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GUIDE
TO EU FUNDING
2023 EDITION



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TO EU FUNDING
2023 EDITION**

EDITOR

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ACRONYMS AND PROGRAMMES

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
CAP	Common agricultural policy
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility (for transport infrastructure)
CF	Cohesion Fund
CFP	Common fisheries policy
COSME	Europe's programme for small and medium-sized enterprises
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EaSI	EU programme for employment and social innovation
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECHO	EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EEEF	European Energy Efficiency Fund
EEPR	European Commission's European energy programme for recovery
EFSI	European Fund for Strategic Investments
EGF	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EIAH	European Investment Advisory Hub
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EIP-AGRI	European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
ELENA	European local energy assistance
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EMN	European Migration Network
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
Erasmus+	EU programme for education, training, youth and sport

ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ESIF	European structural and investment funds
ESPON	European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion
ETC	European territorial cooperation
EURES	European Jobs Network
EUSAIR	EU strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region
EUSALP	EU strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSBSR	EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
EUSDR	EU strategy for the Danube region
EUSF	EU Solidarity Fund
EVS	European Voluntary Service
FEAD	Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived
FPI	Foreign Policy Instruments
GMES	Global Monitoring for Environment and Security
GNI	Gross National Income
H2020	European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INEA	Innovation and Networks Executive Agency
INTPA	European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPARD	Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
JASPERS	Joint assistance to support projects in European regions
JESSICA	Joint European support for sustainable investment in city areas
JRC	European Commission's Joint Research Centre

LEADER	'Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale'
LIFE+	EU's Financial Instrument for the Environment
MFFR	Multiannual Financial Framework Regulation
NEET	Young person not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PROGRESS	EU programme for employment and social policies
R&I	Research and innovation
REACT EU	Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe
RDP	Rural Development Programmes
REA	Research Executive Agency
RFCS	Research Fund for Coal and Steel
RTP	Research and Training Programme
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TEN-E	Trans-European Energy Network
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
URBACT	EU programme for integrated urban development
VCS	Voluntary Coupled Support (in farming)
VET	Vocational Education and Training
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been put together to serve as a source of information for regional and local authorities, NGOs, businesses, professionals and citizens on how to access funding for their projects from a number of EU funds. It covers financing under the EU's 2021-2027 budget (multiannual financial framework) as well as the Next Generation EU temporary instrument set up to stimulate the EU's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The funds are listed in a simple way and are accompanied by short descriptions highlighting the opportunities they offer.

To facilitate research, the authors have split up the main funding themes into subsections and provided hyperlinks to ensure easier access to the sources of funding information.

Depending on the nature, scope and priorities of the project for which funding is sought, EU funds can be explored for the funding opportunities they may offer. As multiple calls for funding are published on a regular basis, it is important to check for such opportunities often and to keep an eye on the national and EU sites that provide relevant information.

The guide presents essential information on EU funding sources, with the ambition to help potential

fundraisers map out their course of action as precisely as possible, based on this information. Fundraisers need to be aware that applying for EU funding requires careful planning and good timing. Advice from specialised staff may also be helpful for some applicants. Each section of the guide features a non-exhaustive list of the key potential beneficiaries.

We hope that this guide will give you an introduction to EU funding opportunities, from which you could then in turn apply to secure support for projects in your work or community.



EU REGIONAL POLICY: EU-FUNDED PROJECTS IN ALL EU REGIONS



European Union (EU) cohesion policy targets all EU regions and cities to support job creation, business competitiveness, economic growth and sustainable development, and to improve citizens' quality of life.

It is delivered through the following funds:

- the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#), which invests in the social and economic development of all EU regions and cities;
- the [Cohesion Fund \(CF\)](#), which invests in environment and transport in the less prosperous EU countries;
- the [European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#), which supports jobs and creates a fair and socially inclusive society in EU countries;
- the [Just Transition Fund \(JTF\)](#), which supports the regions most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality;
- the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe ([REACT-EU](#)), which addresses the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the economic situation of EU regions.

Cohesion policy covers **every region** in the EU. However, most of the funds are targeted where they are most needed: at regions with per capita gross domestic product (GDP) under 75 % of the EU average. ERDF and ESF+ funding is allocated to three categories of regions (less developed, more developed, in transition). Some countries benefit from the Cohesion Fund, some regions with specific needs receive dedicated funding (for instance, outermost regions and regions – such as cross-border areas, mountains, islands and sparsely populated areas – that face severe and permanent geographical or demographic challenges). All EU countries can benefit from the Just Transition Fund, but its funding is primarily destined for the regions that are most strongly affected by the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner forms of energy.

For the 2021-2027 period, EU cohesion policy set a list of five policy objectives supporting growth:

1. A more competitive and smarter Europe;
2. A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy;
3. A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility;
4. A more social and inclusive Europe;
5. Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories.

Funds' priorities:

The European Regional Development Fund supports investments under all five policy objectives (POs), but Policy Objectives 1 and 2 are the main priorities.

Policy Objective 4 is the main priority of the European Social Fund+.

The Cohesion Fund supports policy objectives 2 and 3.

The Just Transition Fund provides support under dedicated specific objectives.

Potential beneficiaries:

- local, regional and national authorities and administrative bodies;
- social, cultural and educational institutions;
- workers' and employers' organisations, as well as organisations providing training, support for workers, labour market support;
- NGOs and charities;

- public administrations and municipal institutions;
- companies, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including micro-enterprises and social economy enterprises and associations.

To obtain further information, potential beneficiaries should contact the national and regional [managing authority](#) responsible for coordinating EU funds in their country/region. Beneficiaries may vary according to the priority strands of each project and the major priorities set by the individual Member States.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The [ERDF](#) contributes to reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions within the EU. Particular attention is paid to the structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind and to the conversion of declining industrial regions, including by promoting sustainable development and addressing environmental challenges.

Over the 2021-2027 period, the fund will contribute to the following:

Making a more competitive and smarter Europe, through innovation and support to small and medium-sized businesses, as well as digitalisation and digital connectivity:

- developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies;
- reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities;
- enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments;
- developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship;
- enhancing digital connectivity.

Creating a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a resilient Europe with a net zero carbon economy, by promoting a clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility:

- promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein;
- developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E);
- promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches;
- promoting access to water and sustainable water management;
- promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy;
- enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution;
- promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources;
- promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of transition to a net zero carbon economy.

A more connected EU through the enhancement of mobility:

- developing a climate-resilient, intelligent, secure, sustainable and intermodal Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T);
- developing and enhancing sustainable, climate-resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility.

A more social and inclusive Europe and a more successfully implemented European Pillar of Social Rights:

- enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure and promoting social economy;
- improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and online education and training;

- promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs, through integrated action, including housing and social services;
- promoting the socioeconomic integration of third-country nationals, including migrants, through integrated actions, including housing and social services;
- ensuring equal access to health care and fostering the resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-based and community-based care;
- enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.

A Europe that stands closer to the citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives:

- fostering integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security in urban and non-urban areas.

ERDF investments are focused on several key priority areas. This is known as 'thematic concentration'.

Depending on the level of their wealth, regions and Member States use varying amounts of funding to address the five policy objectives.

All regions and Member States will also concentrate at least 8 % of their allocation to urban development delivered through local development partnerships using different tools. Operations under the ERDF are also expected to contribute 30 % of the overall financial envelope to climate objectives.

The ERDF will also support investments in infrastructure; activities for applied research and innovation, including industrial research, experimental development and feasibility studies; investments in access to services; productive investments in SMEs and investments aiming at safeguarding existing jobs and creating new jobs; equipment, software and intangible assets; networking, cooperation, exchange of experience and activities involving innovation clusters, including between businesses, research organisations and public authorities; information, communication and studies; and technical assistance. The ERDF will also support training, lifelong learning, reskilling and education activities. The ERDF may

support the financing of working capital in SMEs in the form of grants, where strictly necessary as a temporary measure to respond to exceptional or unusual circumstances.

Potential beneficiaries:

- local, regional and national authorities and administrative bodies;
- non-government organisations (NGOs), associations and foundations;
- enterprises and SMEs.

Cohesion Fund

The [Cohesion Fund \(CF\)](#) aims to **reduce economic and social disparities** and to promote sustainable development. The Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund share certain limitations that will be mentioned below.

The Cohesion Fund strengthens the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU and its sustainable development by providing support to Member States with a gross national income per inhabitant below 90 % of the EU average.

The Cohesion Fund mainly focuses on capital-intensive **environmental and transport investments**:

- **environmental:** the Cohesion Fund supports sustainable development- and energy-related investments that offer environmental benefits, with a particular focus on renewable energy. In that context, the Cohesion Fund also supports combined energy and seismic retrofitting;
- **transport:** attention is given to Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), notably priority projects of EU interest as identified by the EU. The Cohesion Fund also supports infrastructure projects under the [Connecting Europe Facility](#).

The Cohesion Fund is expected to contribute towards the EU's climate objectives by dedicating 37 % of its overall financial allocation to activities and efforts aimed at attaining them.

Cohesion Fund specific objectives

A greener, low-carbon economy transitioning towards a resilient Europe with a net zero carbon economy, by promoting a clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility. This would happen by means of:

- promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- promoting renewable energy in accordance with [Directive \(EU\) 2018/2001](#) on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, including the sustainability criteria set out therein;
- developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E);
- promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches;
- promoting access to water and sustainable water management;
- promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy;
- enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution; promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources;
- promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of transition to a net-zero carbon economy.

A more connected EU through the enhancement of mobility. This would happen by means of:

- developing a climate resilient, intelligent, secure, sustainable and intermodal TEN-T;
- developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility.

As part of its specific objectives, the Cohesion Fund may also support activities under the Investment for jobs and growth goal, whenever they:

- improve the capacity of programme authorities;
- improve the capacity of sectoral or territorial players responsible for carrying out activities relevant to the implementation of the Cohesion Fund;
- enhance cooperation with partners both within and outside a given Member State. Cooperation will include cooperation with partners from cross-border regions, from non-contiguous regions or from regions located in the territory covered by a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, a macro-regional or sea-basin strategy or a combination thereof.

Activities excluded from the scope of both ERDF and CF support are:

- decommissioning and construction of nuclear power stations;
- reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from certain activities;
- tobacco and tobacco products;
- certain undertakings in difficulty;
- airport infrastructure except in outermost regions;
- disposal of waste in landfill, facilities for the treatment of residual waste;
- fossil fuels (with the exception of investment in clean vehicles);
- broadband infrastructure in areas with already good coverage;
- purchase of rolling stock for use in rail transport, with some exceptions.

In addition, the Cohesion Fund does not support investments in housing unless they are related to energy efficiency and renewable energy use.

Mode of implementation

The fund is delivered under [shared management](#) and is governed by the [Common Provisions Regulation](#). The co-legislators establish the level of funding and determine the allocations by Member State and category of region. The Commission adopts the operational programmes and cooperates with Member States' administrations on the implementation. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, procurements and financial instruments.

Potential beneficiaries:

Public and regional authorities in **Member States with GNI of less than 90 % of the EU average** are eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund. In the funding period 2021-2027, these countries are Bulgaria, Czechia, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The **ESF+** is the EU's **main instrument for investing in people**, with the aim of building a more social and inclusive EU. The ESF+ provides an important contribution to the EU's employment, social, education and skills policies, including the structural reforms in these areas. Being part of the cohesion policy, the ESF+ reinforces its mission to support economic, territorial and social cohesion in the EU by way of reducing disparities between Member States and regions. For the 2021-2027 period, to make things simpler, the ESF has been merged with the **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)**, the **Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD)** and the directly managed **Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) Programme**, to become the ESF+. The aim of the ESF+ is to achieve **high employment levels**, fair **social protection** and a **skilled and resilient workforce** for the future world of work, in line with the principles set out in the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. The European Social Fund Plus supports the EU's green, digital and resilient recovery from crisis by driving investment in jobs, skills and services.

Main objectives of the ESF+

The **ESF+** supports:

- social innovation;
- investment in young people to help them obtain qualification and a good-quality job, and to improve their education;
- training and lifelong learning;
- investment in capacity-building and transnational/cross-border cooperation to strengthen fair working conditions;
- initiatives fostering equal labour-market opportunities and enhancing labour mobility;

- combating child poverty and helping the most vulnerable in society who are losing their jobs and seeing their incomes reduced;
- providing food and basic material assistance to the most deprived.

For more information on the ESF+ and other opportunities in the area of social affairs, see the section on employment, social affairs and inclusion in this funding guide.

Potential beneficiaries:

- organisations of workers and employers and organisations providing training and support for workers;
- NGOs and charities, foundations and organisations of a social character;
- government, municipal and regional authorities;
- companies and associations;
- EU citizens, young people and children, people from vulnerable groups.

Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund (**JTF**) is the first pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism (**JTM**). Over the 2021-2027 period, it will be a key tool for providing tailored support to the territories most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality. It is implemented under shared management, within the overall framework of cohesion policy – the main EU policy for reducing regional disparities and addressing structural changes in the EU.

The JTF exclusively supports:

- productive investments in SMEs, including microenterprises and start-ups, leading to economic diversification, modernisation and reconversion;
- investments in the creation of new firms, including through business incubators and consulting services, leading to job creation;
- investments in research and innovation activities, including by universities and public research organisations, and fostering the transfer of advanced technologies;
- investments in the deployment of technology as well as in systems and infrastructure for affordable clean energy, including energy storage technologies, and in greenhouse gas emissions reduction;

- investments in renewable energy in accordance with [Directive \(EU\) 2018/2001](#) on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, including the sustainability criteria set out therein, and in energy efficiency, including for the purposes of reducing energy poverty;
- investments in smart and sustainable local mobility, including decarbonisation of the local transport sector and its infrastructure;
- rehabilitation and upgrade of district heating networks with a view to improving energy efficiency of district heating systems and investment in heat production, provided that the heat production installations are supplied exclusively by renewable energy sources;
- investments in digitalisation, digital innovation and digital connectivity;
- investments in regeneration and decontamination of brownfield sites, land restoration and including, where necessary, green infrastructure and repurposing projects, taking into account the 'polluter pays' principle;
- investments in enhancing the circular economy, including through waste prevention, reduction, resource efficiency, reuse, repair and recycling;
- upskilling and reskilling of workers and jobseekers;
- job-search assistance to jobseekers;
- active inclusion of jobseekers;
- technical assistance;
- other activities in the areas of education and social inclusion including, where duly justified, investments in infrastructure for the purposes of training centres, child- and elderly-care facilities as indicated in territorial just transition plans.

The fund seeks to alleviate the socioeconomic costs triggered by climate transition, supporting the economic diversification and reconversion of the territories concerned. This means backing productive investment in SMEs, but also in activities such as the creation of new firms, research and innovation, environmental rehabilitation, clean energy, up- and reskilling of workers, job-search assistance and programmes for the active inclusion of jobseekers, as well as activities involving the transformation of existing carbon-intensive installations when the investment made leads to substantial emission cuts and job protection. It is expected to mobilise close to €30 billion in investment.

Member States have prepared, together with the relevant local and regional authorities of the territories concerned, one or more territorial just transition plans covering one or more affected territories corresponding to NUTS level 3

regions or parts thereof, in accordance with the template set out in [Annex II](#). Those territories are those most negatively affected, based on the economic and social impacts resulting from the transition, in particular with regard to the expected adaptation of workers or job losses in fossil fuel production and use and the transformation needs of the production processes of industrial facilities with the highest greenhouse gas intensity.

The Just Transition Fund is part of the [Just Transition Mechanism](#). Please note that the [InvestEU Fund](#) will also provide for a dedicated scheme to generate additional investment to the benefit of just transition territories – those that are the most strongly affected by the socioeconomic consequences of the green transition – in complementarity with the Just Transition Fund and the Public Sector Loan Facility.

REACT-EU

[REACT-EU](#) (Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe) is one of the programmes under the new instrument, [Next Generation EU](#). Its funding is a top-up to 2014-2020 programmes and an addition to the cohesion allocations for 2021-2027, bringing the total resources of the structural and investment funds higher than current levels and becoming the highest single-policy grant instrument in the EU budget. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the REACT-EU package was proposed for the regions most severely hit by the crisis. It also complements two previous coronavirus response investment initiatives delivered through cohesion policy. The allocation method takes into account the impact of the crisis on gross domestic product (GDP) and unemployment in Member States, with an amount earmarked for the outermost regions.

REACT-EU supports those Member States and regions that are experiencing the strongest need of crisis repair in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and its social consequences, and are preparing a green, digital and resilient recovery of their economy, with a view to deploying resources quickly to the real economy through the existing operational programmes. These additional resources were to be distributed to Member States in 2021 and 2022 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), as well as the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). Technical assistance measures can also be financed. In order to provide swift support to regions, expenditure incurred as from 1 February 2020 is eligible. The final date of eligibility for this expenditure is 31 December 2023.

Member States have the flexibility to transfer money between structural funds, programmes and categories of regions. REACT-EU is expected to contribute 25 % of its overall financial resources to climate objectives. In line with its nature as a crisis-repair instrument, REACT-EU provides the Member States a fair amount of flexibility: it does not impose any thematic concentration requirements on them, and allows them to channel the REACT-EU resources they receive to support their ERDF- or ESF+ -funded operations, according to their needs. Member States should continue to pay special attention to people living in rural, border, less developed, insular, mountainous, sparsely populated and outermost regions, as well as in areas affected by industrial transition and depopulation and, where appropriate, use the REACT-EU resources for supporting those people. Member States can also allocate their REACT-EU resources to existing cross-border programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal and technical assistance.

Support is available for job maintenance and job creation, skills development, provision of working capital and investment for SMEs, as well as enhancement of the green and digital transition. Funds should be targeted towards sectors most affected by the crisis, such as healthcare, tourism and culture.

Other facilitating funds and tools and instruments for regional development

Instruments for urban development

Next Generation EU

Next Generation EU is a more than €800 billion temporary recovery instrument to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. Post-COVID-19 Europe will be greener, more digital, more resilient and better fit for the current and forthcoming challenges. Next Generation EU is also bringing additional money to other programmes or funds such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), as well as the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), Horizon 2020, InvestEU, rural development or the Just Transition Fund (JTF).

The centrepiece of Next Generation EU, with €723.8 billion in loans and grants available to support reforms and investments undertaken by EU countries,

is the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The aim is to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make EU economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions. Member States are working on their recovery and resilience plans to access the funds under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. To find out more about this important fund, see the section on Next Generation EU.

The Urban Agenda of the EU

The [Urban Agenda for the EU](#) is an integrated and coordinated approach to deal with the urban dimension of EU and national policies and legislation. By focusing on concrete priority themes within dedicated partnerships, the Urban Agenda seeks to improve the quality of life in urban areas.

The Pact of Amsterdam, agreed upon by the EU ministers responsible for urban matters on 30 May 2016, established the Urban Agenda for the EU. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the Urban Agenda focuses on the three pillars of EU policy-making and implementation: better regulation, better funding and better knowledge.

Fourteen partnerships have been defined so far on the following themes:

- air quality;
- circular economy;
- climate adaptation;
- culture and cultural heritage;
- digital transition;
- energy transition;
- housing;
- inclusion of migrants and refugees;
- innovative and responsible public procurement;
- jobs and skills in the local economy;
- sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions;
- urban mobility;
- urban poverty;
- security in public spaces.

Each partnership involves, on a voluntary and equal basis, cities, Member States, the European Commission and stakeholders such as NGOs. Together they work on developing and implementing actions to successfully tackle challenges of cities and to contribute to green and digital transitions and other EU objectives. The Urban Agenda of the EU is financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund.

The European Urban Initiative

The legal basis of the European Urban Initiative (EUI) is the European Regional Development Fund/Cohesion Fund regulation for 2021-2027, which also maps out the content and strategic framework of the initiative. The overall objectives of the EUI are i) to strengthen integrated and participatory approaches to sustainable urban development; and ii) to provide a stronger link to EU policies, and in particular to cohesion policy. The initiative is aimed at offering coherent support to cities in the face of the current fragmented landscape of manifold initiatives, programmes and instruments available to them under cohesion policy.

The European Urban Initiative is an essential tool to support cities of all sizes, to build capacity and knowledge, to support innovation and develop transferable and scalable innovative solutions to urban challenges of EU relevance. The European Urban Initiative (EUI), funded by the European Union, supports urban areas of all sizes with innovative actions, capacity and knowledge building, as well as policy development and communication on sustainable urban development.

