CALL FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

PONT Environmental Actors Programme

Submission of Concept Notes by Non-Governmental Organizations involved in conserving the PONT Focus Region in North-Western Greece with a focus on enhancing conservation connectivity along the ecological corridors connecting protected areas

Overview

The Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) is a foundation established under the German Law, supporting Protected Areas and Environmental Actors in the PONT Focus Region in Albania, Greece, and North Macedonia, with the mission of "Conserving nature for a sustainable future through long-term partnerships and financing". PONT pursues its mission through two main grant programmes: (1) co-financing operational costs of Protected Areas; and (2) co-financing the work of Environmental Actors. The latter include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), municipalities, scientific and academic institutions involved in nature conservation in the PONT Focus Region. The goals, objectives, and co-financing priorities for both Protected Areas and Environmental Actors are set out in the PONT Strategic Framework. For more information, please visit us at: www.pont.org.

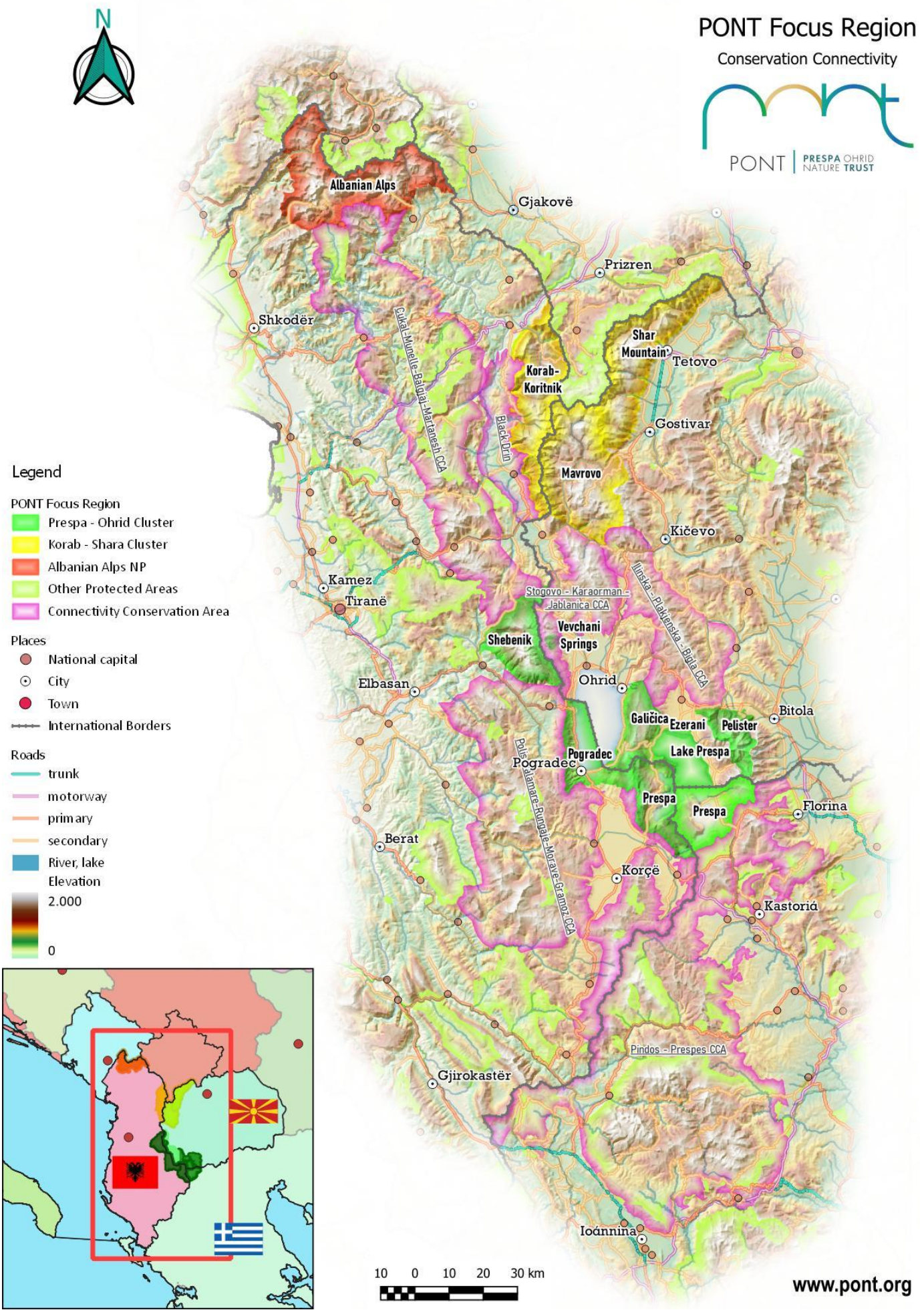
PONT focuses on financing conservation actions in eligible protected areas in the PONT Focus Region in Albania, Greece, and North Macedonia (see the figure on page 2). Its role centres on financing, monitoring and verification of grants while entrusting the implementation to the grantees. This implies that grantees are capable organisations fulfilling minimum criteria and standards that ensure effective and efficient implementation of conservation actions and management of funds.

