thematic priority b & c) 50% of the programme total budget is allocated to this priority axis which contributed both to sustainable growth (directly) and to smart growth (indirectly through the development/upgrade of transport and information and communications technology applications): 40% to infrastructure in the fields of transport, information and communications technology and

environment (Infrastructure interventions tend to gather a larger share of resources due to the higher unit cost of interventions) and 10% is devoted to environmental protection soft actions.

Priority axis 2. Boosting the local economy (thematic priority d & g) 40% of the programme total budget is allocated to this priority axis which is entirely focused on economic development and smart growth: 25% is concentrated to the promotion of tourism - especially through the preservation/promotion of natural and cultural heritage – as this sector presents a comparative advantage for the cross-border area and 15% is devoted to across-the-board improvements in entrepreneurship (such as hosting facilities, business services, clusters, etc).

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

The eligible cross-border area spreads from the Ionian Sea to the Prespa lakes, and includes:

- the Regional Units of Grevena, Kastoria, Florina, Arta, Thesprotia, Ioannina, Preveza,

Zakynthos, Kerkyra, Kefallinia and Lefkada in Greece, and

- the Region1 of Vlorë, the Region of Gjirokastër, the Region of Korçë and the Region of

Berat in Albania.

Beneficiaries from the Regional Unit of Kozani in Greece, will also be eligible as per the flexibility rule as stipulated in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014, Art. 44, paragraph 2b, “the total amount allocated under the Cross Border Cooperation Programme to operations located outside the Programme area does not exceed the 20% of the support from the Union at Programme level”.

The eligible cross border area is determined in accordance to the IPA II rules set out in Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 where only Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) III regions are eligible for cross-border cooperation programmes referred to in point (a) of Article 27, without prejudice to potential adjustments needed to ensure the coherence and continuity with 2007-2013 programs. The eligible cross- border area covers an area of 28,526 km² (17.445 km² for Greece cross-border area and 11.081 km² for Albania cross- border area) with a total population of 1,339,804 inhabitants (729.687 inhabitants for Greece cross border area and 610.117 inhabitants for Albania cross- border area) (census data of 2011).

Table 1: Eligible Area

TABLE 1: ELIGIBLE AREA	
NUTS level III regions (or equivalent regions in the non-MS) covered by the cross-border cooperation programme	11 GREEK REGIONAL UNITS:
	• EL131 (Grevena)
	• EL132 (Kastoria)
	• EL134 (Florina)
	• EL211 (Arta)
	• EL212 (Thesprotia)
	• EL213 (Ioannina)
	• EL214 (Preveza)
	• EL221 (Zakynthos)
	• EL222 (Kerkyra)
	• EL223 (Kefallinia)
	• EL224 (Lefkada)
	4 ALBANIAN REGIONS:
	• AL031 (Berat)
	• AL033 (Gjirokaštër)
	• AL034 (Korçë)
	• AL035 (Vlorë)

The Programme cross- border eligible area is illustrated on the map below:

Map 1: Greece-Albania 2014 – 2020 eligible area



4.1.3. Target groups

- Cross-border Decision and policy makers including local, regional and national authorities
- cross-border population,
- cross-border business,
- Economic and social partners
- cross-border tourists,
- Different institutions & NGO.

4.2. Specific work

The Consultant will support the Contracting Authority in overall process for elaboration of Field researches and scientific support on good practices guide. He/She shall contribute to achieving project objective through:

- Providing the collection of necessary data and information;
- Analyse and review the available practices of resources management in Albanian project area;
- Elaborate all the results and provide inputs for finalization of the study on “Methodology building: Mapping and assessing the eco-cultural resources”;
- Provide the collection of best actual practices on Albanian project areas and review the European on place branding;
 - Provide inputs for finalization of the study on “Methodology building: Recording and assessing the current and the future identity of the project’s area”
- Prepare the data collection strategy and create a data base for data entry and data processing;
- Process the data and provide necessary inputs for the final studies report entitled: "Field researches (surveys and interviews with representatives of the bodies involved)"

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

Studies and Development Center – Albania (PB 2).

4.3.2. Management structure

The Contracting Authority - Studies and Development Center;

Studies and Development Center – Project Management Team of Culture Pluse Project;

Executive Director of SDC / Project Manager of the Project;

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

Desk office if necessary

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

Tirana/Albania and travel in the other Partner's Cities or Countries as defined in Project timetable.

5.2. Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is April 16, 2019 and the period of implementation of the contract will be approximately 12 months, started from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

6.1.1. Key experts

Key experts have a crucial role in implementing the contract. These terms of reference contain the required key experts' profiles. The tenderer shall submit CVs and statements of exclusivity and availability for the following key experts:

Key expert

Qualifications and skills

- University Degree in any discipline i.e. economics, law, or social sciences or any other related applied natural sciences.
- Very good skills in writing and speaking English, another language of EU will be considered an asset.

General professional experience

- At least 5 years of professional experience

Specific professional experience

- Prior experience in conducting surveys and field research;
- Previous experience in collaboration with national or international non-profit organizations will be a strong advantage.
- Excellent analytical skills
- Good communications skills and working in group.

6.1.2. Other experts, support staff & backstopping

No other experts are required for this contract.

6.2. Office accommodation

The place of performance of the tasks shall be the SDC premises and target eligible areas in Albania or exceptionally any other place depending on the nature of the specific tasks. Office accommodation of a reasonable standard and of approximately 10 square metres for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Contracting Authority-SDC. The Contractor involved shall be reachable via telephone and e-mail during normal working hours (08.00-16.00). When required by the tasks to be performed, the usage of mobile phone should be considered during normal working hours. The contractor will also offer the possibility to be contacted through video- conference (long-distance meeting) or other web tools such as Skype.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in English in one original and one copy:

- **Inception Report** of maximum 12 pages to be produced after one month from the start of implementation. In the report the contractor shall describe e.g. initial findings, progress in collecting data, any difficulties encountered or expected in addition to the work programme and staff travel. The contractor should proceed with his/her work unless the contracting authority sends comments on the inception report.
- **Interim report** is required with a short description of progress including problems encountered. This report shall be submitted no later than September 2019.
- **Draft final report** of maximum of 20-30 pages (main text, excluding annexes) This report shall be submitted no later than one month before the end of the period of implementation of tasks.

- **Final report** with the same specifications as the draft final report, incorporating any comments received from the parties on the draft report. The deadline for sending the final report is 15 days after receipt of comments on the draft final report. The report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description of the different options to support an informed decision. The detailed analyses underpinning the recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

7.2. Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

NA

8.2. Special requirements

NA