The EUI provides different levels of assistance:

- supporting urban authorities with up to 80% direct co-financing, allowing EU cities to experiment as testbeds for their innovative idea and transferring it to other cities;
- strengthening capacities of cities in the design of sustainable urban development strategies, policies and practices in an integrated and participative way;
- providing a knowledge environment for cities to ensure easier access to horizontal and thematic knowledge and share the know-how on sustainable urban development.

TAIEX-REGIO Peer2Peer

The **TAIEX-REGIO Peer2Peer** tool is designed to share expertise between bodies that manage funding under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund. It facilitates exchanges between the national and regional bodies that manage and administer funds from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund. It helps civil servants share knowledge, good practice and practical approaches with their peers in other EU countries. This way they upgrade their administrative capacity, thereby improving EU investment outcomes.

Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (JESSICA)

JESSICA is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB), in collaboration with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). Member States are given the option of using some of their EU grant funding to make repayable investments in projects forming part of an integrated plan for sustainable urban development. These investments, which may take the form of equity, loans and/or guarantees, are delivered to projects via urban development funds and, if required, holding funds.

European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA)

ELENA provides technical assistance for energy efficiency and renewable energy investment targeting buildings and innovative urban transport through three different envelopes: energy efficiency; sustainable residential; and urban transport and mobility. Typically, ELENA supports investment programmes above €30 million with a three-year implementation period for energy efficiency (residential projects included) and a four-year period for urban transport and mobility. ELENA encourages and supports the aggregation of different projects to increase their attractiveness for contractors and financiers. Activities eligible for ELENA grants include: technical studies, energy audits, business plans and financial advice, legal advice, tendering procedure preparation, project bundling and project management.

URBACT III

URBACT is the EU programme for integrated urban development. It enables cities across the EU to develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies. It is a cohesion policy instrument, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the 27 Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

The URBACT III programme is organised around four main objectives:

- **capacity for policy delivery:** to improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way;
- **policy design:** to improve the design of sustainable urban policies and practices in cities;
- **policy implementation:** to improve the implementation of integrated and sustainable urban strategies and actions in cities;
- **building and sharing knowledge:** to ensure that practitioners and decision-makers at all levels have access to knowledge and share know-how on all aspects of sustainable urban development in order to improve urban development policies.

To reach these objectives, URBACT III implements three types of interventions:

1. transnational exchanges;
2. capacity-building;
3. capitalisation and dissemination.

Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS)

JASPERS is a **technical assistance** partnership between the European Commission, the EIB and the EBRD. It provides independent advice to beneficiary countries to help prepare high-quality major projects to be co-financed by two EU structural and investment funds (the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund).

JASPERS' assistance may cover:

- project preparation; support, from identification to submission of the request for EU grant finance;
- independent quality review of projects;
- post-submission appraisal function for all major projects submitted directly to the EU Commission;
- horizontal assignments and strategic support;
- capacity-building, including a competence centre;
- implementation support;
- Connecting Europe Facility projects, mainly in the rail and road sectors;
- the activities of the European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH) through the screening and handling of requests.

This [brochure](#) provides further information about JASPERS as well as how to apply for funding under this partnership.

Potential beneficiaries:

Cities, municipalities, political and administrative institutions with policy-related authority.

Rural and coastal development instruments

LEADER is a local development method that has been used for 30 years to engage local players in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas. It is implemented by around 2 800 Local Action Groups (LAGs), covering 61 % of the rural population in the EU and bringing together public, private and civil-society stakeholders in a particular area. In the rural development context, LEADER is implemented under the national and regional rural development programmes (RDPs) of each EU Member State. You can follow the work of the permanent [LEADER/CLLD Sub-group](#) operating within the framework of the European Rural Networks' Assembly. A [database](#) lists all of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) across the EU by Member State.

The European Network for Rural Development ([ENRD](#)) serves as a hub for exchange of information on how rural development policy, programmes, projects and other initiatives are working in practice and how they can be improved to achieve more. The ENRD supports the effective implementation

of EU Member States' rural development programmes (RDs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as by facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe. These activities are facilitated by two support units: the ENRD Contact Point and the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development. A dedicated [webpage](#) offers news about the network and its activities.

In areas where fishing and aquaculture play an important role in the local economy, financing can be made available to fund Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), which also include the relevant fisheries-related stakeholders. Designing their own local development strategies, each LAG or FLAG engages community members in thinking through the most pressing economic, social and environmental priorities for their area, and how best to tackle them. Staff are on hand to help people develop project ideas and a budget is available to fund local initiatives considered important for the area's development (e.g. investing in new businesses, services, activities, training, awareness-raising, etc.).

For further information on subsidies and EU aid in the area of agriculture, see the section on Agriculture – Rural Development and the one on Fisheries, as well as the next section of the funding guide.

The New European Bauhaus initiative

The New European Bauhaus initiative connects the European Green Deal to our daily lives and living spaces. It calls on all Europeans to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds and souls. By creating bridges between different backgrounds, cutting across disciplines and building on participation at all levels, the New European Bauhaus inspires a movement to facilitate and steer the transformation of our societies along three inseparable values:

- **sustainability:** from climate goals to circularity, zero pollution and biodiversity;
- **aesthetics:** quality of experience and style beyond functionality;
- **inclusion:** from valuing diversity to securing accessibility and affordability.

The New European Bauhaus brings citizens, experts, businesses, and institutions together to reimagine sustainable living in Europe and beyond. In addition to creating a platform for experimentation and connection, the initiative supports positive change also by providing access to EU funding for beautiful, sustainable and inclusive projects.

The links below provide information on the different EU funding opportunities under the initiative. Several calls for proposals are presented according to the main type of impact they seek.

- **Mobilising EU programmes for the transformation of places on the ground:** these programmes are fully dedicated or partially contribute to the New European Bauhaus calls for proposals aimed at supporting the transformation of the built environment and associated lifestyles at local level.
- **Mobilising EU programmes for the transformation of the enabling environment for innovation:** these programmes are fully dedicated or partially contributing to the New European Bauhaus calls for proposals aimed at supporting innovation seeking to integrate sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics in new solutions and products.
- **Mobilising EU programmes for the diffusion of new meanings:** fully dedicated or contributing to the New European Bauhaus calls for proposals aimed at facilitating a process of questioning our perspectives and mind-set around the values of aesthetics, sustainability and inclusion.

Support to the Turkish Cypriot community

The main objective of the programme is to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, improvement of contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and preparation for the adoption of the body of EU law (the EU *acquis*) following a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue.

The aid programme fosters reunification efforts through a number of specific actions, including:

- the promotion of social and economic development in the Turkish Cypriot community;
- infrastructure investments;
- reconciliation, confidence-building and support for civil society;
- bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU, including by helping with preparations for the implementation of EU law once a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue is agreed.

The [aid programme](#) finances studies, services, supplies and work supporting the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. The budget is implemented both through direct management by the Commission and through indirect management (through international organisations and Member State agencies). Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, procurements and contribution agreements with international organisations and Member State agencies.

Potential beneficiaries:

The Turkish Cypriot community is the ultimate beneficiary, represented, among others, by:

- non-governmental organisations;
- small and medium-sized enterprises;
- farmers;
- students;
- teachers.

Brexit Adjustment Reserve

The withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the EU has affected EU Member States and their regions in different ways. Some Member States, regions, sectors or local communities have been more affected than others. This is why the Brexit Adjustment Reserve was designed to support all Member States while ensuring a strong concentration on those most affected. Support is provided to counter the adverse economic, social, territorial and, where appropriate, environmental consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. There is no advance programming or planning of measures; furthermore, the reserve provides for flexibility in the implementation and operates in line with the subsidiarity principle. The Brexit Adjustment Reserve [Regulation](#) entered into force in October 2021.

The regulation stipulates that three factors should be used to calculate how much money each EU country would receive from the reserve:

- the factor linked to fish caught in the UK exclusive economic zone is used to allocate €656 million;
- the factor linked to trade is used to allocate €4.5 billion;
- the factor linked to maritime border regions that also covered the UK is used to allocate €274 million.

Member States that depend significantly on fisheries have to direct a specific percentage of their national allocation to small-scale coastal fisheries and local and regional communities dependent on fishing activities.

The reserve supports measures specifically introduced in relation to the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. These can include measures:

- to support private and public businesses, in particular SMEs, the self-employed, local communities and organisations adversely affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
- to support the economic sectors most adversely affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
- to support businesses, regional and local communities and organisations, including small-scale coastal fisheries dependent on fishing activities in United Kingdom waters, in waters of territories with a special status or in waters covered by fisheries agreements with coastal states where fishing opportunities for EU fleets have been reduced as a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
- to support job creation and protection, including green jobs, short-time work schemes, reskilling and training in sectors most adversely affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
- to ensure the functioning of border, customs, sanitary and phytosanitary, security and fisheries controls, as well as the collection of indirect taxation, including additional personnel and their training, and infrastructure;
- to facilitate regimes for certification and authorisation of products, to assist in meeting establishment requirements, to facilitate labelling and marking, for example for safety, health and environmental standards, as well as to assist in mutual recognition;
- for communication, information and awareness-raising of citizens and businesses about changes to their rights and obligations stemming from the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
- aimed at the reintegration of EU citizens as well as persons having the right to reside in the EU who left the UK as a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The reference period for the expenditure started retroactively on 1 January 2020 and is scheduled to end on 31 December 2023. The expenditure is eligible for a financial contribution from the reserve also for measures carried out before the reference period but incurred and paid by authorities in the Member States at national, regional or local level during the reference period.

When designing support measures, Member States take into account the varied impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on different regions and local communities and focus the financial contribution from the reserve on those most adversely affected by the withdrawal. They also take into account the partnership principle, encouraging a multi-level dialogue with social partners and civil society, local and regional authorities, as well as with communities of regions and sectors that have been the most adversely affected.

A European Commission webpage provides [information](#) on the provisional allocation to each EU Member State from the resources of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve.

EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION (INTERREG)



European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as Interreg, promotes cooperation between regions and countries in and out of the EU to help their economic and social development.

For the 2021-2027 period, Interreg VI funds cross-border programmes in and outside the EU, which contribute to implementing the main priorities of EU cohesion policy: a more competitive and smarter Europe; a greener, low-carbon economy transitioning towards a resilient Europe with a net zero carbon economy; a more connected Europe; a more social and inclusive Europe; and a Europe closer to citizens.

Interreg has multiple strands:

1. **Cross-border (Interreg A)**

- cross-border programmes, which are implemented within the EU and at the EU's external borders;
- 49 programmes in the EU, making sure to turn some border obstacles into opportunities between EU Member States;

- 10 Interreg Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA) programmes, which are operating at the EU's borders with IPA countries. They are mainly contributing to the enlargement policy of the EU;
- 14 Interreg NEXT programmes, implemented at the borders with EU neighbouring countries.

2. Trans-national (Interreg B)

14 transnational cooperation programmes will continue to support cooperation activities on a larger scale in Europe and beyond.

Four transnational programmes – Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Danube Region, Interreg IPA Adrion and Interreg Alpine Space programme – will directly support the macro-regional strategies covering their geographical area. Some 80 % of their thematic concentration should be aligned with a macro-regional strategy.

Transnational programmes linked to sea basin strategies, such as the Interreg Atlantic Area or the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin also apply the thematic concentration.

Transnational programmes can benefit from additional funding from ERDF, IPA or NDICI.

3. Interregional (Interreg C)

The interregional cooperation strand is aimed at boosting the effectiveness of cohesion policy by promoting exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity-building between regions (Article 3(3) of the European Territorial Cooperation Goal (ETC) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059).

Four interregional cooperation programmes will be operating over the 2021-2027 period: the interregional co-operation programme ([interreg Europe](#)) and three networking programmes ([Urbact III](#), [Interact III](#) and [ESPON](#)), which cover all EU Member States. They provide regional and local bodies across the EU countries with a framework for exchanging experience.

The [Interreg Europe](#) cooperation programme is a policy learning programme for public authorities in 29 countries – the EU-27, Norway and Switzerland. It promotes the exchange of experience and the transfer of good practices between players at all levels of government. Encouraging the sharing of knowledge reinforces the effectiveness of cohesion policy and helps the authorities develop and deliver better policy in all other domains.

Interact ensures the exchange of experience, information and innovation to promote best practices and make cooperation easier. It aims to achieve this through targeted events, publications and tools.

URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable and that integrate economic, social and environmental urban topics.

The **ESPON** programme aims to promote and foster a territorial dimension in development and cooperation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy players at all levels.

4. Outermost regions' cooperation (Interreg D)

The specificities of the outermost regions are recognised through a specific strand (Strand D). Strand D helps those regions to cooperate with neighbouring countries and territories in the most efficient and simple way. Calls for proposals can be launched for combined funding under the ERDF and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

Strand D covers four geographical areas:

- Amazonia and the Caribbean;
- the Middle Atlantic / the Gulf of Guinea (MAC);
- the Indian Ocean;
- the Mozambique Channel.

European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

The **European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation** (EGTC) is an EU legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation by enabling Member States, regional/local authorities, associations and any other public bodies to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. Recourse to an EGTC is optional. Eligible for becoming an EGTC member are:

- Member States;
- regional or local authorities;
- associations;
- any other public bodies.

The EGTC is unique in the sense that it enables public authorities of various Member States to team up and deliver joint services, without this requiring a prior international agreement to be signed and ratified by national parliaments. Member States must however agree to the participation of potential members in their respective countries. The law applicable to the interpretation and application of the convention is that of the Member State in which the official EGTC headquarters are located.

A [list](#) of the existing EGTCs has been compiled by the European Committee of the Regions.

Macro-regional strategies

A 'macro-regional strategy' is an integrated framework that addresses common challenges faced by Member States and third countries located in the same geographical area, which would benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Macro-regional strategies are endorsed by the European Council and may be linked to the European structural and investment funds, among others.

There is no standard definition of a macro-region. In general, it denotes an area that covers parts of different countries or regions associated with one or more common features or challenges. The idea behind the EU macro-regional strategies is to add value to interventions, whether by the EU, by national or regional authorities, by the third sector or by the private sector, in a way that significantly strengthens the functioning of the macro-region. EU macro-regional strategies do not rely on any additional funding. In this respect, one of the challenges is to find ways to better use existing resources, legislation and structures for the benefit of the whole region.

There are several macro-regions in the EU covering large areas crossing several national borders. For each, a dedicated macro-regional strategy has been put in place. The [EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) (EUSBSR) was adopted in October 2009; the implementation of the [EU strategy for the Danube Region](#) (EUSDR) started in June 2011; the [EU strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region](#) (EUSAIR) was adopted by the European Commission in 2012. The [EU strategy for the Alpine Region](#) (EUSALP) was adopted in 2015.

The [EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) (EUSBSR) brings together eight EU Member States situated around the Baltic Sea, representing 80 million inhabitants or nearly 16 % of the EU population. These Member States are Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany (Berlin; Brandenburg; Hamburg; Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; Schleswig-Holstein), Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The strategy is built around three objectives: 1) save the sea; 2) connect the region; and 3) increase prosperity. The EUSBSR has achieved a variety of results. As a key achievement, it has brought together stakeholders across countries, sectors and levels. New networks and projects of macro-regional relevance have been created and existing ones intensified. The strategy has also contributed to policy-shaping and development (e.g. in the fields of energy, navigation, environment and climate change), to a better implementation of existing legislation and to the further development of synergies and complementarities between existing cooperation frameworks in the region. By providing a strategic framework, it has brought legitimacy to macro-regional cooperation and increased recognition of the challenges and opportunities in the macro-region.

The [EU strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region](#) (EUSAIR) covers 10 countries: four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and six non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino and Serbia). The general objective of the EUSAIR is to promote economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity. The strategy will contribute to the further integration of the Western Balkans. The countries are aiming to create synergies and foster coordination among all territories in the Adriatic-Ionian Region in the four thematic areas/pillars: sustainable tourism, environmental quality, blue growth and connecting the region.

The [EU strategy for the Danube Region](#) addresses a wide range of issues grouped in 12 [priority areas](#). Each priority area is managed by two countries ('priority area coordinators'). These areas are: waterways mobility; rail-road-air mobility; sustainable energy; culture and tourism; water quality; environmental risks; biodiversity, landscapes, and air and soil quality; knowledge society; competitiveness of enterprises; people and skills; institutional capacity and cooperation; and security.

The [EU strategy for the Alpine Region](#) covers seven countries, comprising five EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) and two non-EU countries (Liechtenstein and Switzerland), and 48 regions. It has four thematic policy areas. The first is economic growth and innovation; its objectives include fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the

Alpine Region. The second thematic policy area is mobility and connectivity; its main objective is sustainable internal and external accessibility to all. The third thematic policy area is environment and energy; its objective is to promote a more inclusive environmental framework for all and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future. Governance, including institutional capacity, is another policy area, which has as its main objective the creation of a sound macro-regional governance model for the region (in order to improve cooperation and the coordination of action).

Potential beneficiaries:

- national and decentralised administrations;
- regional and local government structures and policy-making bodies;
- NGOs, civil society organisations, research institutes.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT



The EU budget is and will continue to be a driver of sustainability, investment in sustainable agriculture along with climate action, environmental protection, food security and rural development.

Funding for agricultural programmes comes from two funds that form part of the EU's general budget:

- the [European Agricultural Guarantee Fund \(EAGF\)](#), which primarily finances direct payments to farmers and measures to regulate agricultural markets;
- the [European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development \(EAFRD\)](#), which co-finances the rural development programmes of the Member States.

EAGF and EAFRD are implemented in shared management between the Member States and the EU. This means, among other things, that the Commission does not make payments directly to the beneficiaries of aid; this task is delegated to the Member States.

During the first two years of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF – the seven-year framework regulating the EU's annual budget), the existing 2014-2020 common agricultural policy (CAP) regulations continue to apply, as set out in the [transitional regulation](#) adopted on 23 December 2020. The regulation is in place to ensure a smooth transition to the future framework of the [CAP strategic plans](#).

CAP strategic plans are due to be implemented from 1 January 2023. The strategic plans will allow for a greater degree of flexibility between the two funds and will include the ambitions of the [European Green Deal](#), in particular the [Farm to Fork strategy](#). Overall, 40 % of total CAP expenditure will be dedicated to climate action.

The new CAP is based on a more flexible performance and a results-based approach that takes into account local conditions and needs, while increasing the EU's ambitions in terms of sustainability. It is built around 10 objectives, which are also the basis upon which EU countries design their CAP strategic plans.

The objectives are:

1. to ensure a fair income for farmers;
2. to increase competitiveness;
3. to improve the position of farmers in the food chain;
4. to undertake climate change action;
5. to apply environmental care;
6. to preserve landscapes and biodiversity;
7. to support generational renewal;
8. to create and maintain vibrant rural areas;
9. to protect food and health quality;
10. to foster knowledge and innovation.

EU countries will implement the new CAP with a [CAP strategic plan at national level](#). Each plan will combine a wide range of targeted interventions addressing the specific needs of that EU country and deliver tangible results in relation to EU-level objectives, while contributing to the ambitions of the European Green Deal.

The new CAP is fairer, greener, more animal friendly and flexible.

For the first time, the new CAP will include social conditionality, meaning that CAP beneficiaries will have to respect elements of EU social and labour law to receive CAP funds.

Redistribution of income support will be mandatory. Member States will redistribute at least 10 % to the benefit of smaller farms, and must describe in their strategic plan how they plan to do this. Support for young farmers will have a new mandatory minimum level of 3 % of Member States' budgets for CAP income support to young farmers (farmers up to 40 years of age). This could cover income support, investment or start-up aid for young farmers.

Ecoschemes will be mandatory for Member States to offer. This new instrument will reward farmers for implementing climate and environmentally friendly practices (organic farming, agroecology, integrated pest management, etc.) as well as animal welfare improvements. Member States must allocate at least 25 % of their income support budget to ecoschemes.

At least 35 % of rural development funds will be allocated to agri-environment commitments, which promote environmental, climate and animal welfare practices.

As regards conditionality, the minimum requirements CAP beneficiaries have to comply with to receive support are now more ambitious. For example, at least 3 % of the arable land on any farm will be dedicated to biodiversity and non-productive elements, with a possibility for the farmer to receive support via ecoschemes in order to raise this percentage to 7 %. All wetlands and peatlands will be protected.

Direct income support for farmers and market measures

The main goal of the EAGF is to support viable farm income and resilience across the EU to enhance food security through the common agricultural policy. The fund aims to contribute to meeting EU environment and climate objectives via greening (until 2022) and via eco-schemes and conditionality from 2023. Achieving a higher level of environmental ambition, addressing climate change and the protection of natural resources and biodiversity are priorities in the future common agricultural policy, which will enter into force in 2023.