To ensure synergies and complementarity of its two programmes, PONT continuously promotes and facilitates formal and informal partnerships between Protected Area Management Authorities and Environmental Actors. PONT also cooperates with governments, local authorities, as well as projects and other donors in the PONT Focus Region to identify opportunities for matching funds and coordinate actions. While PONT's mission is to provide sustainable long-term financial flows for conservation, grantees are expected to become less dependent from PONT over time.

PONT's Environmental Actors programme aims at complementing and supporting the conservation work carried out by the Protected Area Management Authorities, as well as at facilitating stakeholder and community involvement in protected area governance and management.

Grants to Environmental Actors are primarily intended for qualified NGOs with a local presence in the PONT Focus Region, as well as with a mission and strategy that concerns nature conservation, including such activities as promoting citizen participation in conservation, developing sustainable society and local communities.

Nationally based NGOs may be supported in implementing conservation actions and other nature-based sustainable development actions covering more protected areas and along the ecological corridors connecting the protected areas in the PONT Focus Region.


PONT Focus Region
Conservation Connectivity
PONT | PRESPA OHRID NATURE TRUST
N
Albanian Alps
Gjakovë
Prizren
Shkodër
Cukal-Munele-Balgjaj-Martanesh CCA
Shar Mountain
Tetovo
Korab-Koritnik
Black Drin
Gostivar
Mavrovo
Kičevo
Kamez
Tiranë
Stogovo - Karaorman - Jablanica CCA
Ilinska - Plakenska - Bigla CCA
Shebenik
Vevchani Springs
Ohrid
Elbasan
Galičica
Ezerani
Pelister
Bitola
Lake Prespa
Pogradec
Pogradec
Prespa
Prespa
Florina
Berat
Korçë
Kastoriá
Polis-Adamaz-Rungaje-Morave-Gramoz CCA
Pindos - Prespes CCA
Gjirokastër
Ioánnina
Legend
PONT Focus Region
Prespa - Ohrid Cluster
Korab - Shara Cluster
Albanian Alps NP
Other Protected Areas
Connectivity Conservation Area
Places
National capital
City
Town
International Borders
Roads
trunk
motorway
primary
secondary
River, lake
Elevation
2.000
0
10 0 10 20 30 km
www.pont.org

Environmental Actors are screened on their thematic expertise and eligibility for PONT co-financing. Eligible Environmental Actors are invited by PONT to apply through open or closed Calls for Grant Proposals. Open Calls are advertised on the PONT website and its social media channels. PONT uses its Strategic Framework (Crosscutting issues and pillar 2 of the PONT Strategic Framework) for Environmental Actors to design and select the topics for each Call including specific requirements and eligibility criteria. Topics are chosen where a need or gap is identified with the respective Protected Area Management Authorities or for topics covering more protected areas and along the ecological corridors.

