



Operational Programme 'Crete and the Aegean Islands'

Programme under the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment objectives co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

On 5 November 2007, the European Commission approved an Operational Programme for Greece for the period 2007-13. The Operational Programme "Crete and the Aegean Islands" involves Community support for 3 NUTS II regions of the Greek Islands: Crete, the North Aegean islands, and the South Aegean islands.

The Operational Programme falls within the framework laid out for the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment objectives and has a total budget of around € 1 194 billion. Community assistance through the ERDF amounts to some € 871 billion, which represents approximately 4.35% of the total EU money invested in Greece under the Cohesion Policy for 2007-13.

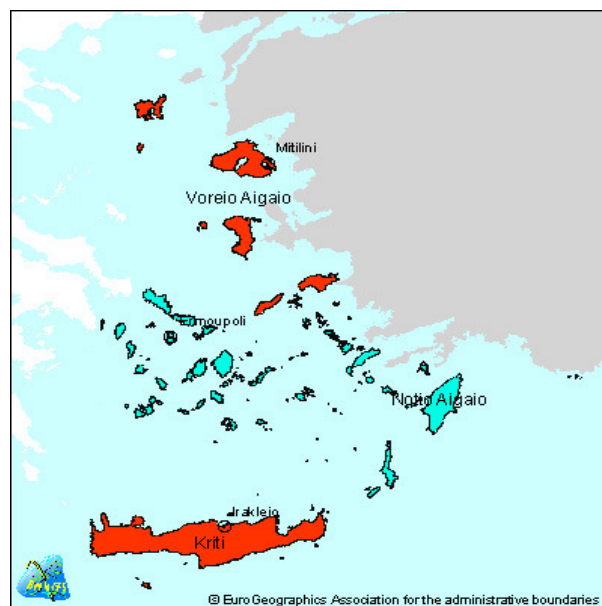
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1. Purpose and aim of the programme

The three regions covered by the Operational Programme have a rich environment, the potential to generate income from high-quality tourism, important international infrastructure connections (particularly for sea transport), diversified tourist assets as well as some distinguished research centres and universities. Apart from the South Aegean region, however, regional GDP per capita and employment rates are below the national average.

The major financial public investment efforts undertaken in 2007-13 are aiming to:

- diversify the economic base of the tourism sector into higher-quality market segments and innovative approaches;
- provide enhanced infrastructures to improve accessibility;
- promote sustainable development through increased emphasis on the environmental dimension of all actions;
- provide environmental infrastructures, nature protection and the proper management of natural resources;
- utilise the natural and cultural heritage within the context of sustainable growth;
- promote digital convergence and entrepreneurship;
- combat intraregional disparities, notably in the South Aegean region.



2. Expected impact of the investments

The programme's various actions will ensure the creation of approximately 900 new jobs. Some 375 000 inhabitants will be connected to water-supply systems and 150 000 inhabitants to waste-water treatment systems. It will also improve public transport for some 54 000 inhabitants and ensure the construction of 250 km of roads. Approximately 100 000 pupils and students will benefit from entirely new or modernised education infrastructures.

3. Priorities

The Operational Programme is structured along three thematic objectives: accessible infrastructures and services, sustainable development and quality of life, and digital convergence and entrepreneurship. Under each objective, three sets of thematic priorities are designed for each of the three regions covered by the programme. A fourth priority concerns the smaller islands of the South Aegean region. Another priority contains the budget for technical assistance in

order to implement the thematic objectives in each of the three regions.

The Operational Programme "Crete and the Aegean Islands" is structured along the following priorities:

Priority 1: accessible infrastructures and services in the Crete region [approximately 18.1% of total funding]

The main objective is the modernisation of transport infrastructures and services in the region.

Priority 2: accessible infrastructures and services in the North Aegean region [approximately 11.8 % of total funding]

The priority aims to improve interconnections between the islands of the region and island connections with the mainland. Improvements to transport conditions on the islands will secure better links to economic and administrative centres and to the main ports and airports.

Priority 3: accessible infrastructures and services in the South Aegean region [approximately 2.6% of total funding]

The main objectives are to improve the accessibility of the region through interventions involving ports, airports, local roads and public transport as well as to provide the region's islands with an infrastructure that provides secure energy.

Priority 4: digital convergence and entrepreneurship in the Crete region [approximately 3.2% of total funding]

The main objective is to reinforce private investment and promote innovation and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Priority 5: digital convergence and entrepreneurship in the North Aegean region [approximately 2.6% of total funding]

The main objective is to broaden and modernise the productive base of the local economy.

Priority 6: digital convergence and entrepreneurship in the South Aegean region [approximately 4.5% of total funding]

This priority aims to improve the conditions for private investment and promote the use of ICT throughout the island's economy, for example in the tourism sector.

Priority 7: sustainable development and quality of life in the Crete region [approximately 26.8% of total funding]

Specific objectives under this priority axis include:

- modernisation of education, health and social infrastructures;
- promotion of a sustainable management of environmental resources;
- valorisation of the cultural heritage of the island.

Priority 8: sustainable development and quality of life in the North Aegean region [approximately 20.3% of total funding]

The main objectives are to protect the natural environment (one of main assets for tourism) and improve education, health and social infrastructures.

Priority 9: sustainable development and quality of life in the South Aegean region [approximately 5.6% of total funding]

The main objectives under this priority are to ensure a high level of protection for the environment, which is key to the development of the tourist sector, and also to improve social cohesion by providing modern education, health and social infrastructures.

Priority 10: regional cohesion and partnership in the South Aegean region [approximately 3.1% of total funding]

The main objective is to tackle intraregional disparities between the region's more developed islands and its more isolated and smaller islands.

Priority 11: technical assistance in the Crete and North Aegean regions [approximately 1.2% of total funding]

This priority will focus on supporting the programme beneficiaries and services involved in the implementation of co-funded actions in the Crete and North Aegean regions.

Priority 12: technical assistance in the South Aegean region [approximately 0.3% of total funding]

This priority will focus on supporting the programme beneficiaries and services involved in the implementation of co-funded actions in the South Aegean region.

4. Managing Authority

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Financial and Technical information

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Intervention Type : Operational Program

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Number of decision : C/2007/5439

Final approval date : 2007-11-05

Breakdown of finances by priority axis

Priority Axis	EU Contribution	National Public Contribution	Total Public Contribution
Accessible infrastructures and services in the Crete region	157 500 000	37 500 000	195 000 000
Accessible infrastructures and services in the North Aegean region	102 500 000	18 100 000	120 600 000
Accessible infrastructures and services in the South Aegean region	22 600 000	22 503 325	45 103 325
Digital convergence and entrepreneurship in the Crete region	27 750 000	7 250 000	35 000 000
Digital convergence and entrepreneurship in the North Aegean region	22 500 000	6 080 952	28 580 952
Digital convergence and entrepreneurship in the South Aegean region	39 300 000	37 656 380	76 956 380
Sustainable development and quality of life in the Crete region	233 250 000	59 750 000	293 000 000
Sustainable development and quality of life in the North Aegean region	177 000 000	51 319 048	228 319 048
Sustainable development and quality of life in the South Aegean region	48 700 000	48 491 665	97 191 665
Regional cohesion and partnership in the South Aegean region	27 400 000	27 282 790	54 682 790
Technical assistance in the Crete and North Aegean regions	10 500 000	3 000 000	13 500 000
Technical assistance in the South Aegean region	2 300 178	3 765 840	6 066 018
Total	871 300 178	322 700 000	1 194 000 178