Farmers' incomes are supported by the European Union by means of direct payments (payments granted annually directly to farmers' bank accounts, as income support and to provide a safety net).

Through the EAGF, EU countries must offer:

- a basic payment scheme for farmers;
- green direct payments (for sustainable farming methods);
- a payment for young farmers.

EU countries can also use the EAGF to fund specific schemes to help small and medium sized farms, farmers who operate in areas of natural constraint, and sectors undergoing difficulties.

All payments are subject to compliance with EU rules on food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare. They are crucial for keeping farmers in business, as farming incomes are significantly below the average income in the EU.

The EAGF also funds measures to **support and stabilise agricultural markets**, including public intervention buying; private storage aid; sector-specific exceptional support measures; the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme; information and promotion actions; etc. These measures operate as part of the Common Market Organisation, the framework for the market measures provided for under the CAP. A new agricultural reserve will be introduced to fund market measures in times of crises.

Rural development

Funding for [rural development](#) is drawn partly from the EAFRD and partly from national/regional and sometimes private sources. Since 2021, the EAFRD has been within the framework of the European structural and investment funds; after 2022, it will be fully within the framework of the CAP strategic plans.

The main objective of the EAFRD is to support the transition towards a fully sustainable agricultural sector and the development of vibrant rural areas. It finances the common agricultural policy's contribution to the EU's rural development objectives:

- a. improving the competitiveness of agriculture;**
- b. encouraging sustainable management of natural resources and climate action;**
- c. achieving balanced socioeconomic development of rural areas and communities.**

The EAFRD provides assistance to farmers and inhabitants of rural areas to increase sustainability and competitiveness, including through:

- boosting the use of digital and technological tools;
- actions to improve the attractiveness of rural areas both for living and for job creation;
- support for innovation and diversification of on-farm activities;
- village revitalisation;
- protection of the environment and biodiversity;
- actions aimed at restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, with a positive impact on biodiversity, soil, water and air.

EU rural development policy is implemented on the basis of national or regional multiannual [rural development programmes](#) (RDPs) designed and managed by EU Member States or regions and approved by the European Commission. Each programme defines a specific strategy that has to meet the needs of the country/region concerned while respecting EU priorities for rural development.

RDPs have been conditionally extended for 2021 and 2022. Due to this extension, many of the projects and schemes included in RDPs will continue to run until the end of 2025.

From 2023 onwards, all new rural development actions will be incorporated into national [CAP strategic plans](#). Each national plan will be built around key social, environmental and economic objectives for EU agriculture, forestry, and rural areas.

Potential beneficiaries:

- farmers and rural stakeholders;
- administrative bodies;
- local or regional authorities and institutions;

- institutes, educational institutions;
- NGOs;
- companies, SMEs and associations.

Research and innovation opportunities in agriculture

For setting up projects on innovation in agriculture, food and forestry, the [brochure](#) on funding opportunities prepared by the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability (EIP-Agri) may be of assistance. It sets out the 'how, what, where' for a wide range of options from the EAFRD to H2020 to LIFE+.

Farmers may also benefit from support in the Horizon 2020 area of food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy. Funding opportunities relating to food and diet are listed on Horizon's [Participant Portal](#).

[Farmers](#) can benefit from some actions under the [COSME programme](#), managed by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). See the [Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan](#) for detailed information.

The EAFRD also supports knowledge transfer and innovation via the EIP-Agri.

Other opportunities related to farming

The [LEADER](#) approach is an area-based, bottom-up method of delivering support to local communities that design and implement local development strategies themselves. It is a compulsory feature of all Member State RDPs, and at least 5 % of EAFRD national envelopes must be devoted to LEADER measures.

The [European Network for Rural Development](#) (ENRD) builds upon current experience and knowledge with a view to providing help in the design and the implementation of future rural development programmes.

Funding is also available under the [European Social Fund](#) for improving employment conditions in rural areas.

EAGF funding may also be granted to public bodies involved in the School Milk Scheme, the [School Fruit Scheme](#) or in the [promotion of farm products](#) in the EU or in third countries.

Connecting Europe Facility for Transport

The [Connecting Europe Facility \(CEF\) Transport programme](#) is the key EU funding instrument for the development of high performing, sustainable and interconnected trans-European transport networks (TEN-T), with a focus on the [nine core network corridors](#). The programme co-finances projects that enhance multimodality, improve infrastructure and advance innovation and new technologies.

[CEF 2.0](#) promotes interconnected and multimodal networks to develop and modernise railway, road, inland waterway and maritime infrastructure, as well as safe and secure mobility. Priority is given to further development of the TEN-T focusing on missing links and cross-border projects with EU added value. This second edition of the programme is running from 2021 to 2027.

CEF 2.0 has similar objectives to CEF 1.0, but with a greater emphasis on:

- sustainability, decarbonisation and lower emissions;
- the complementarity of transport modes.

The main objectives are:

- to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to efficient, interconnected and multimodal networks and infrastructure for smart, interoperable, sustainable, inclusive, accessible, safe and secure mobility;
- to adapt parts of the TEN-T for the dual use of the transport infrastructure with a view to improving both civilian and military mobility.

Support is reserved for projects of common interest aimed at:

- removing bottlenecks, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections;
- ensuring sustainable and efficient transport systems in the long run, with a view to preparing for expected future transport flows, as well as enabling all modes of transport to be decarbonised;
- optimising the integration and interconnection of transport modes and enhancing the interoperability of transport services, while ensuring the accessibility of transport infrastructure.

The proposed [revision of the TEN-T Regulation](#) contains a number of **novelties**, including:

- higher speeds for train services across the TEN-T network (160 kilometres per hour for passenger services and 100 kilometres per hour for freight);
- maximum waiting times at borders of 15 minutes for rail freight;
- guaranteed good navigation status per river basin on the inland waterways on the TEN-T;
- requirements for the deployment, across the TEN-T, of the charging and refuelling infrastructure needed for alternative transport fuels. This would mean sufficient charging capacity for cars, vans and trucks at 60 kilometres distance in each direction by 2025 on the core network and by 2030 for the extended core and comprehensive networks;
- providing safe and secure parking areas for commercial drivers, equipped with alternative fuels infrastructure.

- use of innovative technologies, such as 5G, to further advance the digitalisation of transport infrastructure, further increasing efficiency, and improving the safety, security and resilience of the network;
- increased resilience of the TEN-T to natural and human-made disasters via climate-proofing requirements and environmental impact assessments for new projects, and to the implications of an accident or breakdown (e.g. by enabling alternative route alignments to the main network);
- the requirement for 424 major cities with ports, airports and railway terminals on the TEN-T to have sustainable urban mobility plans by 2025, in order to align their mobility-related measures (such as the promotion of zero-emission mobility and the greening of the urban fleet) along the TEN-T with each other;
- more transshipment hubs and multimodal passenger terminals in cities to facilitate multimodality, in particular for the last mile of a passenger or freight journey;
- connect large airports to rail and, where possible, to high-speed rail;
- making it possible network-wide for lorries to be transported by trains.

The TEN-T will be completed in three steps:

1. **by 2030:** completion of the core TEN-T at existing TEN-T standards such as for example the electrification of the entire rail network and the possibility to run trains that are 740 metres long;
2. **by 2040:** completion of the extended core network according to the new standards such as the 160 km/h minimum line speed for passenger rail. The new standard, in particular on green transport and enhanced digitalisation, will apply by this date for both the core and the extended core network. The 2040 milestone has been added to accelerate network completion in view of reaching the EU's climate ambitions by 2050;
3. **by 2050:** completion of the entire trans-European transport network, including the sections within the comprehensive network.

For most transport projects, EU financial support does not exceed 30 % of the total eligible cost. This can be increased up to 50 % for studies, actions of greater priority and civilian-defence dual-use actions, and up to 85 % for projects where funds are transferred from the Cohesion Fund. As regards works undertaken in the outermost regions, a specific maximum co-funding rate of 70 % applies.

To support synergies between the transport, energy and digital sectors, actions to achieve objectives in at least two of these sectors can receive a higher co-funding rate in compliance with a work programme addressing at least two of these sectors.

The programme is implemented through direct management by the [European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency \(CINEA\)](#), through a mix of grants, procurements and financial instruments. CINEA is the successor organisation of the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) since 2021.

Potential beneficiaries:

- representatives of the transport industry;
- small and medium-sized enterprises;
- research organisations;
- public and private entities established in a Member State or in a non-EU country associated with the programme, or created under EU law;
- international organisations.

Information on calls for proposals for projects in the area of transport is provided on the [CINEA website](#).



The EU has a complementary role in tourism policy, supporting and coordinating the actions taken by the Member States. There is no dedicated EU budget for tourism for the 2021-2027 period. Financial support to tourism could be provided through multiple EU programmes.

Tourism across the EU has suffered an unprecedented shock as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, sharply reducing tourism flows and thus the revenues of tourism-related businesses. The European Commission has initiated measures and proposals to mitigate the impact of this crisis on the EU's tourism sector.

Beyond this immediate shock, the tourism sector is facing other, more long-term challenges related to its green and digital transformation, competitiveness, sustainability and resilience.

Several EU initiatives and programmes can provide funding for investment in tourism. For the 2021-2027 period, there are 13 programmes that could be used to finance actions in the tourism sector, under direct or shared management,

including those created to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

The [2021-2027 European Regional Development \(ERDF\) legislative framework](#) includes a specific policy objective related to sustainable tourism. Besides this specific objective, sustainable tourism can be supported through any other policy objective as long as the investments contribute to achieving the objective and comply with applicable enabling conditions or requirements. The public authorities in the Member States select projects to be financed through the operational programmes (and follow up on their implementation).

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#) provides Member States with the possibility to finance investments and reforms, including in the tourism sector, as part of their [national recovery and resilience plans \(NRRPs\)](#). The available funding from the RRF must be committed up to the end of 2023.

Below is an overview of the EU funding sources for tourism in the 2021-2027 period and the types of actions supported based on Annex I of the [ECA Special Report 27/2021: EU support to tourism](#).

The Commission has also published an [online guide on EU funding for tourism](#). The [page](#) contains links to the relevant EU programmes' websites that publish the latest developments on annual work programmes or calls for proposals and technical details per programme. It also points to examples of good projects co-funded by EU funds in the past.

Recovery and Resilience Facility

Funding as defined in the [national recovery and resilience plans](#).

European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund (ERDF/CF)

ERDF: investments to strengthen the environmental, socioeconomic sustainability and resilience of tourism in the long term, transforming the sector by learning from innovative solutions;

CF: tourism-related investments in the environment and in the trans-European transport networks, in particular in regions with an economy heavily dependent on tourism.

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

Actions to support youth employment measures; actions accompanying the green and digital transitions by driving investment in jobs and skilling opportunities.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Tourism-related investments included in the [national common agricultural policy strategic plans](#).

European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFF)

Tourism-related projects such as eco-tourism, pesca-tourism, local gastronomy (fish and seafood restaurants), accommodation, tourist trails, diving, as well as supporting local partnerships in coastal tourism.

LIFE programme

Tourism-related environmentally sustainable projects, especially those mitigating CO₂ emissions through energy efficiency or renewable energy; projects that 'marry' climate adaptation measures with tourism.

Horizon Europe

Funding for the development of new approaches, concepts and practices for sustainable, accessible and inclusive cultural tourism (Cluster 2 research activities).

Creative Europe programme

Funding for [European Capitals of Culture scheme](#); cooperation projects or platforms, including cultural events in the form of music or performing arts festivals; film festivals and markets; city branding through culture; development of the creative aspects of sustainable cultural tourism, the design and fashion sectors, and the promotion and representation of those sectors outside the EU.

Erasmus+

Projects covering mobility, developing competence and employability of young people in tourism, digital skills in cultural heritage, learning hospitality, and tourism research innovation.

Just Transition Fund

Funding for tourism SMEs: investments in fixed capital or immaterial assets. Supporting diversification of economic activity, creating new business opportunities and helping people adapt to a changing labour market.

Digital Europe programme

Funding for the creation of data spaces: the [European Common Data Space for Cultural Heritage](#) (support to the digital transformation of Europe's cultural heritage sector) and the European Mobility data space (support to inter-operability); [Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs](#): support to tourism SMEs in their digital transformation.

Single Market programme

Improving the competitiveness of tourism sector enterprises, particularly SMEs, and supporting their access to markets.

InvestEU

Investments to strengthen tourism's competitiveness, sustainability, and value chains; sustainable, innovative and digital measures that could help reduce the tourism sector's climate and environmental footprint.

Potential beneficiaries:

- businesses in the tourism sector;
- SMEs;
- regions, local authorities.



European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

The main objective of the EU fisheries policy is to facilitate the sustainable use and management of marine resources, the development of a resilient blue economy, and international cooperation towards healthy, safe and sustainably managed oceans.

The [European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund \(EMFAF\)](#) – previously the [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(EMFF\)](#) – helps achieve sustainable fisheries and conserve marine biological resources. The fund is designed to:

- help fishers in their transition to sustainable fishing;
- support coastal communities in diversifying their economies;

- finance projects that create new jobs and improve quality of life along European coasts;
- enhance sustainable aquaculture developments;
- reinforce the implementation of the maritime policy;
- stimulate the growth of a [sustainable blue economy](#).

The programme allocates [funding](#) from the EU budget to support the EU's [common fisheries policy \(CFP\)](#), the EU's maritime policy and the EU's international commitments in the area of ocean governance. It provides support for developing innovative projects ensuring that aquatic and maritime resources are used sustainably.

The EMFAF pursues the following priorities:

- fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources;
- fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the EU;
- enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities;
- strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed.

In particular it facilitates:

- the transition to sustainable and low-carbon fishing;
- the protection of marine biodiversity and ecosystems;
- the supply of quality and healthy seafood to EU consumers;
- the socio-economic attractiveness and the generational renewal of the fishing sector, in particular as regards small-scale coastal fisheries;
- the development of a sustainable and competitive aquaculture contributing to food security;
- the improvement of skills and working conditions in the fishing and aquaculture sectors;
- the economic and social vitality of coastal communities;
- innovation in the sustainable blue economy;
- maritime security towards a safe maritime space;

- international cooperation towards healthy, safe and sustainably managed oceans.

The EMFAF funds actions supporting the improvement of fishing gear, facilities and practices; innovation and sustainability of the blue economy sector; improvement of aquaculture facilities and greening of the sector; and quality and sustainability of marine food sources.

The [EMFAF Regulation](#) also contains a **negative list** of operations or expenditure that are not eligible for EMFAF support:

- operations that increase the fishing capacity of a fishing vessel;
- the acquisition of equipment that increases the ability of a fishing vessel to find fish;
- the construction, acquisition or importation of fishing vessels;
- the transfer or reflagging of fishing vessels to third countries, including through the creation of joint ventures with partners of third countries;
- the temporary or permanent cessation of fishing activities;
- exploratory fishing;
- the transfer of ownership of a business;
- direct restocking, except explicitly provided for as a reintroduction measure or other conservation measures in an EU legal act or in the case of experimental restocking;
- the construction of new ports or new auction halls, with the exception of new landing sites;
- market intervention mechanisms aiming to temporarily or permanently withdraw fishery or aquaculture products from the market with a view to reducing supply in order to prevent price decline or to drive up prices;
- investments on board fishing vessels necessary to comply with the requirements under EU law in force at the time of submission of the application for support;
- investments on board fishing vessels that have carried out fishing activities for less than 60 days in the two calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support;
- the replacement or modernisation of a main or ancillary engine of a fishing vessel.

Both shared and direct forms of management are applied in managing the

programme. Some 87 % of the EMFAF budget co-finances projects alongside national funding streams, with each Member State receiving a share of the total budget. Member States draw up their national operational programmes, specifying how they intend to invest the funds. Once approved by the Commission, national authorities decide which projects they wish to support (shared management). Some 3 % (€797 million) of the budget is either managed directly (direct management) by the European Commission services or delegated to [European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency \(CINEA\)](#).

To see if a project is eligible for EMFAF support, potential beneficiaries have to check with the [national authority](#) in charge of managing the operational programme in each EU country.

[Tender opportunities](#) in maritime affairs and fisheries can be found on the website of the Commission by clicking on the hyperlink.

Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

Community-led local development (CLLD)

Community-led local development (CLLD) also empowers coastal communities to design and implement local projects with support from the EU. CLLD is a term used by the European Commission to describe an approach that turns traditional 'top down' development policy on its head: local people take the reins and form a local partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy. The local partnership receives long-term funding from EMFAF or another fund, and decides how it is spent. Current fisheries partnerships have been supported by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network ([FAMENET](#)). This network supports stakeholders in the implementation of the EMFF and EMFAF in three core areas:

- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the EMFAF and the EMFF;
- implementing the CLLD in fisheries and aquaculture areas to foster a sustainable blue economy;
- communicating on the results of the EMFF and EMFAF through written stories and videos, and supporting the INFORM EU network.

FAMENET organises events for managing authorities, experts and other bodies to communicate on the latest working papers, to foster dialogue and capacity-building between stakeholders, and to ensure that all Member States receive the support they need.

Potential beneficiaries:

- fishers;
- aquaculture farmers;
- coastal communities;
- civil society organisations;
- marine scientists;
- public authorities;
- other stakeholders involved in the exploitation and management of marine resources.

NEXT GENERATION EU (NGEU) FOR POST-COVID RECOVERY, HEALTH, SUSTAINABLE AND DIGITAL TRANSITION



In 2020, the European Union provided an unprecedented response to the coronavirus crisis that hit Europe and the world. At its heart is a stimulus package worth €2.018 trillion in current prices (€1.8 trillion in 2018 prices). It consists of the EU's long-term budget for 2021 to 2027 of €1.211 trillion (€1.074 trillion in 2018 prices), topped up by €806.9 billion (€750 billion in 2018 prices) through [Next Generation EU](#), a temporary instrument to power the EU's recovery.

The aim of Next Generation EU is to help repair the immediate economic and social damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic and make the EU fit for the future. The instrument will help build a post-COVID-19 EU that is greener, more digital, more resilient and fit for the current and forthcoming challenges. The centrepiece of Next Generation EU is the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) – an instrument for providing grants and loans to support reforms and investments in the EU Member States at a total value of €723.8 billion. Part of the funds – €338.0 billion – will be provided in the form of grants. The remainder –

€385.8 billion – will be used to provide loans from the EU to individual Member States on favourable conditions, which will be repaid by those Member States.

The funds under the Recovery and Resilience Facility will be distributed according to national recovery and resilience plans prepared by each Member State, in cooperation with the European Commission and in line with an agreed allocation key.

Next Generation EU will also reinforce several existing EU programmes and policies, as follows:

- the **cohesion policy** under the recovery assistance for cohesion and the territories of Europe (**REACT-EU**), to help address the economic consequences of the pandemic in the first years of the recovery;
- the **Just Transition Fund**, to guarantee that the transition to climate neutrality works for all;
- the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development**, to further support farmers;
- **InvestEU**, to support the investment efforts of EU businesses;
- **rescEU**, safeguards that the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has the capacity to respond to large-scale emergencies;
- **Horizon Europe**, to make sure the EU has the capacity to fund more excellence in research.

To finance Next Generation EU, the EU will borrow on the markets. Repayment will take place over a long-term period, until 2058. This will avoid placing immediate pressure on Member States' national finances and enable them to focus their efforts on the recovery.

More than 50 % of the EU's long-term budget and Next Generation EU will be used in support of the following priorities:

- research and innovation, through Horizon Europe;
- fair climate and digital transitions, through the Just Transition Fund and the Digital Europe programme;
- preparedness, recovery and resilience, via the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU), and the health programme, EU4Health.

Some 30 % of the EU's long-term budget and Next Generation EU will be spent on fighting climate change. These funds are part of a major investment plan that the EU will put in place to green the economy. It will combine EU and national public funds, and public and private investments to support the EU on its path to climate neutrality by 2050.

Recovery and Resilience Facility

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#), which entered into force on 19 February 2021, is a temporary recovery instrument. It aims to help the EU achieve its target of climate neutrality by 2050 and to set it on a path of digital transition, creating jobs and spurring growth in the process. It has been financing reforms and investments in Member States since the start of the pandemic in February 2020 and will continue to do so until 31 December 2026. The RRF provides large-scale financial support to public investments that are channelled towards projects in six key areas (pillars): green transition; digital transformation; economic cohesion, productivity and competitiveness; social and territorial cohesion; health, economic, social and institutional resilience; and policies for the next generation. The support is given in the form of grants (€338.0 billion) and loans (€385.8 billion), in current prices.

The [grant component of the RRF](#) is divided among EU countries according to several allocation criteria. These include gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, unemployment levels, population and the impact of the coronavirus crisis.