PONT recognises that environmental and social sustainability are interconnected and need to be mainstreamed into all of PONT supported activities. PONT recently developed an Environmental and Social Management System to ensure that all activities implemented by PONT grantees employ appropriate measures to avoid or minimise negative environmental and social impacts while enhancing positive impacts, in accordance with international good practice standards. PONT will support the grantees in developing capacity to align their operations and activities with relevant international Environmental and Social Standards and best practice.

Scope of the call

The grants under this Call for Grant Proposals are intended for eligible NGOs active in North-Western Greece with a strategy in conservation, developing society, improving communities, and promoting citizen participation in conservation. This Call aims at co-financing conservation actions enhancing conservation connectivity along the ecological corridors connecting protected areas in the PONT Focus Region.

The thematic scope of this Call is defined by the following theme:

1. Connectivity Conservation in the PONT Focus Region in Greece

The geographical scope of this call is limited to the Priority Connectivity Conservation Area:

1. The Pindos-Prespes Connectivity Conservation Area within the PONT Focus Region

A description of the Pindos-Prespes Connectivity Conservation Area, the ecological corridors therein and the priority areas of intervention to be supported by PONT are provided in this report.

Eligible applicants

Concept Notes under this Call may be submitted by an individual organization or a partnership/group of organizations with the applicant (lead partner) being an eligible local or national NGO active in North-Western Greece. For the purposes of this Call the applicant must be a legally established and tax registered non-for-profit organization for at least the last 3 years in Greece. The applicant (lead partner) should be a new beneficiary for PONT meaning that the applicant (lead partner) cannot currently have an ongoing grant with PONT.

Applicant organizations must be composed of basic staff, infrastructure, financial systems, and a basic budget. Applicants must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions. Other NGOs, cooperatives, social enterprises, individuals, community groups, associations, protected area management

authorities, municipalities, research institutes or businesses must work with eligible applicants to develop applications.

Eligible activities

Call Theme: **Connectivity Conservation in the PONT Focus Region**. The eligible actions must focus along ecological corridors connecting the protected areas / *Natura 2000* sites within the Pindos-Prespes Connectivity Conservation Area (PP-CCA) of North-Western Greece in the PONT Focus Region. The applications must aim at restoring or maintaining ecological connectivity for any one or a combination of the following purposes:

1. *Movement of individuals*: to allow for the movement of selected species between the existing protected areas, including those eligible for PONT financing.
2. *Genetic exchange*: To allow for the movement of selected flagships species between population segments that have been separated by a highway; dam and/or associated development.
3. *Migration*: To facilitate the annual passage of selected flagship species for breeding.
4. *Maintenance/restoration processes*: to restore ecological functions in identified connectivity bottlenecks within the PP-CCA of North-Western Greece.
5. *Climate change adaptation*: to facilitate range shifts of species to adjacent areas in the landscape through restoring riparian and/or other corridors in the PP-CCA of North-Western Greece.

The applications should aim at establishing effective, participatory governance structures for the selected ecological corridors(s) and include any of the following recommended actions or the ones highlighted in chapter 13 of the "Description of the Connectivity Conservation Area (CCA) in North-Western Greece: a PONT study":

- Launch and manage a connectivity conservation initiative for a selected ecological corridor or a group of closely related ecological corridors based on a collaborative partnership.
- Assist the connectivity partnership in adopting a vision and mission statements, in line with the connectivity (management) objective for the ecological corridor(s).
- Assist the connectivity partnership in defining the boundaries of the ecological corridor(s), establish an effective, collaborative governance body, and develop a management plan for the selected corridor(s).
- Raise awareness among civil society and stakeholders of the need and purpose of governance and management of ecological corridors.
- Assist local communities and stakeholders to organise themselves and provide information and technical support to participate in decision-making regarding the selected ecological corridor(s).
- Foster the active engagement of stakeholders to broaden social support for the selected ecological corridor(s) and thus improve their management.

