



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ALBANIA

Call for Proposal for the Grant Scheme for the Regional Development and Cohesion

15 July 2021

A project of:



Implemented by:



In collaboration with:



Table of Contents

1	General information on Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme	3
1.1	Background and approach	3
1.2	The governance structures	4
1.3	Financial allocation provided by the Donors	5
1.4	Selection of projects, grant award and payment of grant funds.....	5
2	Rules of the RDPA Grant Scheme on Regional Development and Cohesion	7
2.1	Eligibility Criteria	7
2.1.1	Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))	7
2.1.2	Eligible Actions: Actions for which an application may be made	8
2.1.3	Eligibility of costs: costs that can be covered by a grant	11
2.2	How to apply and the procedures to follow	12
2.2.1	Concept Note	12
2.2.1.1	Where and how to send concept notes	12
2.2.1.2	Deadline for submission of concept notes	13
2.2.1.3	Further information about concept notes	13
2.2.2	Application	13
2.2.2.1	Where and how to send applications	14
2.2.2.2	Deadline for submission of applications	14
2.2.2.3	Further information about applications	15
2.3	Evaluation and selection of applications	15
2.4	Notification of the Contracting Authority's decision	20
2.4.1	Content of the decision	20
2.4.2	Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications	20
2.5	Indicative timetable.....	21
2.6	Grant contract signature.....	22
2.7	Conditions for implementation after the Contracting Authority's decision to award a grant.....	22
3	LIST OF ANNEXES	23
Annex 1:	Detailed list of eligible micro regions as per "100 villages" programme	23
Annex ACN:	Grant Application Form - Concept Note (Word format)	23
Annex A:	Grant Application Form - Full Application (Word format)	23
Annex A1:	Logical Framework (Word format)	23
Annex B:	Budget (Excel format) – this will become Annex II to the Grant Contract	23
Annex C:	Template of Project Partnership Agreement	23

1 General information on Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme

1.1 Background and approach

The Regional Development Programme Albania Phase IV, 2019-2023 ('RDPA' or 'Programme'), is an initiative funded by the Swiss Confederation jointly with the Austrian Development Agency ('the Donors'). The overall goal of the Programme is the encouragement of a balanced and sustainable social and economic development by relying on the regions' characteristics and attributes, by conserving and developing their natural and cultural features, by encouraging their economic development potential aiming at reducing disparities in Albania and providing better social and economic conditions to the Albanian citizens.

The Programme implementation regulated under bilateral agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania, aims to increase regional cohesion, reduce inequalities in resource utilization, productivity and social/environmental standards, providing also direct financial support in forms of grants to local authorities, being this latter the active actor on the ground.

Following the approach applied so far, the new RDPA grant scheme for Regional Development and Cohesion is based on priority needs and potentials in the regions, aligned with national and local level strategies, including those related to EU integration, as well as to the priorities of the Albanian Development Fund. Being designated by the Government as the organization responsible for the Regional Development Policy, ADF prepared a national programme reflecting the policy of the Government of Albania for socio-economic development of the country with focus on rural areas "Programme for Integrated and Sustainable Development of 100+ Villages of Albania 2022-2026". As the objectives of "100 villages" programme contribute to the RDPA objectives, it is proposed the new grant scheme to be aligned to the "100+ villages" programme.

The scope and nature of the Grant Scheme on Regional Development and Cohesion shall focus on regional development dimensions and encouragement of institutions and partners to collaborate through inter-municipal projects and/or projects with a clear regional development impact.

The main objectives of RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion grant scheme are:

1. To support integrated approaches that contribute to the sustainability of interventions by creating synergies and complementarity with interventions outlined in the "Programme for Integrated and Sustainable Development of 100+ Villages of Albania 2022-2026";
2. To increase the economic potential in the micro regions¹ and improve the local and regional capacities based on identified needs and potential in sectors such as culture, tourism, research and development, environmental protection and education, supporting policy-driven initiatives and establishing socio-economic networks.
3. To support the social and economic development in the micro regions through improving access to social services.

More information on the Programme and the RDPA Grant Scheme may be found in the following website: www.rdpa.al.

¹ As defined in Annex 1 in line with "Programme for Integrated and Sustainable Development of 100+ Villages of Albania 2022-2026".

1.2 The governance structures

The Contracting Authority

The RDPA Foundation shall be the Contracting Authority for the RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme. In this capacity, the RDPA Foundation shall:

- Prepare guidance and eligibility criteria to grant beneficiaries;
- Monitor the selection procedure delivered by the Mandated Body and perform verifications of all evaluation steps foreseen;
- Prepare of grant contracts and amendments to grant contracts;
- Sign grant contracts and amendments to grant contracts;
- Ensure the financial control, including complete and sufficient audit trails in all involved institutions;
- Perform sample checks on payment/reimbursement files received from the Grant Beneficiaries via the Mandated Bodies, and verify the sufficiency of the documentation, and the correctness and legality of the supporting documents;
- Ensure supervision of delegated functions based on Mandate Agreement;
- Report any irregularities and ensure the reimbursement by the Beneficiary of unduly paid sums financed by the contribution and, provide all required information to external authorized controllers and auditors;
- Ensure the visibility of the RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme.