In order to receive support from the RRF, EU countries need to submit recovery and resilience plans to the Commission, explaining how they will spend the money. These plans need to take into account the challenges identified in the [European Semester](#), in particular, the [country-specific recommendations](#) of 2019 and 2020. Furthermore, the plans need to set out the reform and investment agenda of the Member State concerned. Recovery and resilience plans that are eligible for financing under the RRF should also list measures for the implementation of reforms and public investment through a comprehensive and coherent package, which may also include public schemes that aim to incentivise private investment. The Commission will assess these plans and the European Council will then approve them. Money will be disbursed upon the achievement of milestones and targets Member States have themselves committed to.

As mentioned above, the Recovery and Resilience Facility applies to policy areas of EU relevance structured in six pillars:

1. green transition;
2. digital transformation;
3. smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including economic cohesion, jobs, productivity, competitiveness, research, development and innovation, and a well-functioning internal market with strong SMEs;
4. social and territorial cohesion;
5. health, and economic, social and institutional resilience, with the aim of, inter alia, increasing crisis preparedness and crisis response capacity;
6. policies for the next generation, children and young people, such as education and skills.

Support under the RRF is additional to the support provided under other EU programmes and instruments. Reforms and investment projects may receive support from other EU programmes and instruments provided that such support does not cover the same cost.

Apart from grants, the RRF also has a loan component. Until 31 December 2023, upon request from a Member State, the Commission may grant the Member State concerned a loan for the implementation of its recovery and resilience plan. There is a ceiling for the maximum volume of loans for each Member State at 6.8 % of its GNI. The timeline for committing the funds is limited to the end of 2023.

Some 20 % of the Recovery and Resilience Facility funds will be invested in the EU's digital transformation. These funds will help the EU invest more in supercomputing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills and the wider use of digital technologies across the economy and society.

Furthermore, the RRF will contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and environmental sustainability by supporting measures that account for an amount representing at least 37 % of the Member States' recovery and resilience plans' total allocation. RRF will also contribute to mainstreaming biodiversity action in EU policies. Reforms and investments included in the Member States' recovery and resilience plans will include a 'do no significant harm' principle, meaning that they should not be to the detriment of climate and environmental objectives.

For 70 % of the total of €312.5 billion available in grants, the allocation key will be based on each Member State's population (the inverse of its per capita GDP) and its average unemployment rate over the past five years (2015-2019) against the EU average. For the remaining 30 %, instead of the unemployment rate (2015-2019), consideration will be given to the observed loss in real GDP over 2020 and the observed cumulative loss in real GDP over the 2020-2021 period.

Member States' plans should propose a congruent set of reforms and public investment projects to be implemented until the end of 2026. Funding will be available for three years (up to 13 % of pre-financing will be available upon approval of the plans). Projects commenced on 1 February 2020 and onwards are eligible for support.

More information about the programming and allocation of funding for the individual Member States is available on the [RRF webpage](#).

InvestEU

The InvestEU programme is a single investment support mechanism for the 2021-2027 period. It brings together various EU financial instruments for internal policies previously supported by different funds and programmes linked to the EU budget. [InvestEU](#) supports sustainable investment, innovation and job creation in the EU. It is suited to providing long-term funding to companies and to supporting EU policies in recovery from a deep economic and social crisis. Its guarantee amounts to €26.2 billion, with provisioning from the MFF and resources from Next Generation EU. The overall investment to be mobilised on this basis is estimated at more than €372 billion over the 2021-2027 period. It brings together, under one roof, the European Fund for Strategic Investments and 13 other EU financial instruments.

InvestEU was designed to ensure it benefits all Member States, irrespective of their size or development of their financial market. There are no national envelopes as this is a market-based and demand-driven instrument. Member States are able to allocate amounts to InvestEU from funds under shared management and from the Recovery and Resilience Facility. InvestEU supports the following [policy areas](#):

Energy sector:

- the expansion of the generation, supply or use of clean and sustainable renewable, as well as safe and sustainable zero- and low-emission energy sources and solutions;
- energy efficiency and energy savings (with a focus on reducing demand through demand-side management and the refurbishment of buildings);
- the development, smartening and modernisation of sustainable energy infrastructure, in particular storage technologies, electricity interconnections between Member States and smart grids, both at the transmission and the distribution levels;
- the development of innovative zero- and low-emission heat supply systems and the combined production of electricity and heat;
- the production and supply of sustainable synthetic fuels from renewable/ carbon-neutral sources and other safe and sustainable zero- and low-emission sources, biofuels, biomass and alternative fuels, including fuels for all modes of transport;
- infrastructure for carbon capture and storage in industrial processes, bioenergy plants and manufacturing facilities to assist the energy transition;
- critical infrastructure, whether physical or virtual, including infrastructure elements identified as critical, as well as land and real estate crucial for the use of such critical infrastructure and the provision of goods and services instrumental to the operation and maintenance of the critical infrastructure.

Sustainability:

- projects that support the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) infrastructure, including infrastructure maintenance and safety, the urban nodes of TEN-T, maritime and inland ports, airports, multimodal terminals and the connection of such multimodal terminals to the TEN-T;
- smart and sustainable urban mobility projects that target low-emission urban transport modes, including inland waterway solutions and innovative mobility solutions, non-discriminatory accessibility, reduced air pollution and noise, energy consumption, networks of smart cities, maintenance, and increasing safety levels;

- railway infrastructure, other rail projects, inland waterway infrastructure, mass transit projects and maritime ports and motorways of the sea;
- projects to maintain or upgrade existing transport infrastructure, including motorways on the TEN-T, where necessary, to upgrade, maintain or improve road safety, to develop Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) services or to guarantee infrastructure integrity and standards, to develop safe parking areas and facilities, as well as recharging and refuelling stations for alternative fuels.

Environment:

- water, including drinking water supply and sanitation, and network efficiency, leakage reduction, infrastructure for the collection and treatment of waste water, coastal infrastructure and other water-related green infrastructure;
- waste management infrastructure;
- projects and enterprises in the areas of environmental resource management and sustainable technologies;
- the enhancement and restoration of ecosystems and their services, including through the enhancement of nature and biodiversity by means of green and blue infrastructure projects;
- sustainable urban, rural and coastal development;
- climate change actions, climate adaptation and mitigation, including disaster risk reduction;
- projects and enterprises that implement the circular economy by integrating resource-efficiency aspects in the production and product life cycle, including the sustainable supply of primary and secondary raw materials;
- the decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries and the substantial reduction of emissions in such industries, including the demonstration of innovative low-emission technologies and their deployment;
- the decarbonisation of the energy production and distribution chain by phasing out the use of coal and oil;
- projects that promote sustainable cultural heritage.

Research, innovation and digitalisation:

- research, product development and innovation activities;
- the development of digital connectivity infrastructure, whether physical or virtual, in particular through projects that support the deployment of very high-capacity digital networks or 5G connectivity or that improve digital connectivity and access, particularly in rural areas and peripheral regions;
- research and innovation projects that contribute to the objectives of Horizon Europe, including research infrastructure and support to academia;
- corporate projects, including training and promoting the creation of clusters and business networks;
- transfer of technologies and research results to the market, supporting market enablers and cooperation between enterprises;
- demonstration and deployment of innovative solutions and support to the scaling-up of innovative companies as well as the digitalisation of EU industry;
- research in the area of key enabling technologies (KETs) and their industrial applications, including new and advanced materials;
- new effective and accessible healthcare products, including research, development, innovation and manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, diagnostics and advanced therapy medicinal products and new antimicrobials, as well as innovative development processes that avoid using animal testing;
- the development, deployment and scaling-up of digital technologies and services, especially digital technologies and services, including media, online service platforms and secure digital communication, that contribute to the objectives of the Digital Europe Programme.

SMEs:

- financial support to entities employing up to 499 employees, with a particular focus on SMEs and small mid-cap companies;
- access to and availability of finance primarily for SMEs, including innovative ones and those operating in the cultural and creative sectors, as well as for small mid-cap companies;
- support in particular for businesses with difficulties in accessing finance: start-ups, younger and smaller companies, businesses with a perceived higher risk and lacking (sufficient) collateral, and innovative ones.

Social investment and skills:

- microfinance;
- social enterprise finance and the social economy;
- measures to promote gender equality skills, education, training and related services;
- social infrastructure (including health and educational infrastructure and social and student housing);
- social innovation, including social impact, impact investing and social outcome contracting;
- health and long-term care;
- inclusion and accessibility;
- cultural and creative activities with a social goal;
- integration of vulnerable people, including third-country nationals.

Other areas to which funding may be channelled include:

- the cultural and creative sectors, cultural heritage, the rehabilitation of industrial sites (including contaminated sites) and the restoration of such sites for sustainable use;
- the media, the audiovisual sector, journalism and the press, in particular through the development of new technologies, the use of digital technologies and technological management of intellectual property rights;
- tourism;
- sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and other elements of the wider sustainable bioeconomy;
- social investments, including those supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- the development of the defence industry in order to contribute to the EU's strategic autonomy, space, in particular in relation to the development of the space sector in line with the objectives of the space strategy for Europe;
- seas and oceans, through the development of projects and enterprises in the area of the blue economy, and the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles, in particular through maritime entrepreneurship and industry, renewable marine energy and the circular economy.

All areas may cover strategic investments including important projects of common European interest to support final recipients whose activities are of strategic importance to the EU, in particular in view of the green and digital transitions, of enhanced resilience and of strengthening strategic value chains.

In order to benefit from InvestEU financing, potential projects must:

- address market failures or investment gaps and be economically viable;
- need EU backing in order to get off the ground;
- achieve a multiplier effect and where possible crowd-in private investment;
- help meet EU policy objectives.

Within the InvestEU Regulation, the policy areas eligible for financing and investment operations are presented in [Annex II](#). Annex V to the same regulation mentions various activities that are excluded from funding. In addition, the InvestEU programme also provides for a dedicated scheme to generate additional investment to the benefit of Just Transition territories – those that are most affected by the socio-economic consequences of the green transition – in complementarity with the Just Transition Fund and the public sector loan facility.

The guarantee available under the InvestEU programme is implemented via selected financial partners, (implementing partners). The main partner is the EIB Group, which will be responsible for implementing 75 % of the EU guarantee. For the first time, the EU guarantee is also open to national promotional banks and international financial institutions.

Two further components complement InvestEU:

The [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#) provides technical support and assistance to help with the preparation, development, structuring and implementation of projects, including capacity-building. The InvestEU Advisory Hub complements the InvestEU Fund by supporting the identification, preparation and development of investment projects across the European Union. Together with the InvestEU Portal – the EU's online matchmaking tool – the aim is to strengthen the EU's investment and business environment. The InvestEU Advisory Hub connects project promoters and intermediaries with advisory partners, who work directly together to help projects reach the financing stage. It is the central entry point for project promoters and intermediaries seeking advisory support and technical assistance related to centrally managed EU investment funds.

The [InvestEU Portal](#) brings together investors and project promoters by providing an easily accessible and user-friendly database. The InvestEU Portal allows project promoters to reach investors that they may not be able to reach otherwise. It provides project promoters with more options to finance their projects.

Potential beneficiaries:

- large companies;
- investors;
- SMEs.

Technical Support Instrument

The main objective of the [Technical Support Instrument](#) (TSI) is to promote the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion by supporting Member States' efforts to implement the reforms necessary to achieve economic and social recovery, resilience, and upward economic and social convergence. The instrument assists national authorities in improving their capacity to design, develop and implement reforms, and to prepare, amend, implement and revise national recovery and resilience plans.

The instrument provides tailor-made expertise to support public authorities in their efforts to design and implement reforms in a broad range of policy domains. These include areas related to governance and public administration, revenue administration and management of public finance, sustainable growth and the business environment, the labour market, education, health and social services, the financial sector and access to finance. Specific emphasis is given to actions that foster the green and the digital transitions.

EU Member States wishing to receive technical support have to submit a request to the Commission through their national coordinating authority by 31 October of each year. The Commission analyses these requests and, together with the national coordinating authorities assesses the countries' specific needs and the options to support the design and implementation of their reforms.

Support may be provided directly by the Commission's in-house experts or by other providers, such as:

- experts from EU Member States' national administrations (TAIEX);
- international organisations;
- private firms and consultancies;
- individual experts from the private sector.

The instrument is managed directly by the European Commission and indirectly by international organisations and other bodies that get entrusted with handling various tasks. Funds are disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- Member State authorities.



European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The **ESF+** is the EU's **main instrument for investing in people**, with the aim of building a more social and inclusive EU. The ESF+ provides an important contribution to the EU's employment, social, education and skills policies, including structural reforms in these areas. The fund is also one of the cornerstones of the EU's socioeconomic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

For the 2021-2027 period, for simplification, the ESF has been merged with the **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)**, the **Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD)** and the directly managed **Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme**, to become the ESF+. The aim of the ESF+ is to achieve **high employment levels**, fair **social protection** and a **skilled and resilient workforce** for the future world of work, in line with the principles set out in the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. The fund supports the EU's green, digital and resilient recovery from the crisis by driving investment in jobs, skills and services.

Main objectives of the ESF+

The **ESF+** supports the following:

1. social innovation;
2. investments in young people to help them find a qualification and a good-quality job and improve their education;
3. training and lifelong learning;
4. investments in capacity-building and transnational/cross-border cooperation to strengthen fair working conditions;
5. foster equal labour-market opportunities and enhance labour mobility;
6. combating child poverty and helping the most vulnerable in society who are suffering from job losses and income reductions;
7. providing food and basic material assistance to the most deprived.

Member States use the ESF+ to tackle the socio-economic crisis caused by the **coronavirus pandemic**. Under **thematic concentrations**, resources should be concentrated in the following areas:

- **social inequalities and poverty:** Member States should allocate at least 25 % of their ESF+ resources to the promotion of social inclusion. In addition, the **FEAD** has been integrated in the ESF+ to provide food and basic material assistance. Member States must devote at least 3 % of their ESF+ resources to FEAD-related activities;
- **youth unemployment:** All Member States must allocate an appropriate amount of their ESF+ resources to targeted actions and structural reforms in support of youth employment. Member States above the EU average rate of young people aged 15 to 29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) for the years 2017-2019 should devote at least 12.5 % of their ESF+ resources to youth. Under the **reinforced Youth Guarantee**, Member States need to ensure that young people up to the age of 30 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed;

- **child poverty:** The ESF+ requires Member States most affected by child poverty to allocate at least 5 % of their ESF+ resources to implementing measures for reducing it. All other Member States must allocate an appropriate amount to this end;
- **the capacity of social partners and civil society:** All Member States should allocate an appropriate amount to building the capacities of social partners and civil society. Member States that have a European Semester country-specific recommendation (CSR) in this area should allocate at least 0.25 % of their ESF+ resources under shared management to this goal.

Potential beneficiaries:

- organisations of workers and employers, and organisations providing training and support to workers;
- NGOs and charities, foundations and organisations of a social character;
- government, municipal and regional authorities;
- companies and associations;
- EU citizens, young people and children, people from vulnerable groups.

Modes of implementation

ESF+ in partnership

ESF+ funding is mostly available through the Member States and regions. Support is implemented under shared management (by the European Commission and national authorities jointly) and indirect management, by partner organisations or other authorities. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, procurements and financial instruments.

Organisations and individuals interested in ESF+ funding for a project should contact the ESF+ managing authority in their country or region. National and regional ESF+ websites, as well as local employment services are also a good source of information on opportunities proposed by the ESF+.

Some examples of the **type of projects that are eligible for funding** are:

- studies, actions and training aimed at investing in people;
- job creation and protection;

- promotion of social inclusion;
- fighting poverty;
- developing the skills needed for the digital and green transitions;
- investing in young people;
- addressing child poverty;
- the purchasing and distribution of food;
- the provision of basic material assistance to the most deprived.

ESF+ direct (Employment and Social Innovation – EaSI strand)

The [EaSI strand](#) builds on the former EaSI programme, maintaining the focus on evidence-based policy-making and social experimentation, support to job mobility and the non-financial instrument activities related to the former [Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship](#) axis. As part of ESF+ the EaSI strand follows the same policy objectives as ESF+ with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) as the main framework.

EaSI is centred on the following main policy priorities:

- employment and skills;
- labour markets and labour mobility;
- social protection and active inclusion;
- working conditions.

EaSI supports analytical activities (surveys, studies, statistical data, methodologies, classifications, micro-simulations, indicators, support to EU-level observatories and benchmarks) to promote evidence-based policy-making in the areas of employment and social policy. Under EaSI, stakeholders can benefit from networking and capacity-building activities.

To counter labour market shortcomings and develop an integrated EU labour market, it finances cross-border partnerships and services in cross-border regions as well as EU-wide targeted labour mobility schemes with a view to filling vacancies where labour market imbalances have been identified.

Communication and dissemination activities are a crucial part of the programme as well, notably mutual learning through exchange of practices, innovative approaches, peer reviews and benchmarking, as well as reports, information materials and media coverage.

Under the ESF+ EaSI strand, projects are promoted at the '[Projects & Results](#)' section on the [ESF+ EaSI page on the Funding and Tenders](#) portal.

ESF Social Innovation and transnational cooperation+

The [ESF Social Innovation+ initiative](#) aims to facilitate the transfer and/or upscaling of innovative solutions in response to the societal challenges of today. Through supporting transnational cooperation, the initiative aims to expand best practices in fields including employment, education, skills and social inclusion across the EU. It is administered through indirect management. Following a call for expression of interest, the Lithuanian [European Social Fund Agency \(ESFA\)](#) was selected to handle the indirect management of the initiative during the 2021-2027 period. The first activities under the initiative started in the second half of 2022, following the formalisation of ESFA's administrative role.

The initiative is implemented through two work streams:

- **Social innovation grant scheme:** The initiative will launch EU-level calls for proposals. These will be aimed at supporting transnational projects that facilitate the transfer and/or upscaling of social innovations. This will include several types of action. Some projects will conceptualise and validate tested approaches, others will help to roll out validated models across the EU, and yet others will help the social innovation support organisations to improve their capacities.
- **European Competence Centre for Social Innovation:** A European Competence Centre for Social Innovation has been established as part of this initiative. The centre offers mutual learning, capacity-building and networking activities for ESF+ managing authorities and other relevant stakeholders. It collects, assesses, develops, validates and disseminates suitable tools and methods for social innovation, one of which will be the European Social Innovation database. The centre works in close cooperation with the [national competence centres for social innovation](#), and continues the work of the communities of practice (online groups where people with similar interests from the adult learning sector can get together) on employment, education and skills, social inclusion and social innovation.

Other instruments

Single Market programme

The [Single Market programme \(SMP\)](#) is the EU funding programme to help the single market reach its full potential and ensure the EU's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The SMP is the successor of the [COSME programme](#). It provides various forms of support to businesses, in particular SMEs to boost their competitiveness and sustainability.

In particular, it:

- facilitates access to markets;
- promotes entrepreneurship and the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills;
- promotes the modernisation of industry and address global and societal challenges.

All kinds of information – including the relevant legislation and rules for participation, templates for proposals, evaluations and project reporting – can be accessed at the [Funding and tender portal](#).

Progress Microfinance Facility

The [European Progress Microfinance Facility \(Progress Microfinance\)](#) offers loans below €25 000 for setting up or developing a small business. It is being implemented through the [EaSI programme](#). The EaSI programme does not directly finance entrepreneurs but enables [selected microcredit providers](#) in the EU to increase lending by issuing guarantees, thereby sharing the providers' potential risk of loss. In addition, the European Commission is providing support for building the capacity of selected microcredit providers: private or public banks, non-bank microfinance institutions and not-for-profit microcredit providers. The conditions for microloans to entrepreneurs – amount, duration, interest rates and fees, timeframe to get a loan – depend on the particular microcredit provider.

Potential beneficiaries:

- self-employed persons;
- developers of a microenterprise (fewer than ten employees), particularly a social enterprise;
- unemployed persons;

- persons who have taken time out of the labour market;
- disadvantaged persons having difficulty getting conventional credit.

European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Persons (EGF)

The [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers \(EGF\)](#) is a special EU instrument to express EU solidarity with EU workers or the self-employed that have been displaced due to restructuring, and to help them find new jobs by improving their skills and employability. That way the EGF contributes to the creation of a more dynamic and competitive EU economy. The EGF also helps low-skilled and disadvantaged jobseekers deal with new challenges on the labour market.