- Support and facilitate the active participation of women, youth, vulnerable people (elderly, disabled etc.), and local communities in governance and management of the selected ecological corridor(s).
- Promote the establishment of processes and mechanisms to get feedback and identify, hear, and resolve complaints and disputes related to the governance or management of the ecological corridor(s).

Applications submitted under this Call should consider the following:

Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to submit concept notes which harmonize with existing national or regional initiatives.

Applied research, with the involvement of protected area staff where relevant, related to the priority actions listed above is supported, but fundamental research is not.

Grants cannot be used for:

- the purchase of land, involuntary resettlement of people, or activities that negatively affect physical cultural resources, including those important to local communities.
- activities adversely affecting local communities or where these communities have not provided their broad support to the grant proposal.
- removal or alteration of any physical cultural property (includes sites having archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious, or unique natural values).

Application for a Grant

Eligible applicants can submit Concept Notes as an individual organization or in consortium with other Environmental Actors serving as implementing partners. Partnering of Environmental Actors is preferred, and the PONT evaluation panel will give additional points to applications submitted by two or more Environmental Actors. Implementing partners may be based nationally in either Greece, North Macedonia or Albania or in any other part of the PONT Focus Region. In cases where the lead applicant is a national NGO, the involvement of locally based NGOs as implementing partners is highly encouraged. Both the applicant and implementing partner may be involved in one proposal only. The application should clearly state the role of the implementing partner(s).

The timeframe for implementation of the grant must be between 18 and 24 months, with 15 June 2023 being the earliest starting date.

The total budget of each grant may be from €50,000 up to a maximum of €150,000. **A minimum of 25% of co-financing/matching funds from non-PONT sources by the applicant and/or its implementing partners is required.** The budget of the proposal may not exceed 50% of the annual budget of the applicant in 2021 or 2022. For applications submitted by a partnership, the combined annual budget of all partners in 2022 should be at least twice as much as that of the proposal.

For all interested applicants an online open session will be organized which will take place on the Microsoft Teams platform on 3 March 2023 in the period from 10:00-12:00 CET (11.00-13.00 Greek time). This open session is devoted to explaining the requirements under this Call and answering questions regarding the concept note preparation. The participants in the Open session need to register by 1 March 2023 by sending an email to PONT, info@pont.org, with

information on the person(s) to participate (name and surname), position/title and the organization they represent.

In addition, applicants may submit their queries relating to this Call to PONT at info@pont.org, no later than 9 March 2023. 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 13 March 2022.

Deadline for Submission of Application

Interested applicants should submit their Concept Note proposals by no later than **17 March 2023** at 14:00 CET. Applications are to be sent to PONT at info@pont.org.

To apply for a grant under this Call please complete the **application form** in English available here.

Review Process and Next Steps

The concept note review process will take approximately 14 days from the deadline date. The review committee will select the strongest concept notes which meet the eligibility criteria, as described above. All applicants will receive a response following the review of their grant proposal.

The applicants of the concept notes that have been accepted will proceed to the second stage and elaborate their full grant application, in English, with a more detailed budget and log-frame and submit a full proposal by **27 April 2023**. The full grant application would include a detailed budget form that include:

- staff time
- cost related to travel, meetings, training
- consultant fees
- purchase of small equipment (<20.000 EUR per item)
- a maximum of 10% management fees/overheads of the overall budget

The approved full applications will be awarded a grant upon signing a Grant Agreement, in English. The grantee must then establish a separate bank account to which the contribution from PONT will be paid. The grant will be paid in several instalments, with the last one amounting to 10% of the PONT co-financing.

COVID 19

All applications should take into account epidemiological measures instituted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please consider the potential spread of new virus strains, which could lead to new and stricter measures.