The Mandated Body

In order to deliver RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme effectively and efficiently, the ADF shall be the Mandated Body and shall, inter alia:

- Provide information to applicants on the conditions for financing;
- Receive and record applications;
- Establish the Evaluation Committee and perform the selection of projects in accordance with the condition and criteria published in this Call for Proposals;
- Support the Contracting Authority to finalize the grant contracts for selected projects;
- Provide guidance to grant beneficiaries including assistance with preparation of public procurement files, tendering and award whenever appropriate;
- Perform management verifications and issue visas for payment and/or reimbursement of grant expenditure;
- Ensure monitoring and reporting on the RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme;
- Ensure the visibility of the RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme.

Thus, the Albanian Development Fund shall play a key role in both project selection and implementation.

The grant contract shall stipulate the detailed responsibilities of the Contracting Authority and the Mandated Body vis-à-vis the grant beneficiary. Grant Beneficiaries shall manage their own grant contract in accordance with the applicable national legislation, including the procurement of services, and/or supplies and/or works.

The Evaluation Committee

Evaluation Committee shall be established by ADF in order to assess and select the project proposals. Evaluation Committee's members shall ensure their professional, impartial and confidential assessment of project proposals. The Evaluation Committee may rely on external impartial technical expertise.

1.3 Financial allocation provided by the Donors

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is 158.092.012 ALL (1.421.600 CHF) without VAT. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants

Municipalities under the “Programme for Integrated and Sustainable Development of 100+ Villages of Albania 2022-2026”, are the only entities that can apply and are eligible for this grant.

If there is only **one municipality** applying for this call proposal, any grant requested must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts without VAT:

Minimum grant amount	Maximum grant amount
5,000,000 ALL	15,000,000 ALL

If there are **two or more municipalities** applying jointly for this call proposal, any grant requested must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts without VAT:

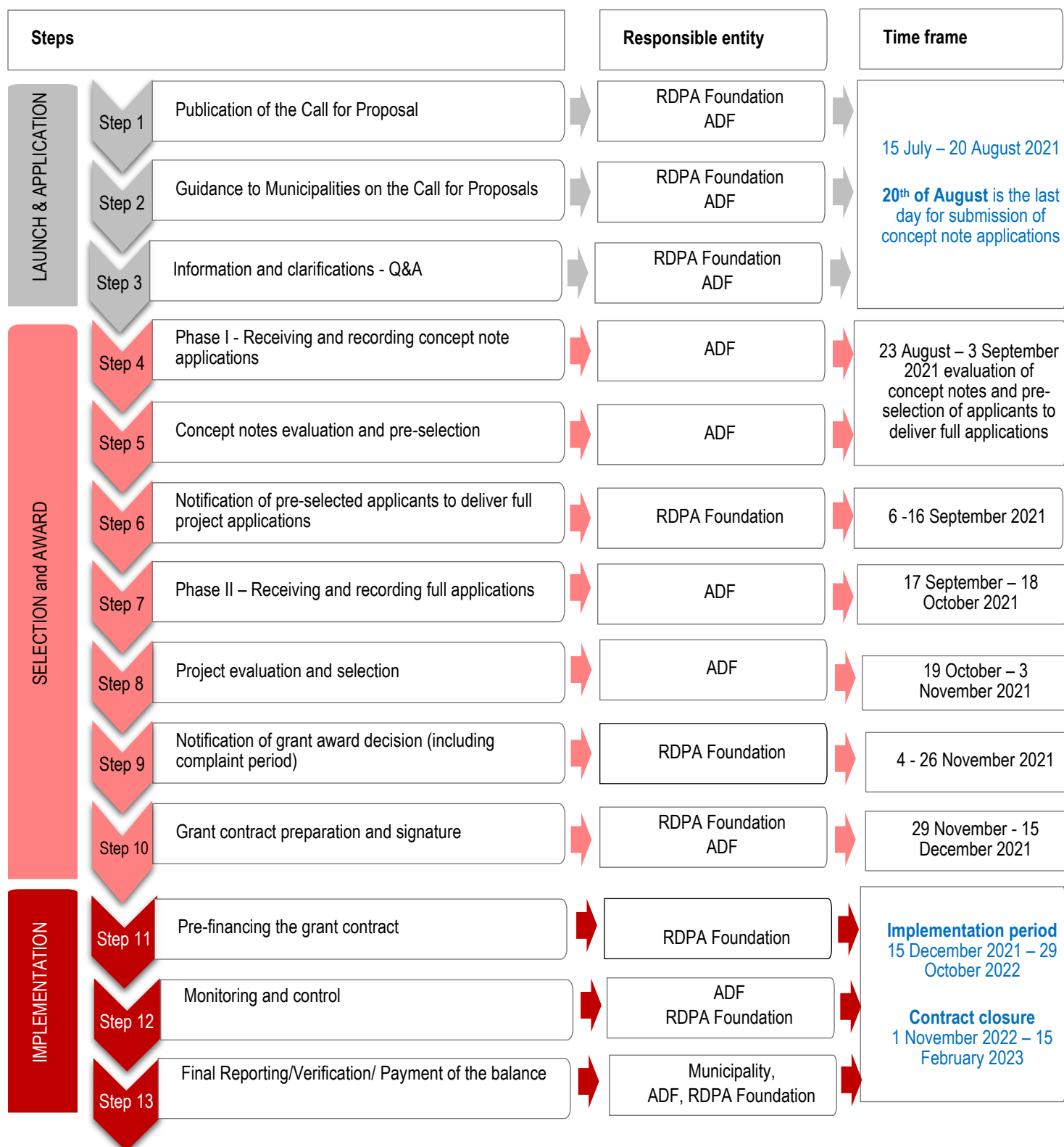
Minimum grant amount	Maximum grant amount
5,000,000 ALL	30,000,000 ALL