As a general rule, the EGF can be activated when over 200 workers are laid off by a single company (including its suppliers and downstream producers), by companies in various sectors in the same region or in a particular sector in one or more neighbouring regions. Those who lose their job due to the coronavirus crisis, digitalisation, automation, the transition to a low-carbon economy, or other changes, are eligible for support, no matter what caused the job displacement. The EGF can fund from 60 % to 85 % of the cost of projects designed to help workers made redundant find another job or set up their own businesses. National or regional authorities implement and manage EGF cases. Each project runs for two years.

The EGF adds to existing job market assistance services by providing personalised measures for the unemployed. Individuals, representative organisations or employers affected by redundancies and wishing to ensure that the redundant workers benefit from EGF support should get in touch with the [EGF contact person for their Member State](#).

The EGF can co-finance measures such as:

- help with looking for a job;
- career advice;
- education, training and re-training;
- mentoring and coaching;
- entrepreneurship and business creation.

It can also provide training or subsistence allowances or similar support, including allowances for carers, mobility and relocation allowances, and employers' recruitment incentives.

The EGF does **not** co-finance social protection measures such as pensions or unemployment benefits.

Potential beneficiaries:

- individual workers that have been laid off;
- self-employed, temporary and fixed-term workers made redundant;
- low-skilled and disadvantaged jobseekers.

The EGF does **not** provide support to companies to stay in business, modernise or restructure.

The rules on intervention criteria, eligible beneficiaries, and measures are set out in the [EGF Regulation](#). The EGF differs significantly from the EU structural and investment funds, as it provides workers with one-off individual support that is limited in time.



Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

The *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)* aims to boost national capacities and improve procedures for migration management, as well as to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing between Member States, in particular through emergency assistance and the relocation mechanism.

AMIF contributes to the achievement of four specific objectives:

1. to strengthen and develop all aspects of the common European asylum system, including its external dimension;
2. to support legal migration to the Member States, including by contributing to the integration of third-country nationals;

3. to contribute to countering irregular migration and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries;
4. to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by migration and asylum challenges.

AMIF funds a wide range of initiatives, including:

- ensuring a uniform application of the EU *acquis* (the common set of EU rules applicable to all of its Member States) and of the priorities related to the Common European Asylum System, legal migration and return;
- providing support and services consistent with the status and the needs of the person concerned, in particular persons from vulnerable groups;
- supporting resettlement, humanitarian admission and transfers of applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection;
- supporting the development and implementation of policies promoting legal migration to the EU, for instance, through mobility schemes and actions focused on raising awareness of the appropriate legal channels for immigration;
- supporting integration measures tailored to the needs of third-country nationals and early integration programmes focusing on their education, language training and other forms of training (such as civic orientation courses and professional guidance) to prepare their active participation in and their acceptance by the receiving society;
- supporting infrastructure for the reception of third-country nationals, including the possible joint use of such facilities by more than one Member State;
- supporting an integrated and coordinated approach to return management at the EU and Member States' level, development of capacities for effective and sustainable return and reducing incentives for irregular migration;
- supporting assisted voluntary return and reintegration;
- cooperating with third countries on asylum, legal migration and countering irregular migration and on effective return and readmission for the purpose of managing migration.

The management of the fund is direct, indirect and shared. The resources are allocated to the national programmes (shared management) and to a **Thematic Facility**; under the latter, resources are used for emerging or unforeseen needs and for responding to the shift in EU priorities and to evolving challenges.

Funding under the Thematic Facility is allocated during the programming period through:

- **shared management:** including resettlement and humanitarian admission, transfers of beneficiaries of international protection and applicants for international protection;
- **direct management:** including EU actions (that is, calls for proposals, procurement, direct awards and delegation agreements), emergency assistance, support for local and regional authorities in their integration work with third-country nationals;
- **indirect management:** including EU actions and emergency assistance through international organisations.

In terms of integration, for example, the future calls for proposals under the programme are meant to provide support to the implementation of the action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027. The fund will therefore support proposals targeting four key actions:

- integration and inclusion at regional and local level;
- access to health care;
- improving digital skills among migrants;
- promoting community sponsorship schemes and complementary pathways.

Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- state and federal authorities;
- local public bodies;
- NGOs and humanitarian organisations;
- private and public law companies;
- education and research organisations.

Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF)

The Integrated Border Management Fund is made up of two components:

1. the [Border Management and Visa Instrument \(BMVI\)](#);
2. the [Customs Control Equipment Instrument \(CCEI\)](#).

Border Management and Visa Instrument

The main objective of the Border Management and Visa Instrument is to ensure strong and effective integrated **border management at the EU's external borders** while safeguarding the **free movement of people within its borders**.

The fund supports border management at the EU's external borders in order to facilitate legitimate border crossings, prevent and detect illegal immigration and cross-border crime, and manage migratory movements; it supports the **common visa policy** with regard to issuing visas and facilitating legitimate travel while helping to prevent migratory and security risks.

In particular, the fund supports:

- the [European Border and Coast Guard Agency \(Frontex\)](#);
- the interoperability of EU information systems, including the [entry/exit system \(EES\)](#);
- the [visa information system \(VIS\)](#);
- the [European travel information and authorisation system \(ETIAS\)](#) – currently not yet in operation;
- [Eurodac](#) (the EU's fingerprint database);
- the [Schengen information system \(SIS II\)](#);
- training and deployment of experts.

BMVI funds a wide range of initiatives, such as:

- improving border controls, in line with the European Agenda on Migration and in compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- enhancing EU-level cooperation for tasks carried out at borders;
- funding efficient services to visa applicants while maintaining the security and integrity of visa procedures;
- investing in common large-scale IT systems in the area of borders management and visa policy, including in their interoperability;

- investing in infrastructure and equipment, systems and services, training, exchange of experts, deployment of immigration liaison officers, innovative solutions and new technologies;
- providing operating support for the implementation of the EU integrated border management and of the common visa policy.

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU national authorities responsible for border management, including coastguards, to the extent that they carry out border control tasks;
- the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the national authorities responsible for returns and, as well as other state and federal authorities;
- local public bodies;
- non-governmental organisations, international organisations;
- EU agencies;
- private and public law companies;
- networks;
- education and research organisations.

Customs Control Equipment Instrument

The Customs Control Equipment Instrument allows Member States to purchase, maintain and upgrade state-of-the-art customs equipment such as new scanners, automated number plate detection systems, teams of sniffer dogs and mobile laboratories for sample analysis.

Equipment is eligible for purchase only if it relates to at least one of the six following purposes:

1. non-intrusive inspection;
2. indication of hidden objects on humans;
3. radiation detection and nuclide identification;
4. analysis of samples in laboratories;
5. sampling and field analysis of samples;
6. handheld search.

The instrument also supports the purchase or upgrade of customs control equipment for testing new equipment or new conditions on the ground before Member States start large-scale purchases of new equipment.

The programme is implemented through direct management. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU Member States' customs authorities.



Internal Security Fund (ISF)

The [Internal Security Fund](#) contributes to efforts to maintain a high level of security in the EU, in particular by preventing and combating terrorism, radicalisation, serious and organised crime and cybercrime, by assisting and protecting victims of crime, and by preparing for, protecting against and effectively managing security-related incidents, risks and crises.

The ISF has three specific objectives:

1. improving/facilitating the exchange of information (between Member States' authorities, relevant EU bodies, non-EU countries and international organisations);
2. improving/intensifying cross-border cooperation, including joint operations in relation to terrorism and serious and organised crime with a cross-border dimension;

3. strengthening Member States' capabilities to prevent/combat crime, terrorism and radicalisation as well as manage security-related incidents, risks and crises.

The ISF funds a wide range of initiatives, such as:

- the purchase/procurement of ICT systems and the associated training, testing as well as actions to improve their interoperability and data quality;
- monitoring of the implementation of EU law and policy objectives in the Member States in the area of security information systems;
- operations implementing or facilitating the implementation of the EU policy cycle/EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats);
- support to thematic or cross-theme networks of specialised national units to improve mutual confidence, exchange and dissemination of know-how, information, experiences and best practices, pooling of resources and expertise in joint centres of excellence;
- education and training for relevant law enforcement and judicial authorities and administrative agencies.

The management of the fund is direct, indirect and shared. The largest share is allocated to the national programmes under shared management and to a thematic facility to be used for specific actions. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- state/federal police;
- customs and other specialised law enforcement services (including national cybercrime units, antiterrorism units and other specialised units);
- local public bodies, non-governmental organisations, international organisations;
- EU agencies;
- private and public law companies;
- networks;
- research institutes and universities.

European Defence Fund (EDF)

The [European Defence Fund \(EDF\)](#) is the Commission's initiative to support collaborative defence research and development, and to foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base. Complementing and amplifying Member States' efforts, the fund promotes cooperation among companies and research entities of all sizes and geographical origins in the EU, in the research and development of state-of-the-art and interoperable defence technology and equipment. The fund supports competitive and collaborative projects throughout the entire cycle of research and development for a bigger impact on EU defence capability and the EU defence industry.

It strongly encourages participation of SMEs in collaborative projects and fosters innovative solutions.

The EDF is implemented through annual work programmes structured along 17 thematic and horizontal categories of actions.

In general only collaborative projects are eligible, with at least three participants from at least three different Member States or associated countries. For disruptive technologies, eligible projects should be composed of at least two participants from at least two Member States.

Projects are defined in conformity with priorities set with the Member States. Their aim is to contribute to the security and defence interests of the EU, in line with the defence capability priorities agreed by the Member States within the framework of the common security and defence policy and particularly in the context of the capability development plan, and taking into account, where appropriate, priorities from other regional and international organisations (e.g. NATO).

The fund incentivises the **cross-border participation of SMEs** by providing higher funding rates and favouring projects by consortia that include SMEs.

4-8 % of the budget is set aside to support innovative disruptive technologies for defence that are aimed at boosting the EU's long-term technological leadership and contributing to high-end defence products.

To ensure that EU resources are put to good use, the development of common prototypes is funded only where **Member States intend to buy the final product or use the technology in a coordinated manner**. No capability is owned by the EU.

If eligible, activities developed in the context of **permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)** may receive a higher EU funding rate through the coverage of an additional 10 % of eligible costs.



CIVIL PROTECTION, PROTECTION FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

EU Civil Protection Mechanism and rescEU

The EU plays a key role in coordinating the response to disasters in Europe and beyond. Disasters have affected every region of Europe in recent years, causing hundreds of casualties and billions of euros in damage to infrastructure and the environment. **Epidemics, flash floods, storms, forest fires, earthquakes** and human-induced disasters are continuously putting countries' response capabilities under pressure. Additionally, security concerns have become more complex and climate change is expected to worsen the impact of disasters in the future.

Conflict on the European continent, extreme weather conditions and emerging threats, such as **COVID-19**, have overwhelmed the ability of Member States to help each other, especially when several countries face the same type of crisis simultaneously. In such cases, when Member States require a boost to provide a strong response to crises, the EU provides an extra layer of protection. When

the scale of an emergency overwhelms the possibilities of a country to respond on its own, it can request assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

In 2019, the European Commission upgraded the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) and created [rescEU](#) to reinforce and strengthen components of the EU's disaster risk management. It aims to both protect citizens from disasters and manage emerging risks.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism intervenes in all phases of the disaster risk management cycle – prevention, preparedness and response – and can be activated by any country in the world hit by an emergency. Under the mechanism, rescEU provides a strategic reserve of capacities such as firefighting planes and helicopters, and stockpiles of protective and medical equipment, or capacities for addressing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. rescEU provides a safety net when national capacities are overwhelmed. The newly created [EU Civil Protection Knowledge Network](#) also facilitates better coordination of these activities.

The [mechanism](#) provides funding for various type of projects, such as:

- training and exercises for civil protection experts;
- prevention activities, research, innovation and transfer of knowledge;
- support for transport and/or operational costs;
- financial support for rescue capacities registered in the European Civil Protection Pool (e.g. for medical emergencies, medical equipment, such as ventilators and personal protective equipment; for forest firefighting, in the form of assistance when wildfires overwhelm the response capacities of the affected countries).

Following the **Russian aggression on Ukraine** and the related medical needs of Ukrainians within their country and in the whole region, the EU has deployed assistance from its rescEU medical stockpiles hosted in various locations across its territory. The rescEU deliveries include duly needed medical items such as ventilators, infusion pumps, patient monitors, masks and gowns, ultrasound devices and oxygen concentrators. This assistance comes on top of aid offered by EU countries and coordinated through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. This is the largest EU civil protection operation since the creation of the mechanism in 2001.

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU public and private entities;
- national civil protection capacities;
- health organisations;
- businesses.

The programme is implemented through direct management. rescEU assets are hosted by Member States and participating states, and financed by the EU budget in the form of grants and procurements. When the mechanism is activated, the [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) channels the assistance provided by the Member States and participating states. Since 2001, the centre has coordinated assistance more than 540 times in response to activations of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR)

The 2021-2027 EU budget itself responds to unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters and emergencies, with the help of [special flexibility instruments](#) that enable the mobilisation of additional financial support. The instruments are over and above the expenditure ceilings of the long-term budget.

The Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve covers what were previously two separate instruments: the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) and the Emergency Aid Reserve. It can be used to help tackle emergency situations due to major natural disasters or public health crises in Member States and accession countries. Moreover, it can also help non-EU countries with emerging needs stemming from conflicts, the global refugee crisis or worsening natural disasters due to climate change.

The aid from this instrument is managed by the recipient country. It should be used to rebuild basic infrastructure, fund emergency services, temporary accommodation or clean-up operations, or to counter immediate health risks.



Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the European Commission's flagship programme for support to the cultural and audiovisual sectors. Its main goal is to optimise the potential of Europe's cultural and creative sectors by offering opportunities for operators to develop technologically and artistically through innovative trans-border initiatives. It facilitates the exchange, co-production and distribution of European works and make them accessible to a wide and diverse audience. Creative Europe invests in actions that reinforce cultural diversity and respond to the needs and challenges of the cultural and creative sectors.

The main objectives of the programme are:

1. to safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage;
2. to increase the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the audiovisual sector.

The new elements of the programme contribute to the recovery of these sectors,

reinforcing their efforts to become more inclusive, digital and environmentally sustainable.

The new Creative Europe programme puts special focus on three areas:

- strengthening the music sector, particularly contemporary and live music;
- prioritising female talent and supporting women's artistic and professional careers, and promoting gender equality as one of the main values to be pursued by the programme;
- fostering inclusion by making it easier for people with disabilities and socially marginalised groups to take part in the programme, and by simplifying the application process.

Its main novel features are:

- stronger emphasis on transnational creation and on innovation;
- easier access to funding through higher co-financing rates (greater contribution levels from Creative Europe for projects);
- emphasis on supporting EU-level cooperation to make the European audiovisual sector more globally competitive;
- a mobility scheme for artists and professionals;
- actions that target the needs of specific creative sectors, such as music, architecture and cultural heritage.

Creative Europe has three strands:

1. [Culture](#);
2. [MEDIA](#);
3. [Cross-sectoral strand](#).

Culture

The [Culture](#) strand supports a wide range of cultural and creative sectors, including:

- architecture;
- cultural heritage;
- design;
- literature and publishing;
- music;

- performing arts.

The Culture strand encourages cooperation and exchanges among cultural organisations and artists within Europe and beyond. It aims to:

- foster artistic creation and innovation;
- support the promotion and the distribution of European content across Europe and beyond;
- help artists find creation and performance opportunities across borders;
- stimulate the digital and environmental transition of the EU culture and creative sectors.

The Culture Strand provides a number of opportunities in the following areas:

European cooperation projects

The Creative Europe programme supports transnational cooperation projects involving organisations in the cultural and creative sectors from different countries taking part in the programme. It covers the EU and beyond. Through this funding, Creative Europe aims to improve access to European cultural and creative works and to promote innovation and creativity. Funding is available for three types of projects:

1. Small-scale cooperation projects (minimum three partners from three different eligible countries);
2. Medium-scale cooperation projects (minimum five partners from five different eligible countries);
3. Large-scale cooperation projects (minimum 10 partners from 10 different eligible countries).

Projects can cover one or more cultural and creative sectors and can be interdisciplinary. The maximum duration for all projects is 48 months.

European platforms

The programme provides financial support to European platforms that foster the mobility and visibility of creators and artists, in particular those lacking international exposure; stimulate a genuine Europe-wide programming of cultural and artistic activities by facilitating access to non-national European cultural works through international touring events, exhibitions, festivals, etc.; and contribute to audience development as well as providing visibility to

Europe's values and different cultures.

European networks

The Creative Europe programme provides support for European networks to help the cultural and creative sectors to enhance their capacity to nurture talents, tackle common challenges, innovate, prosper and generate jobs and growth. Cross-border networks provide value by connecting professional organisations throughout Europe and beyond, collecting and disseminating information, practices, ideas, and solutions that help the sectors to innovate and grow, providing training and advice for professionals and representing the sectors and advocating on their behalf on key sectoral issues.

Circulation of European literary works and literary translations

The aim is to widen the transnational circulation and diversity of European literary works by encouraging translation and promotion of books in lesser-used languages. These include all the languages officially recognised in EU Member States, except English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. Another objective of Creative Europe is to help European literary works to reach new audiences within the EU and beyond, and to strengthen the competitiveness of the book sector by encouraging cooperation within the book value chain.

i-Portunus: mobility for artists and professionals

The i-Portunus mobility scheme is the 'Erasmus' of the culture sector. It connects international artists, creators and cultural professionals and supports international collaboration among all countries participating in the Creative Europe programme. The scheme provides funding (a maximum amount of €3 000) to individuals to go abroad for short periods (7-60 days), through two types of applications from either: individual artists or cultural professionals, and hosts or hosting organisations.

Pan-European cultural entities

This new action of the Creative Europe programme aims to support cultural entities – such as orchestras – with a large geographical reach, whose aim is to offer training, professionalisation and performance opportunities for young, highly talented artists.

MEDIA

The MEDIA strand supports the European film and audiovisual industries to develop, distribute and promote European works, taking into account today's digital environment. In addition, it:

- encourages cooperation across the value chain of the audiovisual industry and at EU level in order to scale up enterprises and European content globally;
- nurtures talents – wherever they come from;
- engages with audiences of all ages, specially the younger generations.

The priorities of the MEDIA strand are structured around four clusters:

1. **content:**

Support under this cluster is aimed at:

- boosting the cross-border circulation of European audiovisual works;
- adapting content to new audiences and platforms;
- implementing more solid business models allowing the film business to cope with production costs and increased competition.

2. **business:**

Support under this cluster:

- nurtures audiovisual talents with activities that have a strong focus on mentoring and digital and greening skills;
- encourages business-to-business exchanges covering all parts of the value chain and aiming at global reach;
- promotes transnational distribution of content across borders and platforms.

Specific groups that drive the internationalisation of the sector receive targeted support to strengthen cross-border collaboration and boost learning and knowledge-sharing in order to allow the industry to go beyond its national boundaries.

Potential beneficiaries:

- training organisations;
- distributors and sales agents;
- tech companies;
- video-on-demand (VOD) services;
- aggregators;
- exhibitors;
- film markets.

3. audience:

This cluster connects European audiovisual works with their audiences and supports audience development across Europe and beyond. Activities include:

- stimulating audience growth and renewals by increasing audiences on all platforms;
- engaging with younger audiences through multiple educational and promotion tools;
- ensuring access to content through support for subtitling.

Potential beneficiaries:

- cinema operators;
- festivals;
- video-on-demand networks and operators;
- theatrical distributors;
- sales agents;
- heritage institutions.

4. policy support:

The aim of this cluster is to promote a holistic European audiovisual policy through:

- regulatory dialogue;
- sharing of analysis and data;
- forward-looking intelligence on trends;

- consultation with stakeholders;
- promotion and outreach activities.

Particular focus is placed on:

- fully exploiting the possibilities of the digital transformation during the implementation of projects;
- fostering the greening of the industry and encouraging inclusion, equality, diversity and participation.

Cross-Sectoral strand

The **Cross-Sectoral** strand aims at reinforcing collaboration between different cultural and creative sectors, in order to help them address the common challenges they face and find innovative solutions. This is achieved, for instance, through policy cooperation, the services provided by the **Creative Europe desks**, and the **Creative Innovation Lab**.

For the first time, Creative Europe offers **funding** to the **news media sector** in order to promote media literacy, pluralism and media freedom, as well as activities to help the sector adjust to the structural and technological changes it faces.

Actions under this strand aim to:

- promote sector-wide, cross-border collaboration among news media professionals in Europe;
- stimulate the sharing of best practices for collaborative business transformation;
- encourage journalistic collaboration by developing standards, new business models, training programmes, funding schemes and other activities that aim to uphold quality journalism.

