

CALL FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

Developing Nature-Based Tourism Value Chains in the Wider Prespa Area

Overview

The Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) is a foundation established under German Law, supporting Protected Areas (PAs) and Environmental Actors (EAs) in the Wider Prespa Area (WPA) in North Macedonia, Greece and Albania, with the mission to “provide long term financing for the conservation and sustainable management of biological diversity, natural processes and ecosystem services in Prespa and its wider area for the benefit of nature and people in the region.” PONT implements its mission through two main grant programmes: (1) co-financing operational costs of PAs, and (2) co-financing the work of EAs. The EAs include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), municipalities, and scientific or academic institutions, but no private persons or businesses. The WPA includes the entire Prespa basin, including the entire territory of Galicica and Pelister national parks. For more information about PONT, its mission, approach and programme please visit: www.pont.org.

In 2017, in close cooperation with PAs, EAs and national authorities responsible for managing PAs, PONT has identified a set of 40 priority actions to be addressed by the EAs over the period from 2018 to 2027, that complement the actions included in the Management Plans for the PAs and together constitute the Strategic Framework that informs PONT’s financing decisions¹. The priorities are grouped into five Focus Areas: 1) capacity development; 2) improved PA & forest management; 3) sustainable use of PAs (incl. tourism/recreation; traditional grazing; Non-Timber Forest Products); 4) conservation of species; and 5) conservation of habitats & landscapes. The actions under the last four Focus Areas are classified as related to either (1) applied research, studies and experimentation directly linked to real measures; or (2) real measures/implementation of conservation actions.

PONT has identified two topics among the funding priorities that are not being adequately addressed by its current grants or actions supported by other donors: Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and Sustainable Nature-Based Tourism. This call for grant proposals addresses the latter one.

On behalf of PONT, the Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation conducted a study to assess the opportunities and challenges concerning sustainable tourism in the Wider Prespa Area in Albania and North Macedonia. The Report of the study² reviews the initiatives and actions in the region concerning sustainable tourism over the past few decades, focusing on processes and issues affecting their success, as well as current policy actions, plans and strategies. It also sets out recommendations on the main areas of intervention and on how to maximise the success of future efforts, with a focus on the role EAs can play. The study was conducted through consultation with a wide array of stakeholders and finalized after a transboundary workshop that was held in Stenye on 20 June 2019.

¹ PONT Funding Priorities are available at: <http://pont.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2017-PONT-Funding-Priorities.pdf>

² The study is available at: <http://www.pont.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Assessment-of-Challenges-and-Opportunities-Related-to-Nature-Based-Tourism-in-the-WPA.pdf>

Among other, the Report recommends building capacity among local communities and entrepreneurs to deliver tourism services and products in partnership with protected area authorities and the private sector to improve visitor experience in the WPA and increase the chances of commercial success.

Purpose

The purpose of this call is to support tourism businesses operating in the WPA in developing or re-modelling the value chains of specific, economically viable products. The proposals need to be consistent with the relevant protected area management plans and ensure viable, long-term economic operations that facilitate meaningful and high-quality visitor experience and create economic opportunities for local communities and enterprises.

The call supports proposals aiming at developing specific nature-based tourism products, that comprise a combination of individual components provided by different suppliers or producers, including local communities/entrepreneurs, and piloting their marketing and distribution. Proposals that foster partnerships between the businesses, protected area authorities, and local communities and support the transfer of tourism business skills among the partners will have a preference. PONT encourages proposals that create best practices or provide showcases from which other businesses in the destination can learn.

The proposals need to build upon previous successful interventions and enable the applicants to improve their contribution to biodiversity-conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in selected areas of Albania and North Macedonia for the benefit of nature and people in the region.

For the purpose of this call, nature-based tourism stands for all forms of tourism that use natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form – including species, habitat, landscape, scenery and fresh-water features. Adventure tourism is a form of nature-based tourism that incorporates an element of risk, higher levels of physical exertion and often the need for specialised skills. Ecotourism is a subset of nature-based tourism, including all forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourist is to observe and appreciate nature in ways that contribute to the conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage of the area.

Eligible applicants

This Call is opened to EAs that are active in the Wider Prespa Area in Albania, North Macedonia or in both countries and have interest in nature-based tourism, including recreation. Only EAs that are based in or have an antenna office in the Focus Area and/or with a main purpose to strengthen locally based organizations (e.g. local associations on tourism, recreation, fishery, medicinal plants, etc.) are eligible to submit grant proposals.

The Environmental Actor is a legally established and tax registered organization (for at least the last 3 years) and disposes of basic staff, infrastructure, financial systems and a basic financial budget. PONT expects from its potential grantees that they follow a systematic procedure and maintain a policy on managing the organizations' finances and human resources as this is a strong indicator of a well-managed organization. PONT prefers to render funding support to organizations which have systematic and transparent policies in place for effective financial and human resource management

such as operational or administrative manuals on conducting day-to-day financial transactions, code of conducts, no conflict of interest, procedures manual, employee handbook, etc.

Eligible activities

The following activities are eligible under this Call:

- training and knowledge sharing;
- awareness raising;
- promoting relevant locally-based organizations and entrepreneurs;
- policy development and development and/or strengthening of governance arrangements;
- applied research, studies and piloting concerning the development of nature-based tourism value chains.

The proposed activities may involve transboundary cooperation, where necessary.

How it works

Grants under this Call are available for organisations meeting the following conditions:

- up to a maximum of € 50.000 for applications submitted by several partners together, with one organisation being the lead partner. The lead partner must be an eligible Environmental Actor, as defined above;
- up to a maximum of € 25.000 for applications submitted by one individual organisation (an eligible Environmental Actor, as defined above).

The overall budget available for this Call is € 100.000.

After the submission deadline (20 September 2019), PONT will review the concept note applications and decide on the selected proposal(s) by 27 September 2019. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to submit a full grant application using the PONT Grants Manual and PONT application templates.

A minimum of 25% of co-financing/matching funds (in cash) is required. PONT will review the full applications and sign a grant agreement with the winning applicants.

Under the Grant Agreement the funds will be transferred in at least two disbursements to the applicant to implement the activities as outlined in the full grant application. The work must be completed within a maximum 16 month-period from the date of the contract signature, including the submission of the final report. Only one proposal per organisation may be submitted, either as a partner or a sole applicant.

The detailed budget in the full application may include:

- staff time, travel, meetings, training;
- consultant fees;
- small equipment (<20.000 per item);
- a maximum of 10% management fees/overheads of the overall budget (within the limit of the total € 25.000 / € 50.000).

Application for a Grant

To apply for a grant under this Call please complete the **application form** available [here](#).

Interested applicants are to direct any queries and questions regarding the content or process of this Call to the PONT Grants Coordinator, Oliver Avramoski at oavramoski@pont.org. No other PONT personnel are to be contacted in relation to this Call unless directed to do so by the PONT Grants Coordinator.

Proposers may submit their queries relating to this Call no later than 26 August 2019. Any queries should clearly reference any appropriate paragraph in this Call and, to the extent possible, should be aggregated rather than sent individually. As far as is reasonably possible, PONT will respond to all questions submitted before 2 September 2019.

Deadline for Submission of Application

Interested applicants should submit their concept note proposals by no later than 20 September 2019 at 14:00. Applications are to be sent to Oliver Avramoski by email (oavramoski@pont.org).