The eligible costs of the projects under this call will be 100% covered whenever the project amount is between the minimum and maximum grant value. VAT of the projects is classified as ineligible cost and shall be covered by the beneficiaries.

1.4 Selection of projects, grant award and payment of grant funds

The RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme shall be implemented through 13 steps. Under Figure 1, responsibilities and indicative timing for implementation of each step are outlined.

Figure 1. Steps, responsibilities and indicative timing for the RDPA Regional Development and Cohesion Grant Scheme



2 Rules of the RDP Grant Scheme on Regional Development and Cohesion

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the Actors (section 2.1.1):

- The lead applicant
- Co-applicant(s)
- Associated partner(s)

(2) the Actions (section 2.1.2):

- Actions for which a grant may be awarded;

(3) The costs (section 2.1.3):

- Types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant.

2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

Lead applicants and co-applicants must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be one of the following Municipalities of Albania, whose villages are listed as part of “Programme for Integrated and Sustainable Development of 100+ Villages of Albania 2022-2026” as outlined in Annex 1;
2. Be in partnership agreement with co-applicant(s) and associated partner(s), if any;
3. Not have a conflict of interest with the RDP (Contracting Authority) and ADF (Mandated Body). Should a conflict of interest arise during the performance of the contract, the beneficiary must immediately inform the Contracting Authority.

Lead applicant shall:

- Submit the application;
- Sign the grant contract;
- Be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the Action, not acting as an intermediary;
- Manage the grant funds and make all payments in line with envisaged activities and costs.
- Confirm the eligibility of all costs, incl. such invoiced by associated partner, if any.

Co-applicant(s) shall:

- Implement the activities foreseen in the Application
- Not act as an intermediary;
- Be in partnership agreement with the lead applicant.

Associated partner(s) must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be one of the following type of organization:

- 1.1. Non-governmental (NGO) or non-profit (NPO) organizations such as business support organizations, local enterprise associations, development agencies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development associations, educational, training and Research and Development (R&D) institutions, employers and producer/crafts associations; social businesses or other state and public agencies and associations;
- 1.2. Economic operators from private sector and local businesses;
- 1.3. Local community
2. Be operational in the geographical area where the project will be implemented
3. Be in partnership agreement with the lead applicant.

Associated partners (if any) may contribute financially for the implementation of project activities.

Municipality (as lead or co-applicant) can apply with more than one project proposal within the max budget as defined in section 1.3.

Municipality (as lead applicant/co-applicant) should be awarded one contract only.

2.1.2 Eligible Actions: Actions for which an application may be made

Definition

An Action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The planned duration of an Action may not exceed **10 months** – from contract signature to submission of the final narrative and financial report.

Location

Actions must take place in the territory of the villages listed under annex 1 or the administrative units of which the 100 Villages are part.

Intervention area

Actions should focus on one or more of the four intervention areas. The intervention areas are as follows:

- Development of tourism potentials
- Development of local economy
- Capacity development and social interaction
- Development of public services

Types of Action

Types of Action which may be financed under this call according to the intervention areas are:

Development of tourism potentials

- (1) Interventions in light infrastructure to improve access and functionality of natural and biodiversity attractions.
- (2) Interventions in light infrastructure to improve access and functionality of historical and cultural attraction.
- (3) Interventions in light infrastructure to create a touristic product based on the adventure attraction.

Development of local economy

- (4) Interventions for the establishment of recreational facilities in terms of hospitality and accommodation
- (5) Interventions that focus on the strengthening and promotion of economic activities of food and agro-processing.
- (6) Interventions that focus on the strengthening and promotion of economic activities of handcrafts and traditional products.
- (7) Interventions that focus on the strengthening of economic activities of storage and trade.