The **Creative Innovation Lab** **seeks** to encourage innovative approaches to the creation, access to and distribution and promotion of content across the cultural and creative sectors, but also across other sectors. Such approaches take the digital transition into account and cover both market and non-market dimensions.

The Creative Innovation Lab aims to:

- incentivise players from different cultural and creative sectors to design and test innovative digital solutions with long-term positive impact;
- ease creation of innovative, close-to-market tools, models and methods for the audiovisual sector and at least one other creative or cultural sector.

[Creative Europe desks](#) exist in all of the [countries participating in the programme](#). They provide information and assistance related to the programme's areas of activity as well as help in establishing contact and cooperation with organisations in other countries.

Creative Europe desks:

- provide information about and promote the Creative Europe programme in their country;
- assist the cultural and creative sectors in relation to the programme and provide basic information on other support opportunities;
- stimulate cross-border cooperation within the cultural and creative sectors;
- provide assistance regarding the cultural and creative sectors in participating countries;
- support the Commission in ensuring proper communication and dissemination of the results and impacts of the programme;
- ensure the communication and dissemination of information concerning funding awarded to and results in a participating country.

Creative Europe is managed directly by the European Commission and the [European Education and Culture Executive Agency](#) (formerly the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency). Funds are disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements. More information on funding opportunities and the application procedure can be found on the [EACEA website](#).

The European Commission offers an interactive [CulturEU Funding Guide](#) to ease access to the funding opportunities available for the cultural and creative sectors across all the funding sources of the European Union available in 2021-2027, with the aim of helping players in these sectors identify the most suitable sources of EU support for their projects.

Potential beneficiaries:

- media organisations;
- artists;
- cultural and creative organisations within the EU and beyond;
- the film and music industries and networks.

Project applicants need to be legally established and officially registered in a country participating in Creative Europe. Individuals, with the exception of self-employed individuals, are not eligible. The coordinating organisation must have been legally established for at least two years on the date of the deadline for submission of applications. For cooperation projects, proposals must be submitted by a consortium comprising a minimum of three organisations from three different eligible countries (small scale); five organisations from five different eligible countries (medium scale); and 10 organisations from 10 different eligible countries (large scale).

A dedicated European Commission webpage lists the [database of projects](#) implemented under Creative Europe.

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU programme in support of education, training, youth and sport for the 2021-2027 period. The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life. It supports priorities and activities set out in the [European Education Area](#), [Digital Education action plan](#) and the [European skills agenda](#). The programme also supports the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), implements the [EU youth strategy](#) 2019-2027 and develops the European dimension in sport.

In particular, the programme supports:

- school development and excellent teaching;
- the Copenhagen process on vocational education and training;
- the renewed EU agenda for higher education and the Bologna process;
- the renewed EU agenda for adult learning;
- the renewed EU youth strategy;
- the EU work plan for sport.

In addition to offering grants, Erasmus+ also supports teaching, research, networking and policy debate on EU topics. Its **sports** strand promotes grassroots activities in sports. The main objective of Erasmus+ is to promote learning mobility for individuals and groups, along with cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation. It promotes non-formal and informal learning mobility, active participation in education and sport among young people and learning mobility of sports staff.

The specific objectives pursued by the Erasmus+ programme are:

1. to improve the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society;
2. to foster quality improvements, excellence in innovation, and internationalisation of education and training institutions;
3. to promote the emergence and raise awareness of a European lifelong learning area designed to complement policy reforms at national level;
4. to enhance the international dimension of education and training;
5. to improve the teaching and learning of languages.

For the education sector, the programme is delivering on these goals through a framework of key actions:

Key Action 1: Mobility of individuals

Actions include:

- **mobility of learners and staff:** opportunities for pupils, students, trainees and young people, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, sports coaches, staff of education institutions and civil society organisations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country;
- **youth participation:** youth-led local and transnational initiatives run by informal groups of young people and/or youth organisations to help young people engage and learn to participate in democratic life, raising awareness about the EU's common values and fundamental rights, bringing together young people and decision-makers at local, national and EU level, as well as contributing to the EU's common goals;
- **discoverEU:** action offering 18-year-olds the opportunity to have a short-term individual or group travel experience throughout Europe. As

an informal learning activity, DiscoverEU aims to foster the participants' sense of belonging to the European Union and to enable them to explore its cultural diversity. It also seeks to equip the young people with skills and competences of value to their future lives, as well as to inspire them to embrace sustainable travel in particular and environmental conscience in general. DiscoverEU includes a general action, for which young people can apply directly on the European Youth Portal, and an inclusion action aimed at facilitating the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in DiscoverEU on an equal footing with their peers;

- **language learning opportunities:** for participants carrying out a mobility activity abroad. This support is mainly offered through the Erasmus+ Online Language Support (OLS) tool, adapted as necessary to individual sectors, as e-learning offers advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility. Whenever online learning is not the best tool to reach the target group, additional forms of language support are offered;
- **virtual exchanges in higher education and among youth:** online people-to-people activities that promote intercultural dialogue and soft-skills development between individuals from third countries not associated to the programme, from EU Member States or from third countries associated to the programme. They take place in small groups and are always moderated by a trained facilitator.

Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices

Key Action 2 includes:

Partnerships for cooperation, such as:

- **Cooperation Partnerships:** their primary aim is to enable organisations to increase the quality and relevance of their activities; to develop and reinforce their networks of partners; to increase their capacity to operate jointly at transnational level and thereby to boost the internationalisation of their activities, their exchange or development of new practices and methods, as well as their sharing and confronting of each other's ideas;
- **Small-scale Partnerships:** the aim here is to make the programme accessible to small-scale hard-to-reach entities and individuals involved in school education, adult education, vocational education and training,

youth and sport. Compared to cooperation partnerships, small-scale partnerships are awarded lower grant amounts, have a shorter duration and involve simpler administrative requirements. They are usually composed of grassroots organisations and newcomers to the programme, and less experienced organisations or organisations with smaller organisational capacity.

Partnerships for Excellence, including:

- **European Universities:** this action supports the emergence of bottom-up networks of higher education institutions, which will bring cross-border cooperation to the next level of ambition, through the development of joint long-term strategies for top-quality education, research and innovation, based on a common vision and shared values;
- **Centres for Vocational Excellence (CoVE):** this initiative supports a bottom-up approach to vocational excellence that involves a wide range of local stakeholders. The aim is to enable vocational education and training institutions to rapidly adapt their skills provision to evolving economic and social needs. CoVEs operate in a given local context, creating skills ecosystems for innovation, regional development and social inclusion, while working with CoVEs in other countries through international collaborative networks. They provide opportunities for initial training of young people as well as the continuing up-skilling and reskilling of adults, through flexible and timely offers of training that meet the needs of a dynamic labour market, in the context of the green and digital transitions;
- **Erasmus+ Teacher Academies:** the overall objective of this action is to create European partnerships of teacher education and training providers to set up Erasmus+ teacher academies that will develop a European and international outlook in teacher education. These Academies will embrace multilingualism and cultural diversity, develop teacher education in line with the EU's priorities in education policy and contribute to the objectives of the European Education Area;
- **Erasmus Mundus Action:** this action aims at fostering excellence and worldwide internationalisation of higher education institutions via study programmes – at master's level – jointly delivered and jointly recognised by higher education institutions established in Europe, and open to institutions in other countries of the world;

- **Alliances for Innovation:** this action aims at fostering strategic cooperation between key players in higher education and vocational education and training, business and research – the 'knowledge triangle' – to foster innovation and modernisation of education and training systems with the aim to make them capable of identifying and supplying the right set of skills, knowledge and competences to match the future labour market demand in sectors and areas that are strategic for Europe's sustainable growth and competitiveness;
- **Forward-looking Projects:** this action aims to foster innovation, creativity and participation, as well as social entrepreneurship in different areas of education and training. It supports forward-looking ideas that reflect key EU priorities and have the potential to be mainstreamed and improve education and training systems, as well as to have a substantial innovative effect on the methods and practices employed in all types of learning and active participation settings for achieving EU social cohesion.

Capacity-building projects:

- **in the area of education:** this action supports international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the higher education area in EU Member States or third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme;
- **in the area of vocational education and training:** this action supports international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the area of vocational education and training in EU Member States, third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme. These projects aim to support the relevance, accessibility, and responsiveness of vocational education and training institutions and systems in third countries not associated to the programme, as a driver of sustainable socio-economic development;
- **in the area of youth:** this action supports cooperation and exchange in the area of youth between organisations in EU Member States, third countries associated to the programme and third countries not associated to the programme. It covers non-formal learning activities with a focus on raising the capacity of organisations working with young people outside formal learning, while ensuring the active participation of young people.

Online platforms such as eTwinning, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE), the [School Education Gateway](#) (SEG) and the [European Youth Portal](#) offer virtual collaboration spaces, partner-finding databases, communities of practice and other online services for teachers, trainers, youth workers, policy-makers and other practitioners, as well as for pupils, young people and adult learners in Europe and beyond.

Key Action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation

This key action helps the European Youth Together action, (targeting both youth organisations at grassroots level and larger organisations), supporting partnerships across borders. Activities under this action should contribute to widening the outreach towards young people to ensure a diversity of voices, and reach a diverse range of young people within and beyond youth organisations, including youth with fewer opportunities.

In addition, this key action covers:

- actions aimed at preparing and supporting the implementation of the EU policy agenda on education, training, youth and sport, including sectoral agendas for higher education, vocational education and training, schools and adult learning, in particular by facilitating the governance and functioning of the open methods of coordination;
- **EU policy experimentation**, led by high-level public authorities and involving field trials on policy measures in several countries, based on sound evaluation methods;
- actions aimed at **gathering evidence and knowledge about education, training, youth and sport systems and policies at national and EU level, with a view to facilitating reasoned policy-making**;
- actions that **facilitate transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, as well as the transfer of credits**;
- actions that foster policy dialogue with stakeholders within and outside the European Union;
- **cooperation with international organisations with highly recognised expertise and analytical capacity (such as the OECD and the Council of Europe), to strengthen the impact and added value of policies in the area of education, training, youth and sport.**

As part of Key Action 3, the **Jean Monnet Actions** provide support in the area of both EU and non-EU higher education institutions with the aim to promote teaching and research on EU integration and to promote policy debate and exchanges involving the academic world and policy-makers on EU policy priorities. The following sub-actions are supported:

- **Jean Monnet Modules:** short teaching programmes in one or more disciplines of European Union studies; Jean Monnet Chairs: longer teaching posts with a specialisation in European Union studies for individual university professors;
- **Jean Monnet centres of excellence:** focal points gathering knowledge of high-level experts in various disciplines of European studies, as well as developing transnational activities and structural links with academic institutions in other countries;
- Jean Monnet Actions in other areas of education and training;
- support targeted at specific institutions, etc.

Detailed information on these opportunities, including eligibility criteria, is available in the [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#).

The programme activities are implemented through both direct and indirect management, with the support of the [Erasmus+ EU national agencies](#), which seek to bring the programme as close as possible to the participants. For actions managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), the relevant documents by action are available for submission on the [funding and tender opportunities portal](#). Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- students;
- researchers and academics;
- universities and other organisations working in the area of higher education in the EU, and the [partner countries](#).

European Solidarity Corps

The [European Solidarity Corps](#) is an EU funding programme for young people wishing to engage in solidarity activities in a variety of areas. These range from helping the disadvantaged and providing humanitarian aid, to contributing to

health and environmental action across the EU and beyond. The programme's ambition is not only to be more inclusive but also to be greener and more digital.

Activities are rolled out through direct management by the Commission, as well as through indirect management with the support of a network of EU national agencies. Funding is disbursed mostly in the form of grants.

Potential beneficiaries:

- individuals aged 18 to 30 (35 for humanitarian aid);
- organisations in the EU and the partner countries.

Youth Pass

[Youthpass](#) is a European recognition instrument for identifying and documenting learning outcomes that are acquired in projects under the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. Youthpass promotes individual reflection and awareness about learning and helps to make learning outcomes visible for the learners themselves as well as for others. It aims to reinforce reflective practices in youth work and solidarity activities, thereby enhancing their quality and recognition. It also supports the continued pathways of young people and youth workers, and raises visibility of the value of EU engagement.

European Youth Portal

The [European youth portal](#) provides information and opportunities for young people. It offers EU- and country-level information about opportunities and initiatives that are of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in the EU. The European youth portal addresses young people, but also other stakeholders working in the area of youth (youth organisations, youth workers, policy-makers, etc.).

There are four **main types of content** on the European youth portal, each grouped in a specific section:

- thematic pages related to EU youth policies: 'Get involved';
- thematic pages related to opportunities to go abroad: 'Go abroad';
- EU-funded programme/initiative pages: 'EU initiatives';
- policy pages: 'EU Youth strategy'.

The portal also carries stories and testimonials of young people, news and a calendar of events.

Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)

EPALE is a venue where a European multilingual and open-membership community of professionals in adult learning – including educators, policy-makers, training providers and researchers – can collaborate, learn from each other, stay informed about the latest developments, access professional resources and exchange good practices online. EPALE supports and strengthens the adult learning professions by enabling its members to connect with and learn from colleagues across Europe, through its blog posts, forums and its partner search tool, complemented with physical gatherings. EPALE provides a wealth of high-quality, accurate information relevant for adult learning practitioners. Over time, more and more of this content should be provided by members themselves. [Learn more about how to engage with the EPALE community.](#)

COSME Programme: Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

[Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) is a cross-border exchange programme that gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other participating countries. The programme is designed for entrepreneurs having started a business within the past three years and for aspiring entrepreneurs who are able to move to a European country for one to six months in order to train in a successful business and to acquire experience and know-how. They are given the chance to network with successful entrepreneurs in other EU countries and to acquire the skills needed to improve or establish their own business. The programme is open to all young entrepreneurs planning to start their own business and having a viable business plan.

The exchange of experience takes place during a stay with an experienced entrepreneur, which helps the new entrepreneur acquire the skills needed to run a small firm. The host benefits from fresh perspectives on their business and gets the opportunities to cooperate with foreign partners or learn about new markets.

Sport

Erasmus+ sport actions

Erasmus+ actions in the area of sport promote participation in sport, physical activity and voluntary activities. They are designed to tackle societal and sport-related challenges. Erasmus+ provides the opportunity for organisations to develop, transfer and implement innovative practices in the area of sport between organisations, authorities and others. Opportunities are available for organisations under the below mentioned areas.

Cooperation Partnerships

These partnerships are designed for organisations to develop and implement joint activities to promote (among other things) sport and physical activity, as well as deal with threats to the integrity of sport (such as doping or match-fixing), promote dual careers for athletes, improve good governance, and foster tolerance and social inclusion.

Cooperation Partnerships are designed to promote the creation and development of European networks in the area of sport. They aim to help sports organisations to:

- increase the quality of the work, activities and practices of the organisations and institutions involved;
- build capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across sectors;
- address common needs in the area of sport;
- enable transformation and change (at individual, organisational or sectoral level).

Activities include:

- networking among key stakeholders;
- development, identification, promotion and exchange of best practices;
- preparation, development, and implementation of education and training modules and tools;
- increasing the skills of multipliers;
- developing monitoring and benchmarking of indicators;
- raising awareness of the added value of sport and physical activity;
- promoting synergies between sport, health, education, training and youth;

- improving the evidence base for sport;
- organising conferences, seminars, events and meetings.

Results should be re-usable, transferable, up-scalable and, if possible, cover multiple disciplines. Whether they are local or transnational, projects share their results with each other.

Small-scale Partnerships

For grassroots organisations, less experienced organisations and newcomers to the programme. Small-scale partnerships have simpler administration, smaller grants and a shorter duration than Cooperation Partnerships. They are designed to promote sport and physical activity through innovative practices.

Small-scale Partnerships reach out to grassroots organisations or those less experienced in Erasmus+. They are designed to make the programme more accessible to small-scale entities and hard-to-reach individuals in the areas of school education, adult education, vocational education and training, youth and sport. Small-scale Partnerships are characterised by:

- lower grant amounts awarded to organisations;
- shorter duration;
- simpler administrative requirements;
- reduced entry barriers;
- flexible formats – mixing transnational and national activities – to allow smaller organisations to reach people with fewer opportunities.

Not-for-profit European sports events

These events aim to encourage sports activities, to implement EU strategies for social inclusion through sport, to foster volunteering in sport, to counter discrimination and to encourage participation in sport and physical activity. Erasmus+ offers support for organising such events whenever they have a European dimension. Opportunities are provided for:

- volunteering in sport;
- social inclusion through sport;
- the fight against discrimination in sport, including gender inequality;
- initiatives encouraging participation in sport and physical activity.

Activities covered:

- preparation and organisation of the event;
- organisation of educational activities for athletes, coaches, organisers and volunteers in the run-up to the event;
- organisation of side activities to the sporting event (conferences, seminars);
- training of volunteers;
- implementation of legacy activities (evaluations, drafting of future plans);
- communication activities linked to the topic of the event.

Types of events:

Not-for-profit European sports events can take place either in a single country with participants from other countries (Europe-wide events) or in each of the participating countries (European-local events). Events are in the form of:

- European-local event type I: from a minimum of three organisations coming from three different programme countries to a maximum of five organisations coming from five different programme countries;
- European-local event type II: a minimum of six organisations coming from six different programme countries;
- European-wide events: one event with at least 10 participating organisations from at least 10 programme countries (including the applicant organisation).

Capacity-building in the area of sport

Capacity-building projects are international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the area of sport in EU Member States and third countries associated to the programme (previously called programme countries) and the Western Balkans countries. They aim to support sports activities and policies as a way to promote values and serve as an educational tool for promoting the personal and social development of individuals and for building more cohesive communities.

Capacity-building projects aim to:

- raise the capacity of grassroots sports organisations;
- encourage the practice of sport and physical activity in third countries not associated to the programme;

- promote social inclusion through sport;
- promote positive values through sport (such as fair play, tolerance, team spirit);
- foster cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives.

Proposals should focus on certain thematic areas defined at the programming stage. Examples of particularly relevant areas are:

- promotion of common values, non-discrimination and gender equality through sport;
- development of skills (through sport) needed to improve the social involvement of disadvantaged groups (e.g. independence, leadership);
- integration of migrants;
- post-conflict reconciliation.

The European Commission's webpage on sport features [information](#) on the latest calls for direct funding for projects outside Erasmus+.

Other initiatives

The [European Week of Sport](#) – one of the key initiatives in this field – allows sports organisations, enterprises and experts from across the EU to develop their strategies for increasing participation in sport-related activities, and for participants to celebrate sport in their communities. The week culminates in the presentation of the [#BeActive](#) awards. The [#BeInclusive](#) EU sport awards also recognise organisations using the power of sport to increase social inclusion for disadvantaged groups.

The [EU Sport Forum](#) acknowledges the need for broad, policy-based approaches to ensuring sporting events continue to respond to ongoing economic and cultural challenges – and seeks to build a future in sport through high-level dialogue between sport leaders, entrepreneurs and other sport professionals.

Potential beneficiaries:

- athletic associations;
- athletes and sports institutions;
- NGOs;
- youth.

Youth employment

A number of European funds create employment opportunities for young people. The [Youth Employment Initiative](#) (YEI) is one of the main sources of EU financial support for the implementation of [Youth Guarantee](#) schemes until 2023. The EU launched it in 2013 to provide support to young people living in regions where youth unemployment was higher than 25 %.

In the years 2021-2023, Member States can increase their YEI and [European Social Fund](#) resources to help young people affected by the coronavirus crisis, thanks to the additional EU funding available under the [Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe \(REACT-EU\)](#) initiative.

The Youth Employment Initiative exclusively supports young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs), including the long-term unemployed or those not registered as job seekers. It ensures that in parts of Europe where the challenges are most acute, young people can receive targeted support. Typically, the YEI funds the provision of:

- apprenticeships;
- traineeships;
- job placements;
- further education leading to a qualification.

For further information on employment, see the Section on Employment, social affairs and inclusion in this funding guide.



Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme

The main goal of the [Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme](#) is to protect and promote rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in order to sustain and further develop rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. That includes support for activities that help to create a vibrant and empowered civil society, encourage people's democratic, civic and social participation and cultivate the rich diversity of European society based on our common values, history and memory. Furthermore, the programme supports civil-society organisations active at the local, regional, national and transnational levels in promoting EU values and rights. It raises awareness of equality and non-

discrimination, the rights of the child, data protection, EU citizenship rights and the EU citizens' shared history. It contributes to advancing gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming, and to preventing and combating gender-based violence against women as well as all forms of violence against children and other groups at risk. It supports citizens' participation in democratic EU life.