Capacity development and social interaction

- (8) Soft measure interventions to support the development of events and promotion of cultural, historical, heritage, gastronomy and tourism values of 100 villages, as listed under annex 1;
- (9) Soft measures interventions to support the development of capacities specifically for Actions (4), (5), (6) and (7)
- (10) Soft measures interventions to support the establishment of partnership between developing actors and other stakeholders within the territory of micro regions of 100 Villages and further

Development of public services

- (11) Interventions in light infrastructure and/or soft measures in improving social and community services.

With regard to eligible Actions, some examples of eligible activities for each typology are listed below:

Development of tourism potentials

- (1) Interventions in light infrastructure to improve access and functionality of natural and biodiversity attractions.**

Examples of eligible activities:

- Improving access through the construction of natural trails, walking paths, etc.
- Construction of tourist light infrastructure such as: panoramic balconies, bicycle itineraries, signage, sanitary services, picnic areas, etc.

- (2) Interventions in light infrastructure to improve access and functionality of historical and cultural attraction.**

Examples of eligible activities:

- Improving access through the construction of natural paths, stairways, natural trails, wooden bridges, hanging bridges, etc.
- Touristic light infrastructure in historical/cultural heritage such as: interpretation, signage, basic service, etc.

- (3) Interventions in light infrastructure to create a touristic product based on the adventure attraction.**

Examples of eligible activities:

- Establishment of adventure parks for free outdoor activities
- Establishment of sport facilities such as: sport itineraries, supporting services along the itineraries, signage, collection point, sanitary facilities, etc.

- Light infrastructure for the creation of protected trails for extreme climbing, paragliding platforms, first aid structures, etc.

Development of local economy

(4) Interventions for the establishment of recreational facilities in terms of hospitality and accommodation

Examples of eligible activities:

- Establishment of recreational facilities such as: places for camping/rolls, leisure time spending facilities, return of old agricultural structures in function of agro-tourism, etc.

(5) Interventions that focus on the strengthening and promotion of economic activities of food and agro-processing

Examples of eligible activities:

- Setting up mini-workshops for food products such as: dairy products, fruits, meat, etc.; as well as creating a brand, marketing, and selling them locally
- Setting up mini-workshops for medical plants processing, as well as creating a brand, marketing and selling them locally.

(6) Interventions that focus on the strengthening and promotion of economic activities of handicrafts and traditional products

Examples of eligible activities:

- Setting up mini-workshops for wood, stone, metal, leather and textile processing, as well as creating a brand, marketing and selling them locally

(7) Interventions that focus on the strengthening of economic activities of storage and trade

Example of eligible activities:

- Light infrastructure for the creation of collection points and/or recovering of existing ones, packaging and storage spaces for the products
- Light infrastructure to support setting up aggregate points of sales on villages, administrative units and/or region such as rural markets, facilities of fairs, etc.

Capacity development and social interaction

(8) Soft measure interventions to support the development of events and promotion of cultural, historical, heritage, gastronomy and tourism values of 100 villages

Example of eligible activities:

- Organizing national and local thematic promotional events, organizing promotional tours with interest groups, media and social media promotion of cultural, historical, heritage, gastronomy and tourism values of 100 villages.

(9) Soft measures interventions to support the development of capacities specifically for Actions (4), (5), (6) and (7)

Example of eligible activities:

- Providing assistance and capacity building for hospitality and accommodation
- Providing assistance and capacity building for processing, branding and products sales

- Providing assistance and capacity building for crafts and craft workshops

(10) Soft measures interventions to support the establishment of partnership between developing actors and other stakeholders within the territory of micro regions of 100 Villages and further

Example of eligible activities:

- Establishment of associations according to the nature of activity or territory such as: association of artisans, association of medical plants producers, association of fruit processors, etc.
- Support the existing associations and/or the new ones with research, information, studies, transferring technologies, knowledge, etc.

Development of public services

(11) Interventions in light infrastructure and/or soft measures in improving social services

Example of eligible activities:

- Establishment of community centers for educating purposes or enhancing capacities (renovating, adapting, equipping) to better support the above-mentioned fields under Action (4), (5), (6), (7), (8).
- Establishment or enhancement of search and rescue teams capacities and locations (organizing/coordination activities for volunteers, training and formative courses, equipping teams and working stations) in territory of villages/administrative units.

Applicants are recommended to check with Albanian Development Fund the eligibility of specific activities other than the above. The application might fall under one Intervention Area and/or Action, or it can fall under several Intervention Areas and/or Actions.

Ineligible Actions

Partial Actions or Actions which have already started are not eligible. Projects funded by the grant should not be depending on other funding such as potential loans or grants. Projects funded by the grant should not be under expropriation process and/or compensation process.

2.1.3 Eligibility of costs: costs that can be covered by a grant

Only eligible costs can be covered by RDPA grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs'. The reimbursement of eligible costs shall be based on the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary and any eligible partner of the beneficiary.

Eligible costs

The following costs are eligible:

- Works for construction / rehabilitation / extension of public physical infrastructure being in the ownership of the beneficiary or whose maintenance is the responsibility of the beneficiary;
- Purchase of equipment, furniture, and supplies that are strictly ancillary to the above-mentioned works;
- Supply of technical equipment, furniture and IT infrastructure;
- Consultancy services; surveys, analysis, master plans, etc.;
- Costs for visibility and visibility events of the funded activities;
- Costs for organising events, trainings, incl. renting premises and equipment, learning and training materials, coffee breaks, etc.

- Services for works supervision (including kolaudim);
- Bank fees.

Such costs are eligible if:

- they have occurred and invoiced within the period of grant contract implementation;
- being procured in line with the applicable procurement rules;
- as an exception, up to 20% of the budget for consultancy could be invoiced by associated partner(s), following direct award of a contract, if associated partner is specialized and experienced in delivering such service in the field of project implementation (ex. preparation of surveys, studies, etc.). Reference to at least two similar activities/services with outputs for the activity / cost that should be provided by the associated partner (link or hard copy) to prove the expertise.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- Salaries and other operational costs of the Municipalities or Beneficiary's partners;
- Contributions in kind;
- Expenditure incurred before the signature of the grant contract;
- Cost for preparing the Action;
- Debts and debt service charges (interest);
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Costs declared by the beneficiary and financed by another Action under another source of funding;
- Purchases of land or buildings;
- Rent of assets;
- Credit to third parties;
- VAT.

2.2 How to apply and the procedures to follow

2.2.1. Concept Note

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the concept note instructions in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex ACN). Applicants must apply in English and in Albanian.

Please note that in the concept note, lead applicants must only provide an estimate of the requested grant contribution. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.

The lead applicant may not replace a co-applicant or associated partner.

Only the concept note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains all relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.1.1. Where and how to send concept notes

All applicants should submit 1 (one) signed original application, and 2 (two) copies in A4 size, each separately bound. The concept note must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-ROM or USB sticks) in a single file. The electronic file must contain exactly the same concept note as the paper version enclosed. Both 3 hard copies and CD-ROM or USB stick shall be contained in a single sealed envelope.

The declaration by the lead applicant, duly signed by the legal representative of the municipality, must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

The envelope must bear the title of the call for proposals “SECOND CFP RDPA IV”, the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words ‘Not to be opened before the opening session’ and “Të mos hapet deri në afatin e përcaktuar”.

Municipalities must send their Concept Notes to the ADF. Concept Notes must be submitted by registered mail, or by hand-delivery. In case of hand delivery, a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer. Concept Notes sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected. The postal address of ADF as well as the working hours, are provided below.

Albanian Development Fund

Address: Rruga "Sami Frasheri", Nr 10 Tirane – Albania

Working hours: Monday – Thursday 08.00 – 17.00, Friday 08.00 – 14.00

2.2.1.2. Deadline for submission of concept notes

The deadline for the submission of Concept Notes is **20 August 2021** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip.

In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is before **14:00 local time** as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected automatically.

The Contracting Authority may reject any concept note sent in due time but received after the deadline due to postal delays. Thus, applicants are encouraged to preferably hand deliver their concept notes.

2.2.1.3. Further information about concept notes

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than **30 July 2021**, to the below address, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals ‘SECOND CFP RDPA IV’:

E-mail address: rdpa@rdpa.al

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority shall not provide individual clarifications to applicants on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, an Action or specific activities. Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the RDPA website: RDPA website: www.rdpa.al and ADF website www.albaniandf.org, as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the above-mentioned websites regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.2.2. Application

Applications (pre-selected only) must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the grant application form and budget annexed to these guidelines. Applicants must apply in Albanian. However, the ‘Executive Summary of the Action’ is to be provided in both Albanian and English.

Any error or major discrepancy in the application e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent, may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Mandated Body and the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the grant application prepared by filling in the published forms of the application and the budget, will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the Action. No additional annexes should be sent except those required.

2.2.2.1. Where and how to send applications

All applicants should submit 1 (one) signed original application, and 2 (two) copies in A4 size, each separately bound. The complete application must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-ROM or USB sticks) in a single file (i.e. the application must not be split into several different files), together with the file containing the budget and the required annexes. The electronic files must contain exactly the same application as the paper version enclosed. Both 3 hard copies and CD-ROM or USB stick shall be contained in a single sealed envelope.

The checklist (section 5 of the grant application form) and the declaration by the lead applicant, duly signed by the legal representative of the municipality, (section 6 of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

The envelope must bear the title of the call for proposals ““SECOND CFP RDPA IV”, the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words ‘Not to be opened before the opening session’ and “Të mos hapet deri në afatin e përcaktuar”.

Municipalities must send their applications to the ADF. Applications must be submitted by registered mail, or by hand-delivery. In case of hand delivery, a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer. Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected. The postal address of ADF as well as the working hours, are provided below.

Albanian Development Fund

Address: Rruga "Sami Frasheri", Nr 10 Tirane – Albania

Working hours: **Monday** – Thursday 08.00 – 17.00, Friday 08.00 – 14.00

Lead applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (section 5 of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.2.2. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is **18 October 2021** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip.