The programme is based on four strands:

1. **Equality, Rights and Gender Equality:** promoting rights, non-discrimination, equality (including gender equality), and advancing gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming. Projects in this area seek:
 - to prevent and combat inequalities and discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and respect the principle of non-discrimination;
 - to promote women's full enjoyment of rights, gender equality, including work-life balance, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming;
 - to combat all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, afrophobia, antisemitism, anti-gypsyism, anti-Muslim hatred, and other forms of intolerance, including homophobia and forms of intolerance based on gender identity, both online and offline;
 - to protect and promote the rights of the child, as well as contribute to raising the awareness of children's rights in judicial proceedings and building the capacity of child protection systems;
 - to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities with a view to their active inclusion and full participation in society;
 - to tackle the challenges related to personal data protection and the data protection reform, as well as support the dialogue among the stakeholders in this area;
 - to support the efforts aimed at enabling people to exercise their rights as EU citizens, at enforcing their right to free movement, and at tackling the abuse of those rights.

2. **Citizens' engagement and participation:** promoting citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the EU, exchanges between citizens of different Member States, and raising awareness of the common European history. Projects in this area:

- mark, carry out research on and educate about defining events in recent European history, including the causes and consequences of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes;
- raise awareness among EU citizens of their common history, culture, cultural heritage and values, thereby enhancing their understanding of the EU, its origins, purpose and diversity;
- promote citizens' and representative associations' participation in and contribution to the democratic and civic life of the EU by making known and publicly exchanging their views on EU action in all areas;
- promote exchanges between citizens of different countries, in particular through town-twinning and networks of towns, so as to afford them practical experience of the wealth and diversity of the common heritage of the Union and to make them aware that these constitute the foundation for a common future.

3. **Daphne:** fighting against violence, including gender-based violence. Projects in this area seek to:

- prevent and combat, at all levels, **all forms of gender-based violence**, including domestic violence, against women and girls, also by promoting the standards laid down in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention);
- prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people, as well as violence against other groups at risk, such as LGBTQI persons and persons with disabilities;
- support and protect all direct and indirect victims of violence (such as domestic violence exerted within the family or violence in intimate relationships), including children orphaned by domestic crimes, and supporting and ensuring the same level of protection throughout the EU for victims of gender-based violence.

4. **Union values:** protecting and promoting EU values. Projects in this area focus on protecting, promoting and raising awareness on rights by providing financial support to civil-society organisations active at the local, regional and transnational level in promoting and cultivating these rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of EU values and the respect for the rule of law and contributing to a more democratic EU, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.

Together with the Justice programme, the [citizens, equality, rights and values programme](#) forms the Justice, Rights and Values Fund.

The fund supports the following types of activities:

- training, capacity-building and exchange of good practices;
- town-twinning;
- raising people awareness about their rights and the benefits that EU policies bring to their daily lives;
- the development of knowledge-based EU policies and legislation through surveys, studies and analyses.

Potential beneficiaries:

- civil society organisations;
- European networks;
- public authorities, including equality and human rights bodies;
- local authorities;
- academia, research institutes and think tanks.

A European Commission webpage provides information on the [funding and tender opportunities](#) including the [calls for proposals](#). For the latest news on funding opportunities and funded projects under the citizens, equality, rights and values programme and the justice programme, sign up [here](#) to receive the [funding newsletter](#) on a regular basis.

Justice programme

The [programme](#) supports the further development of the EU area of justice based on the rule of law and mutual recognition and trust. It facilitates access to justice and promotes judicial training and judicial cooperation on civil and criminal matters, and the effectiveness of national justice systems.

The programme funds activities that ensure the full and consistent application and enforcement of EU law and promote the smooth functioning of the EU area of justice. This includes improving mutual trust and ensuring efficient judicial cooperation on civil and criminal matters, improving the knowledge of the judiciary and judicial staff about EU law, and promoting cross-border cooperation. It also funds activities to facilitate effective and non-discriminatory access to justice for all.

Activities that are eligible for funding include:

- training of justice professionals;
- organising stakeholder dialogue and expert meetings;
- conducting surveys and studies;
- organising seminars and campaigns;
- preparing and disseminating technical guidelines;
- capacity-building of key EU judicial networks (e.g. the [European Judicial Training Network](#));
- developing and using digital tools in complementarity with the digital Europe programme;
- maintaining and extending the [e-Justice portal](#).

Potential beneficiaries:

- universities;
- research institutes;
- judicial and administrative authorities;
- justice professionals and their representative bodies and training bodies;
- civil society organisations.

The programme is managed directly by the European Commission. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements. A Commission [webpage](#) provides information on funding and tender opportunities including [calls for proposals](#).

Gender equality and equal opportunities in other EU funds

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are financed through a vast array of actions under several EU funding programmes, some of which are particularly important for gender equality.

The integration of the gender dimension is secured throughout various EU funding and budgetary guarantee instruments, in particular the **European Social Fund Plus**, the **European Regional Development Fund**, **Creative Europe**, the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**, the **Cohesion Fund** and the **InvestEU programme**. Funding supports:

- the promotion of women's labour market participation and work-life balance;
- investment in care facilities;
- the promotion of female entrepreneurship;
- actions aimed at combating gender segregation in certain professions;
- addressing the imbalanced representation of girls and boys in some sectors of education and training.

In the past, European structural and investment funds (**ESI funds**) have funded various actions in order to promote gender equality. In addition, childcare facility infrastructure has been also funded through these funds. The new **Common Provisions Regulation** (setting out the provisions on the **European Regional Development Fund**, the **European Social Fund Plus**, the **Cohesion Fund**, the **Just Transition Fund** and the **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund** and financial rules for those and for the **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund**, the **Internal Security Fund** and the **Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy**) includes specific principles and conditions requiring a Member State to have in place a national gender equality strategic framework as a precondition for making use of the funds when investing in improving the gender balance in the labour market, the work-life balance, or childcare infrastructure. Another horizontal condition – on the effective implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – includes gender equality as one of its key requirements and applies to all the investments under the Common Provisions Regulation. The regulation also stipulates that Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective are

taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of programmes. In addition, Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of programmes. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities shall be taken into account throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.

As mentioned earlier, **dedicated** funding for projects benefiting civil-society organisations and public institutions that implement specific actions, including preventing and combating gender-based violence, is available through the **citizens, equality, rights and values programme**. Particular attention needs to be paid to women and girls in the asylum and migration area. Through the **Asylum and Migration Fund**, Member States are encouraged to target actions that support the specific needs of women in the asylum procedure, as well as actions that support the integration of women in the new society. Furthermore, the fund enables the stepping up of protection of vulnerable groups, including women victims of gender-based violence in asylum and migration contexts. Funding opportunities for women entrepreneurs or scientists may also be found in **Horizon Europe**, the **common agricultural policy** instruments and the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** along with the inclusion and diversity strategy for the **Erasmus+** programme.

At the global stage, the EU continues supporting women's human rights, its defenders, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and efforts to curb sexual and gender-based violence throughout the world, including in fragile, conflict- and emergency situations. For instance, the EU initiated the [Spotlight Initiative](#), a joint EU-UN global programme to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Further information about the EU priorities in the area of gender equality can be found in the [EU gender equality strategy for the 2020-2025 period](#).

The regulation establishing the **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe**, ([NDICI- Global Europe](#)) also states that the implementation of the instrument should be guided by the principles of gender equality, women and girls' empowerment, and preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and should seek to protect and promote women's rights in line with the EU gender action plans and relevant Council conclusions and international conventions, including the Council conclusions on women, peace and security of 10 December 2018. Strengthening

gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external action and increasing efforts to reach the minimum standards of performance set by the EU gender action plans should lead to a gender sensitive and transformative approach in all Union external action and international cooperation. At least 85 % of new actions implemented under NDICI should have gender equality as a principal or a significant objective, as defined by the gender equality policy marker of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. At least 5 % of those actions should have gender equality and women's and girls' rights and empowerment as a principal objective.

Potential beneficiaries:

- public bodies;
- institutions dealing with issues of gender equality;
- companies and start-ups;
- NGOs and civil society.

PROTECTION OF THE FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF THE EU, FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD



Fiscalis programme

The [Fiscalis programme](#) focuses on improving the proper functioning of the internal market's taxation systems by helping participating countries, their tax authorities and their officials to work together in the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning. Fiscalis also helps to protect the financial interests of Member States and honest taxpayers. It allows the relevant authorities to implement EU law in the area of taxation by ensuring the exchange of information, supporting administrative cooperation and helping to reduce the administrative burden of tax authorities and compliance costs for taxpayers when needed.

The following types of actions are funded:

- meetings and similar ad hoc events;
- project-based structured collaboration;
- IT capacity-building actions, in particular the development and operation of European electronic systems;
- human resources and other capacity-building actions, including common training or development of e-learning;
- studies;
- innovation activities;
- communication actions.

The programme is implemented through direct management. It provides funding in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU Member States and third countries associated with the programme.

CUSTOMS programme

The [programme on cooperation in the area of customs \(the CUSTOMS programme\)](#) helps safeguard the financial interests of the EU and of the Member States, and helps customs administrations to protect the public against health, environmental and other threats in their role as guardians of the external EU border for goods. The customs programme supports the development and operation of central [EU information technology systems for customs](#). Moreover, it facilitates collaborative activities between customs officials, including the exchange of good practices and knowledge in customs policy and law and their practical implementation. It also supports the [EU customs union](#) and customs authorities in working together and acting as one. Last but not least, the programme helps customs administrations to deal with increasing trade flows and emerging trends and technologies, such as e-commerce and blockchain.

The [programme](#) is restricted to customs authorities in the EU and eligible non-EU countries. The programme functions without calls for proposals.

The following type of actions are funded:

- seminars and workshops, expert networks, communities of interest, operational collaboration teams and project groups;
- IT capacity-building, in particular the operation and development of EU electronic customs systems;
- human resources and other capacity-building actions, including training and exchange of best practices;
- studies;
- innovation;
- communication.

The programme is implemented through direct management. It provides funding in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU Member States and third countries associated with the programme.

EU anti-fraud programme

The main objective of the [programme](#) is to ensure the necessary coordination of anti-fraud activities and to provide financial, technical and information support to Member States in their efforts to protect the EU's financial interests.

The programme helps Member States to fight fraud by:

1. continuing to protect the EU's financial interests through financial support (previously offered by the [Hercule III programme](#)), in particular technical support, operational support for investigations, specialised training and research activities;
2. organising mutual administrative assistance and cooperation in customs and agricultural matters, notably via the [Anti-Fraud Information System \(AFIS\)](#);
3. operating the [Irregularity Management System \(IMS\)](#) so Member States can report irregularities.

More specifically, the programme supports Member States in purchasing specific anti-fraud equipment and organising specific training sessions, targeted conferences and studies. It also maintains the Irregularity Management System

to facilitate the compliance of Member States with the obligation to report any irregularities detected. Finally, it maintains a platform for the exchange of mutual administrative assistance information and supports activities such as joint customs operations, providing training courses and meetings for operational actions.

The [programme](#) funds the following type of projects and actions:

- purchase of specialised and technically advanced equipment and effective IT tools to improve transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation, aimed at detecting and investigating irregularities, fraud and corruption detrimental to the EU's financial interests;
- actions supporting the development of technical knowledge, such as staff exchanges, including the establishment of investigation teams and joint cross-border operations;
- specialised training, risk analysis workshops, seminars and comparative law studies.

The programme is implemented under the direct management of [OLAF](#), the EU anti-fraud body. It provides funding in the form of grants and procurements.

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU public authorities involved in anti-fraud activities.

Protection of the euro against counterfeiting – Pericles IV

The [Pericles IV programme](#) prevents and combats counterfeiting and related fraud and preserves the integrity of the euro banknotes and coins. It strengthens the trust of citizens and business in the genuineness of banknotes and coins and enhances the trust in the EU's economy, while securing the sustainability of public finances. It provides exchange and dissemination of information, in particular through the organisation of workshops, meetings and seminars, including training, targeted placements and exchanges of staff of competent national authorities. It also provides technical, scientific and operational assistance. Finally, it purchases equipment to be used by third countries' specialised anti-counterfeiting authorities in order to protect the euro against counterfeiting.

All EU Member States' competent authorities can introduce applications to receive co-financing. Actions can take place in the euro area, in EU countries outside the euro area and in third countries. The programme is implemented through direct management by the European Commission. The funds are disbursed in the form of grants awarded to EU national authorities (in both euro-area and non-euro-area Member States).

Potential beneficiaries:

- EU Member States' authorities.

LIFE

LIFE is the European Union's financial instrument for the environment and for climate action. It has been running since 1992 and has co-financed more than 5 500 projects across the EU and countries outside the EU. Its main objectives are:

- to achieve the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable-energy-based, climate-neutral and resilient economy;
- to protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, including the air, water and soil;
- to halt and reverse biodiversity loss;
- to tackle the degradation of ecosystems.

The new LIFE programme is divided into four sub-programmes:

1. [Nature and biodiversity](#);
2. [Circular economy and quality of life](#);
3. [Climate change mitigation and adaptation](#);
4. [Clean energy transition](#).

Nature and biodiversity sub-programme

The [nature and biodiversity sub-programme](#) involves actions and initiatives aimed at protecting and restoring Europe's nature and halting and reversing biodiversity loss. To this end, it funds nature conservation projects, in particular in the areas of biodiversity, habitats and species. It also supports projects that contribute to the implementation of the EU [Birds](#) and [Habitats](#) directives (in particular to the development and management of the [Natura 2000](#) network) and the [Regulation](#) on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. Furthermore, it supports efforts aimed at achieving the objectives of the [EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030](#), part of the [EU Green Deal](#).

Circular economy and quality of life sub-programme

The aim of the [circular economy and quality of life sub-programme](#) is to facilitate the transition towards a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy and to protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, either through direct interventions or by supporting the integration of those objectives in other policies. It therefore co-finances projects in the environmental sector, in particular in the area of the circular economy, including recovery of resources from waste, but also water, air, noise, soil and chemical management as well as environmental governance. The sub-programme provides mostly action grants for projects implementing innovative and best practice solutions in these areas through standard action projects (SAP). It also covers the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU environmental policy and law through strategic integrated projects (SIPs). The European Commission continues to look for solutions that are ready to be implemented in close-to-market conditions, at industrial or commercial scale, while the projects are ongoing.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation sub-programme

The **climate change mitigation and adaptation sub-programme** contributes to the shift towards a sustainable, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and resilient economy, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Climate change mitigation

The climate sub-programme supports projects in the areas of farming, land use, peatland management, renewable energies and energy efficiency. It provides support for pilot, demonstration and best practice projects that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the implementation and development of EU policy and legislation, best practices and solutions. The sub-programme also promotes integrated approaches to implementing climate change mitigation strategies and action plans at regional or national level.

Climate change adaptation

The LIFE programme co-finances projects in the areas of urban adaptation and land-use planning, resilience of infrastructure, sustainable management of water in drought-prone areas, flood and coastal management, resilience of the agricultural, forestry and tourism sectors, and/or support to the EU's outermost regions: preparedness for extreme weather events, notably in coastal areas. It provides action grants for best practices, but also for pilot and demonstration projects that contribute to increased resilience to climate change. The climate sub-programme also promotes integrated projects that implement EU policy and strategy on climate change adaptation.

Climate governance and information

The programme co-funds projects supporting 1) the operation of the European Climate Pact, 2) sustainable finance activities, 3) awareness-raising, training and capacity-building, 4) knowledge development and 5) stakeholder participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation. LIFE also provides action grants for information campaigns and awareness-raising projects on climate matters. This includes public and stakeholder support for EU policy-making; for the communication, management and dissemination of information with a view to facilitating knowledge-sharing and assisting cooperation platforms in their work; for the provision of training; and for the development and dissemination of best practices and policy approaches.

Clean energy transition sub-programme

The [clean energy transition sub-programme](#) continues to support the delivery of EU policies in the area of sustainable energy, in particular, the European Green Deal, the energy union (2030 energy and climate targets) and the European Union's 2050 long-term decarbonisation strategy. For details, please see the section on energy.

Potential beneficiaries:

- national or local authorities;
- private commercial organisations;
- private non-commercial organisations (e.g. non-governmental organisations).

The budget of the LIFE programme is implemented through direct management. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, procurements and prizes.

All LIFE calls for proposals are published on the European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency ([CINEA website](#)) as well as the European Commission's [funding & tenders portal](#). Guidance on the application process, evaluation and grant approval, and on the requirements towards those working as experts is available on the [funding & tenders portal](#). Additional guidance is available on how to submit a proposal using the application tool: [funding & tenders portal for beginners](#).

Other sources of funding related to environmental projects

Since its inception, EU **cohesion policy** has been a source of support for a number of projects through the various funds that were set up as part of its implementation. For further details, see the section on regional development in this guide.

The [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) and the [Cohesion Fund](#) support a number of projects focused on contributing to a greener, low-carbon transition towards a net-zero carbon economy and a resilient Europe, by promoting a clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility. More specifically, the funds provide support for activities and initiatives:

- promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- promoting renewable energy in accordance with [Directive \(EU\) 2018/2001](#), including the sustainability criteria set out therein;
- developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E);
- promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches;
- promoting access to water and sustainable water management;
- promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy;
- enhancing the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution;
- promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of the transition to a net-zero carbon economy.

They also help to enhance the EU's connectedness, one aspect of which is mobility, by supporting efforts aimed at:

- developing a climate resilient, intelligent, secure, sustainable and intermodal TEN-T;
- developing and enhancing sustainable, climate-resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility.

The ERDF also supports the [European Urban Initiative](#). The overall objectives of the EUI are to strengthen integrated and participatory approaches to sustainable urban development, and to provide a stronger link to EU policies, and in particular to cohesion policy) and investment in urban areas as part of the funding earmarked for these areas under Article 11 of the ERDF/CF Regulation and beyond. The initiative aims to offer coherent support to cities to overcome the current landscape of manifold initiatives, programmes and instruments in support of cities under cohesion policy, and in particular, by maximising synergy and complementarity with the interregional cooperation programme URBACT IV. The EUI also supports the multi-level working of the Urban Agenda for the EU and intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters. The European Urban Initiative has two strands: a) support for innovative actions; and b) support for capacity- and knowledge-building, territorial impact assessment, policy development and communication.

The [Just Transition Fund](#) alleviates the socioeconomic costs triggered by the climate transition (the transition to a low-carbon, more resource-efficient and sustainable economy) by supporting the economic diversification and reconversion of the territories concerned. The fund backs productive investment in 1) SMEs and the creation of new firms, 2) research and innovation, 3) environmental rehabilitation and clean energy, 4) up- and reskilling of workers, 5) job search assistance and jobseekers programmes and 6) the transformation of existing carbon-intensive installations (when these investments lead to substantial emission cuts and job protection). It can also fund investment in:

- the deployment of technology as well as in systems and infrastructure for affordable clean energy, including energy storage technologies;
- greenhouse gas emission reduction;
- renewable energy, research and innovation;
- smart and sustainable local mobility, including decarbonisation of the local transport sector and its infrastructure;
- the rehabilitation and upgrading of district heating networks with a view to improving energy efficiency of district heating systems;
- heat production, provided that the heat production installations are supplied exclusively by renewable energy sources;
- the regeneration and decontamination of brownfield sites, land restoration and green infrastructure and repurposing projects;
- the enhancement of the circular economy including through waste prevention, reduction, resource efficiency, reuse, repair and recycling and much more.

The Just Transition Fund is part of the [Just Transition Mechanism](#).

Technical assistance is also delivered to a number of territories in the EU through the [Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition](#), which assists EU countries and coal regions in tackling challenges related to the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The [Research Fund for Coal and Steel \(RFCS\)](#) co-finances, through grants, research and innovation projects in the coal and steel sectors. Recent developments have made it possible for the RFCS to contribute towards the funding of large clean steelmaking research and innovation breakthrough projects whose ambition is to lead to near zero-carbon steelmaking by 2030, and research projects for the coal sector seeking to assist the just transition of formerly operating coal mines or coal mines in the process of closure.

The [common agricultural policy \(CAP\)](#) is also contributing to environmental sustainability. CAP strategic plans, due to be implemented from 1 January 2023, will allow for a greater degree of flexibility between the funds and will incorporate the ambitions of the [European Green Deal](#), in particular the '[farm to fork](#)' strategy. Overall, 40 % of total CAP expenditure will be dedicated to climate action. Funding for [rural development](#) is drawn partly from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and partly from national, regional and sometimes private sources. It can also help to support projects encouraging the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action.