In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is before **16:00 local time** as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected automatically.

The Contracting Authority may reject any application sent in due time but received after the deadline due to postal delays. Thus, applicants are encouraged to preferably hand deliver their application.

2.2.2.3. Further information about applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than **29 September 2021**, to the below address, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals 'SECOND CFP RDPA IV':

E-mail address: rdpa@rdpa.al

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority shall not provide individual clarifications to applicants on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, an Action or specific activities. Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the RDPA website: RDPA website: www.rdpa.al and ADF website www.albaniandf.org, as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the above-mentioned websites regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.3 Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Mandated Body under the supervision of the Contracting Authority. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the concept note addresses all requirements as stated in the application form - concept note.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action. The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 100 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below.

No	RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION		Max. score
1.	The project contributes to the achievement of a specific objective of Grant Scheme on Regional Development and Cohesion (GS RDC)		5
	<i>The project fully contributes to the achievement of more than one specific objective of GSRDC</i>	5 points	
	<i>The project partially contributes to the achievement of a specific objective of GSRDC</i>	3 points	
	<i>The contribution to the achievement of a specific objective of GSRDC is vague/ not well described</i>	2 points	
	<i>No contribution to the achievement of a specific objective of GSRDC is demonstrated.</i>	0 points	
2.	The project is relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the micro region		5
	<i>The envisaged activities in terms of needs of the micro region are very well described and well justified: they are timely and appropriate</i>	5 points	
	<i>The envisaged activities in terms of needs of the micro region are described and partially justified</i>	3 points	
	<i>Insufficiently described and not well justified activities in terms of needs of the micro region</i>	1 points	
3.	The target groups and final beneficiaries are relevant to the project activities, clearly defined and quantified		5
	<i>Relevant, clearly defined and realistically quantified target groups and final beneficiaries</i>	5 points	

	<i>Relevant and clearly defined, but not realistically quantified target groups and final beneficiaries</i>	3 points	
	<i>Unclearly defined and/or not realistically quantified target groups and final beneficiaries (lack of relevant description and lack of quantification)</i>	1 points	
4.	The project complements ongoing or completed project(s) implemented in the micro region as part of national or local development programme		10
	The project complements ongoing project in the micro region	10 points	
	The project complements completed project in the micro region	7 points	
	It is a separate project - not part of a bigger project or connected to another project	3 point	
5.	The project contains particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices) and makes positive contribution to the horizontal principles: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women		5
	<i>The project contains value added elements and is coherent with all 3 horizontal principles</i>	5 points	
	<i>The project contains no value added but is coherent with 2 of the horizontal principles</i>	3 points	
	<i>The project is contains no value added and there is no coherence with the horizontal principles</i>	0 points	
6.	Regional impact and benefits of the project		5
	<i>The regional impact and benefits of the project refer to the micro region</i>	5 points	
	<i>The regional impact and benefits of the project refer tto the project partners only</i>	3 points	
	<i>Unclear micro regional impact</i>	1 point	
7.	Multiplier effect of the project		5
	<i>The project has clear and justified potential for further development</i>	5 points	
	<i>The project has no clear potential for further development, some ideas exist however</i>	2 points	
	<i>The project does not possess potential for further development</i>	0 points	
	SUBTOTAL		40
No	DESIGN OF THE ACTION		Max. score
8.	The project activities proposed are appropriate and the logic consistency objective-activity-result is kept		10
	<i>Full consistency between objective, activities & outputs. Proposed activities correspond directly to the needs</i>	10 points	
	<i>Well described consistency between objective, activities & outputs, but some details are missing</i>	7 points	
	<i>Not very well described consistency between objective, activities & outputs</i>	4 points	
	<i>Activities too theoretical and hard to estimate the achievement of project outputs</i>	1 point	
	<i>No consistency between activities and project outputs</i>	0 points	
9.	Project activities refer to eligible intervention area(s)		10
	Project activities refer to more than one eligible intervention area	10 points	
	Project activities refer to one eligible intervention area	5 points	
	Project activities refer to no eligible intervention area	0 points	
10.	The design reflects a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant partners		10
	The design reflects a robust analysis of the problems involved and the capacities of the relevant partners	10 points	
	The design reflects a weak analysis of the problems involved and the capacities of the relevant partners	5 points	
	There is no analysis of the problems involved and the capacities of the relevant partners	0 points	
11.	The activities are feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)		10

	The activities are feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe) and the results (output, outcome and impact) are realistic	10 points	
	The activities are feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe) but the results (output, outcome and impact) are not realistic	5 points	
	The activities are not feasible and/or consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe) and the results (output, outcome and impact) are not realistic	0 points	
	SUBTOTAL		40
No	PARTNERSHIP		Max. score
12.	The inclusion of co-applicants and associated partner for the implementation of the action is ensured		10
	The lead applicant applies with co-applicant and associated partner	10 points	
	The lead applicant applies with co-applicant only	7 points	
	The lead applicant applies with associated partner only	3 points	
	Lead applicant applies without partners	0 points	
13.	The inclusion of partners for the implementation of the action is elaborated		10
	The inclusion of partners for the implementation of the action is very well elaborated, providing detailed information on the role and function of the partners for the achievement of action's objective	10 points	
	The inclusion of partners for the implementation of the action is elaborated, however no detailed information on the role and function of the partners for the achievement of action's objective is provided	7 points	
	The inclusion of partners for the implementation of the action is not well elaborated, the information on the role and function of the partners for the achievement of action's objective is vague/unclear	4 points	
	No inclusion of partners for the implementation of the action	0 points	
	SUBTOTAL		20
	TOTAL		100

Only the concept notes with a score of at least 60 will be considered for pre-selection.

The number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to the amount of up 200% of the available budget for this call for proposals.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

STEP 2: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.
- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified below for grant application form-full application.

The full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget. They will be evaluated in accordance with the established evaluation grid presented below.

The evaluation criteria focus on the quality of the applications in terms of relevance of the Action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, expected impact, sustainability and efficiency.

No	RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION		Max. score
1.	<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation - section relevance of action</i>		Up to 40
	SUBTOTAL		Up to 40
No	EFFECTIVENESS AND FEASIBILITY OF THE ACTION AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY		Max. score
2.	Logical Framework includes credible baseline, targets and sources of verification		5
	Logical Framework includes credible baseline, targets and sources of verification, which will allow for adequate monitoring and evaluation of project implementation.	5 points	
	Logical Framework includes targets and sources of verification, but the baseline will be defined based on a baseline study foreseen in the project.	3 points	
	The baseline, targets and/or sources of verification are not clearly stated in the logical framework, which will not allow for adequate monitoring and evaluation of project implementation.	1 points	
3.	The action plan for implementing the action is clear and feasible and the timeline is realistic		5
	The action plan for implementing the action is clear and feasible and the timeline is realistic which will ensure achievement of foreseen outputs within project duration	5 points	
	The action plan for implementing the action is clear and feasible while the timeline is not so realistic which may have negative impact on achievement of foreseen outputs within project duration	3 points	
	The action plan for implementing the action is vague and the timeline is not realistic which will have negative impact on achievement of foreseen outputs within project duration	0 points	
4.	The procurement plan is realistic and related procurement documents (tender dossier, incl. bill of quantities for works; technical specification for supply and terms of reference for services		15
	<i>The procurement plan is realistic and all relevant procurement documents are fully elaborated that allow for procurement to be launch immediately after grant contract signature</i>	15 points	
	<i>The procurement plan is realistic and relevant procurement documents are fully elaborated that allow for procurement to be launch immediately after grant contract signature, though minor improvements are needed which could be addressed in the contracting phase</i>	12 points	
	<i>The procurement plan is realistic. Some of procurement documents need to be further elaborated so the procurement to be launch immediately after grant contract signature</i>	9 points	
	<i>The procurement plan is not realistic. Some of procurement documents need to be further elaborated so the procurement to be launch immediately after grant contract signature</i>	5 points	
	<i>The procurement plan is not realistic. Most of procurement documents need to be further elaborated so the procurement to be launch immediately after grant contract signature</i>	2 point	
5.	Communication and visibility activities		5
	<i>The project envisages communication and visibility activities/tools to wide audience (regional and local level)</i>	5 points	
	<i>The project envisages some communication and visibility activities/tools, but to restricted audience (local community)</i>	3 points	

	<i>The project does not envisage communication and visibility activities</i>	<i>0 points</i>	
6.	The project is co-financed by associated partner(s)²		5
	Yes	<i>5 points</i>	
	No	<i>0 points</i>	
7.	Sustainability of expected results/outputs after end of the project and capacity of beneficiary to implement it		5
	<i>The project's main results/ outputs are expected to provide significant and long-term contribution to solving the targeted challenges</i>	<i>5 points</i>	
	<i>The project's main results/ outputs are expected to have positive effect to solving the targeted challenges, but in short term</i>	<i>3 points</i>	
	<i>Some project activities are expected to have positive effect but sustainability remains unclear</i>	<i>2 points</i>	
	<i>The project's main results/ outputs have no potential for long-lasting sustainability</i>	<i>0 points</i>	
	SUBTOTAL		40
No	BUDGET AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ACTION		Max. score
8.	The proposed budget is directly connected and reflected in the project activities		8
	<i>All estimated costs fully correspond to the proposed activities and are necessary for the implementation of the project.</i>	<i>8 points</i>	
	<i>Project expenses exceed the expected benefits for the target area and the target groups. Some costs are not relevant to the activities proposed.</i>	<i>4 points</i>	
	<i>Costs envisaged are totally inconsistent with project activities.</i>	<i>0 points</i>	
9.	The costs are estimated based on real market prices		7
	<i>All costs are estimated based on market prices or official manuals.</i>	<i>7 points</i>	
	<i>Some estimated costs are not based on real market prices, thus revision or partial reductions of item prices will optimize cost effectiveness.</i>	<i>4 points</i>	
	<i>Most costs are not based on market prices. Budget needs full re-design in this aspect.</i>	<i>0 points</i>	
10.	The breakdown between the budget lines is in line with the type of intervention and rules for each budget line are respected		5
	<i>The breakdown between the budget lines is in line with the intervention logic and the specific rules for each budget line are respected</i>	<i>5 points</i>	
	<i>The breakdown between the budget lines and the specific rules for each budget line are partially respected</i>	<i>3 points</i>	
	<i>The breakdown between the budget lines and/or the specific rules for each budget line are not respected</i>	<i>1 point</i>	
	SUBTOTAL		20
	TOTAL		100

Provisional selection

² Co-financing should be understood additional funds provided by the associated partner, based on formal partnership agreement with the lead and co-applicant by which the associated partner to provide additional funds beyond the grant amount (that is not VAT costs covered by the municipal authorities) to implement the project.

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached.

In case of applications with the same score, priority in the list will be given to applications having scored higher under section 2 of the Evaluation Grid as per above, and in case of equal score in section 2, having scored higher in section 3 of the Evaluation Grid as per above; in case of equal scores in sections 2 and 3, priority will be given to score assigned in section 1 then.

In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

2.4 Notification of the Contracting Authority's decision

2.4.1 Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint.

The decision shall also include the list of supporting documents to be additionally provided for the purpose of grant contract signature, and the deadline to provide these documents. Failure to submit the required supporting documents by the deadline established by the Contracting Authority may lead to reject the application.

2.4.2 Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications

The following supporting documents are to be provided for provisionally selected proposals as a condition to go ahead with grant contract preparation:

- The decision of the Municipal Council of lead applicant and co-applicant, if any, to implement the Project for which the RDPA grant is awarded, with mandate to the Mayor to sign the grant contract;
- For investment projects, a confirmation of the ownership on the immovable property or other documentary evidence proving the legal right to use the relevant public property;

Lead applicants are strongly recommended to start the preparation of supporting documents right after the submission of their application, so that these documents be already available at the date of the award notification.

Supporting documents must be supplied in the form of originals, or certified photocopies/scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

If the above-mentioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

2.5 Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Launch and publication of the Call for Proposals	15 July 2021	
2. Info sessions in the regions	26 July 2021 27 July 2021 28 July 2021 29 July 2021	26 July 2021 – Municipalities under the South-eastern Region of Korca (18 Municipalities) 27 July 2021 – Municipalities under the Northern Region of Shkodra (11 Municipalities)(TBC) 28 July 2021 - Municipalities under the Central Region of Tirana (12 Municipalities)(TBC) 29 July 2021 - 9 July 2021 - Municipalities under the Southwestern Region of Vlore (20 Municipalities)
3. Follow-up online info-sessions with the Regional Development Units	30 July 2021	Online sessions with Municipalities per each development region.
4. Evaluation of concept notes by the Delegated Body, ADF	23 August – 03 September 2021	
5. Notification of pre-selected applicants to deliver full application	06 -16 September 2021	
6. Guidance to applicants on project proposals preparation	23,24,27,28 September	Workshops for the pre-selected applicants
7. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	30 July 2021 – for Concept notes 29 September 2021 – for full applications	Mails will be received till 23.59
8. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	2 August 2021- for the concept notes 1 October 2021- for full applications	

9. Deadline for submission of applications	20 August 2021 – for the concept notes	14.00
	18 October 2021 – for full applications	16.00
10. Evaluation of the full application form	19 October – 3 November 2021	
11. Notification of grant award decision (including the period of complaint)	4-26 November 2021	
12. Contracting Procedure	22 November – 3 December 2021	
13. Contract signature	6 -15 December 2021	

All times are in the time zone of Albania.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for points 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9) and may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the www.rdpa.al web site and ADF website www.albaniandf.org.

2.6 Grant contract signature

Signature of the grant contract is envisaged within maximum 10 calendar days from the date of notification of the award notification. Therefore, after receiving and verifying the supporting documents, the Contracting Authority shall prepare the grant contract and send it to the selected applicant. The selected applicant shall sign the contract and return it to the Contracting Authority, by the established deadline.

2.7 Conditions for implementation after the Contracting Authority's decision to award a grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary (ies) will be offered a non-negotiable grant contract. The application submitted by the applicant, including any modifications required by the Evaluation Committee, shall become an annex to the grant contract.

Where implementation of the Action requires the beneficiary (ies) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with the applicable legislation of Albania.

3 LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Detailed list of eligible micro regions as per “100 villages” programme

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex ACN: Grant Application Form - Concept Note (Word format)

Annex A: Grant Application Form - Full Application (Word format)
– this will become Annex I to the Grant Contract together with Logical Framework

Annex A1: Logical Framework (Word format)

Annex B: Budget (Excel format) – this will become Annex II to the Grant Contract

Annex C: Template of Project Partnership Agreement

Annex D: Template of Grant Contract