The [European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund \(EMFAF\)](#) helps achieve sustainable fisheries and conserve marine biological resources. The fund is designed to help fishers transitioning to sustainable fishing, support coastal communities in diversifying their economies, enhance sustainable aquaculture developments and stimulate the growth of a [sustainable blue economy](#).

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#) entered into force on 19 February 2021. It has been financing reforms and investment in Member States from the start of the pandemic in February 2020 and will continue to do so until 31 December 2026. The RRF provides large-scale financial support to public entities for investing in green and digital projects. The support is in the form of grants (€338.0 billion) and loans (€385.8 billion), in current prices. The RRF helps the EU achieve its target of climate neutrality by 2050 and sets Europe on a path of digital transition, creating jobs and spurring growth in the process. The facility is structured around pillars: green transition and digital transformation; economic cohesion, productivity and competitiveness; social and territorial cohesion; health, economic, social and institutional resilience; and policies for the next generation.

The [InvestEU](#) programme is a single investment support mechanism for the 2021-2027 period. It brings together various EU financial instruments for internal policies previously supported by different funds and programmes of the EU budget. It supports sustainable investment, innovation and job creation in Europe. It is suited to provide long-term funding to companies and to support EU policies in a recovery from a deep economic and social crisis. Its guarantee amounts to €26.2 billion, with provisioning from the multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the Next Generation EU. The overall investment to be mobilised on this basis is estimated at more than €372 billion over the 2021-2027 period. It supports projects in the areas of energy, sustainability and the environment.

[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU framework programme for research and innovation. It promotes excellence in research and provides essential support to top researchers and innovators to drive the systemic changes needed to ensure a green, healthy and resilient EU. Horizon Europe incorporates research and innovation [missions](#) such as the [Adaptation to Climate Change mission](#), the [Climate-neutral and smart cities mission](#), the [Soil Deal for Europe](#) and the [Restore our Oceans and Waters mission](#).

Research Fund for Coal and Steel

The Research Fund for Coal and Steel ([RFCS](#)) is an EU funding programme that supports high-quality research projects seeking to keep up the competitiveness of the EU coal and steel industries. The fund covers core production processes, new products and applications, quality control, utilisation and conversion of resources, safety at work, environmental protection (through the reduction of emissions from coal use and steel production), and social issues. The RFCS has its own legal basis and is outside the multiannual financial framework. It is funded through the revenues generated by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (once these have been converted into liquidation assets), which are exclusively devoted to research in the domain of coal and steel. RFCS-funded projects cover: steel production processes, optimised utilisation and conservation of resources, energy savings and industrial efficiency improvements, health and safety at work, environmental protection, technologies supporting coal regions in transition and emissions reductions from steel production.

Proposals may be submitted by legal persons (entities) registered in the EU. Public bodies, private commercial organisations and private non-commercial organisations (including NGOs and universities) are eligible to apply.

For support from the protection of natural disasters, see the section on [Protection From Natural Disasters](#) in this funding guide.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ICT



Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is the EU framework programme for research and innovation. It promotes excellence in research and provides essential support to top researchers and innovators to drive the systemic changes needed to ensure a green, healthy and resilient EU. Through the programme, the European Commission provides grants, prizes and procurement to excellent researchers as a way to promote their activities. It also provides funding to initiatives focused on developing research infrastructure and fostering mobility within the EU. Lastly, it supports partnerships between Member States, industry and other stakeholders to work jointly on research and innovation.

Horizon Europe typically funds research and innovation projects tackling societal challenges with an emphasis on EU industrial leadership, recovery and the green and digital transitions (e.g. high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, data and robotics, batteries, smart cities, cancer and rare diseases,

the carbon-neutral and circular industry, and the blue economy).

The budget is divided amongst **four pillars** and **15 components** to create a programme that supports all the areas of [research and innovation](#):

1. excellent science, global challenges:

- [European Research Council](#);
- [Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions](#);
- [research infrastructure](#).

2. industrial competitiveness:

- [health](#);
- [culture, creativity and inclusive society](#);
- [civil security for society](#);
- [digital, industry and space](#);
- [climate, energy and mobility](#);
- [food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment](#);
- [non-nuclear direct actions of the Joint Research Centre](#).

3. innovative Europe:

- [European Innovation Council](#);
- [European innovation ecosystems](#);
- [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#).

4. widening participation and strengthening the [European research area](#):

- [widening participation and spreading excellence](#);
- [reforming and enhancing the European research and innovation system](#).

The Horizon Europe Regulation establishes a range of targets with respect to the use of the budget:

- 35 % of the budget contributes to climate objectives;
- there is a substantial increase of spending in main digital research and innovation activities compared to Horizon 2020;
- 70 % of the budget of the European Innovation Council is allocated to small and medium-sized enterprises;

- at least 3.3 % of the budget is committed to the programme part dedicated to widening participation and spreading excellence;
- investment in space is commensurate with that under Horizon 2020;
- the participation of industry in the actions should be supported at levels at least commensurate with those under Horizon 2020;
- the budget should contribute to the overall ambition of providing 7.5 % of annual spending under the MFF to biodiversity objectives in 2024, and 10 % of annual spending under the MFF to biodiversity objectives in 2026 and 2027.

The selection of projects to fund is mainly done through open calls for proposals; projects are selected according to their level of excellence, their impact and the quality and efficiency of implementation that they can guarantee. There is no fixed distribution by country or region. The programme is administered by the European Commission, its executive agencies, and a range of legal entities established as EU bodies.

Whilst grants under pillars 1 and 3 are mostly to one beneficiary (monobeneficiary schemes), grants under pillar 2 are mostly to a transnational consortium of beneficiaries, thus ensuring that researchers and research organisations from different countries collaborate with each other.

The following types of actions are supported:

- networking and coordination;
- research;
- innovation;
- pilot actions;
- market deployment actions;
- training and mobility actions;
- dissemination and exploitation of results, etc.

Horizon Europe incorporates research and innovation [missions](#) to increase the effectiveness of funding by pursuing clearly defined targets. Five missions have been identified:

1. [Adaptation to climate change mission](#);
2. [Climate-neutral and smart cities mission](#);
3. [Cancer mission](#);
4. [Soil deal for Europe mission](#);
5. [Restore our oceans and waters mission](#).

Mandatory open access to publications and [open science principles](#) are applied throughout the Horizon Europe programme.

Horizon Europe supports [European partnerships](#) in which the EU, national authorities and/or the private sector jointly commit to supporting the development and implementation of a research and innovation programme.

Potential beneficiaries:

- scientists and academics;
- research organisations;
- universities;
- industry;
- small and medium-sized enterprises;
- students.

All funding information and procedures on how to apply are on the [funding and tenders portal](#).

Euratom research and training programme

Horizon Europe is complemented by the [Euratom 2021-2025 research and training programme](#). The Euratom programme pursues nuclear research and training activities with an emphasis on the continuous improvement of nuclear safety, security and radiation protection.

The European space programme

The [European space programme](#) bolsters the EU space policy in the areas of earth observation, satellite navigation, connectivity, space research and innovation and supports investment in critical infrastructure and disruptive technologies. The programme finances the space and ground infrastructure of Copernicus, Galileo, the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) and the governmental satellite communications programme (GOVSATCOM). It tackles pressing societal challenges by investing in advanced technologies and innovation, providing useful services to citizens, and guaranteeing EU strategic autonomy and industrial competitiveness.

While striving to strengthen existing European space assets and services, it also targets start-ups and SMEs that develop innovative solutions based on space technologies, data and services. The EU space programme supports the European space industry and promotes the emergence of a European 'new space' ecosystem fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and new funding opportunities.

The following flagship components deliver European space-based services on a daily basis:

1. **COPERNICUS** is the European Earth Observation (EO) system. It supports the management of the environment, helps to mitigate the effects of climate change and ensures safety and civil security across Europe. Copernicus is the world's first provider of 'big' space data.
2. **GALILEO** is a global satellite navigation and positioning system (GNSS) on which numerous EU economic sectors rely, from transport and agriculture to border management and search and rescue. Its 20-cm accuracy makes Galileo a game changer for autonomous driving and commercial drones. Already more than 2.5 billion smartphones are Galileo-enabled.
3. **EGNOS** is the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service: a reliable navigation signal improving the navigation services to aviation, maritime and land-based users in over 30+ countries, and already operational in 426 airports and helipads.
4. The recently proposed [EU space-based secure connectivity system](#) will ensure worldwide access to secure and cost-effective satellite communications services, for governmental communications and commercial use. It aims to protect critical infrastructure, support

surveillance and crisis management, as well as enable high-speed broadband everywhere in Europe to best anticipate future challenges facing our economy.

5. **Space traffic management:** the exponential applications of space services involve more and more satellites, thus more traffic in space. As the congestion of satellites and debris threaten the viability of space infrastructure, the European Commission has presented an EU approach to space traffic management. This would further strengthen the EU's space surveillance and tracking capabilities, and set clear standards and rules for a safe, sustainable and secure use of space.
6. The EU **GOVSATCOM** initiative ensures the long-term availability of reliable, secure and cost-effective governmental satellite communications services for EU and national public authorities managing security critical missions and infrastructure.

Europe's sovereign space infrastructure supports a wide array of economic sectors through downstream applications using space technologies, data and services. Here are just a few examples:

- **increased efficiency in agriculture and fisheries:** satellite-enabled applications improve the mapping of cropland in need of irrigation, harvest forecasts, and fisheries control. This guarantees better food quality and security while safeguarding the environment;
- **improving Europe's digital connectivity;** helping regions access knowledge and information: satellites support communication when Earth-based solutions are limited. This reduces regional imbalances by serving communities in remote areas with no internet access;
- **improved crisis response:** satellite services help shorten response times in emergencies. Swift damage images and assessment maps contribute to more efficient planning and relief efforts, and help guide rescue services;
- **protecting the environment and fighting climate change:** environmental monitoring provides crucial information on the state of vegetation, ocean currents, water quality, natural resources, atmospheric pollutants, greenhouse gases and the ozone layer;
- **increased security:** satellite positioning, satellite communications and Earth observation contribute to detecting illegal immigration, preventing cross-border organised crime and combating piracy at sea;

- **improving citizens' health:** space-based applications can significantly improve patients' healthcare and health education through remote medical support. They also help in preventing or mitigating the outbreak of a disease;
- **optimising and greening transport:** when combined with enhanced communication capabilities, highly accurate satellite positioning contributes to a modern and reliable transport sector for cars, planes and ships. It optimises fleet management, vessel traceability, collision prevention, speed control, assistance for ship manoeuvres, etc.

The budget of the EU space programme is implemented mainly through indirect management by the [European Union Agency for the Space Programme](#) (EUSPA), the [European Space Agency](#) (ESA), the [European operational satellite agency for monitoring weather, climate and the environment from space](#) (EUMETSAT) and other entrusted entities; a small part of the budget is implemented through direct management by the Commission. The programme provides funding in the form of grants and procurements.

The following type of projects are funded:

- design, engineering, manufacturing and construction of space and ground infrastructure;
- development of service applications;
- research projects and studies;
- innovation activities;
- communication actions.

Potential beneficiaries:

- the EU space industry;
- manufacturers;
- businesses and start-ups;
- scientists and academics.

ICT and broadband in cohesion policy

The [European structural and investment funds](#) (ESIF) are managed locally by managing authorities and can be combined with financial instruments in order to promote ICT activities. ICT was a priority for the previous cohesion policy programming period (2014-2020), when a number of [funds](#) were dedicated to supporting ICT. For the 2021-2027 programming period, ICT and broadband connectivity remain a priority.

EU cohesion policy makes a key contribution to delivering the digital single market objectives, in particular through significant financial allocations from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The focus of digital investment under cohesion policy is to overcome the digital divide both socially and geographically, e.g. by supporting the digitalisation of firms, by improving access to e-government, e-health, and digital skills, and by fostering the roll-out of broadband in remote and rural regions, so that no EU region is left behind.

For more information on digital opportunities in regional policy, see also Section 1 on Regional Policy in this funding guide.

CEF Telecom

The digital part of the Connecting Europe Facility ([CEF Digital](#)) contributes to:

- development of safe, secure and sustainable high-performance infrastructure including Gigabit and 5G networks;
- increased capacity and resilience of digital backbone infrastructure;
- digitalisation of transport and energy networks.

Activities supported by the fund include:

5G coverage along transport corridors:

CEF Digital contributes to the funding of a set of projects providing 5G coverage along transport paths (roads, railways etc.). The goal is to leverage further public and private investment and establish a pan-European transport network of 5G corridors by 2027. This infrastructure is considered a key enabler for rolling out tomorrow's connected and automated mobility.

5G Smart communities:

CEF Digital supports the early deployment of 5G-based systems to enable socio-economic drivers, such as public administrations, healthcare centres, schools and other education and training institutions. The aim is to make them 'smarter', i.e. more efficient, resilient and able to adapt according to the citizens' evolving needs, the environment, the local economy and society at large.

Backbone networks for pan-European cloud federations:

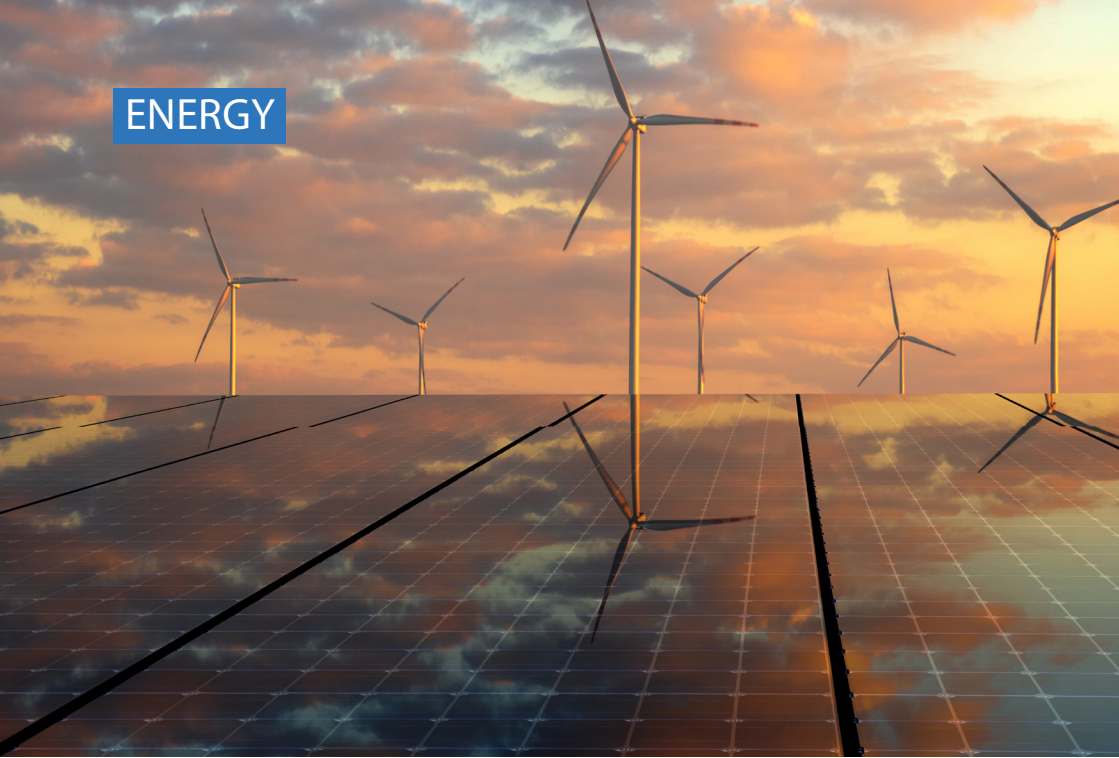
Together with the Digital Europe programme, InvestEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, CEF Digital promotes the deployment of cross-border and national cloud infrastructure interconnections. These interconnections enable distributed, secure, energy-efficient and high-speed connectivity to the benefit of EU citizens and businesses.

Backbone connectivity for digital global gateways:

CEF Digital supports the deployment of trans-continental backbone networks as part of the digital global gateway strategy of the EU; once in place, these networks will contribute to strengthening the quality and resilience of connectivity between EU countries, as well as third countries. This includes submarine cables, satellite infrastructures and connectivity to internet exchange points.

Operational Digital Platforms:

CEF Digital funds operational digital platforms that support digital services in the energy and transport sectors that will be implemented across borders in the EU. These synergies leverage the renewal of the energy and transport infrastructure.



The EU has [various funding programmes](#) for projects that contribute to ensuring a competitive, sustainable and secure energy supply in the EU. Grants and lending schemes help companies, regions, and countries to successfully implement energy projects.

Potential beneficiaries:

- municipal, local and regional authorities;
- public and private entities acting on behalf of those authorities (utilities, public transport providers, social housing associations, energy service companies, etc.);
- businesses and start-ups in the regions where the magnitude and impact of the climate transition are the greatest;
- citizens.

Cohesion Fund

The EU's Cohesion Fund aims to reduce economic and social disparity between EU countries and promote sustainable development. The fund supports energy-related projects that benefit the environment, for instance, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the use of renewable energy or improving energy efficiency. Part of the cohesion fund goes towards implementing the EU's energy union with the help of the [Energy and Managing Authorities Network](#). Another part of the cohesion fund is used for supporting the Connecting Europe Facility.

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) support for the energy sector

Every two years the European Commission draws up a list of EU [projects of common interest \(PCI\)](#) that may apply for CEF funding. In addition to projects of common interest, the CEF programme for 2021-2027 includes a new section to support cross-border projects for renewable energy. The [specific objectives of the CEF in the energy sector](#) are:

1. to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to further integration of an efficient and competitive internal energy market, interoperability of networks across borders and sectors, facilitating decarbonisation of the economy, promoting energy efficiency and ensuring security of supply;
2. to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the area of energy, including renewable energy.

CEF funding supports actions that are carried out as part of electricity, smart grids, CO₂ and natural gas infrastructure projects; the overarching goal is to better interconnect energy networks and thereby strengthen the single energy market in the EU. Upgrading the EU's ageing energy infrastructure in order to prepare it for future challenges (demand for energy, security of supply, large-scale supply of energy from renewable sources) requires huge investments. As some energy projects are not commercially viable, [CEF grants](#) are of particular importance. Grants are allocated following competitive [calls for proposals](#).

European Regional Development Fund

The [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) aims to reduce economic and social disparity between the EU's regions. One of the five priority areas for 2021-2027 is 'the clean and fair energy transition', to be achieved by means of:

- promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein;
- developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E).

Operations under the ERDF are expected to contribute 30 % of the overall financial envelope to climate objectives.

Horizon Europe

The EU's research and innovation programme [Horizon Europe](#) aims to respond to climate change by making the energy sector more climate- and environment-friendly. Under its [cluster 5 on climate, energy and mobility](#), the programme supports projects in the areas of:

- energy supply;
- energy systems and grids;
- buildings and industrial facilities in energy transition;
- energy storage.

Horizon Europe funds energy sector-related research and innovation, both of which play a key role in delivering the solutions and system transformations that the sector so badly needs. Funding contributes to making the whole renewable energy value chain more efficient and to integrating sustainability and circularity throughout it. In parallel, Horizon Europe helps develop novel and disruptive renewable energy technologies and energy storage solutions.

The [European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency \(CINEA\)](#) is running parts of Horizon Europe in the area of energy, as well as innovation of energy efficient technologies and solutions for buildings, heating and cooling, and other forms of innovative energy use. All funding information and procedures on how to apply are on the [funding and tenders portal](#).

InvestEU

The [InvestEU programme](#) supports sustainable investment, innovation and job creation in the EU. The programme builds on the successful model of the Investment Plan for Europe (the Juncker Plan). It brings together, under one roof, the European Fund for Strategic Investments and 13 other EU financial instruments.

The [InvestEU Fund](#) has been operational since 2022. InvestEU implementing partners provide direct and intermediated financing solutions for both private and public project promoters. A guarantee agreement with the EIB Group, the main implementing partner, was signed in March 2022, so that companies and project promoters can start applying for financing.

Guarantee agreements with other implementing partners will follow.

Potential beneficiaries:

- private entities or project companies, large corporations, mid-cap companies, including small ones, and SMEs;
- public sector entities (territorial or not) and public sector-type entities;
- mixed entities, such as public–private partnership (PPPs) and private companies with a public purpose;
- not-for-profit organisations.

Project promoters should apply directly to implementing partners who will offer tailor-made financing solutions based on the financial products supported by the [EU guarantee](#) providing credit risk protection.

Small mid-caps, SMEs and social or micro-enterprises should apply to their local commercial or public banks whose financial products are covered by the EU guarantee in their country or region. These local financial intermediaries will inform them if a particular financing programme is covered by the InvestEU Fund. Find your local intermediary on the [access to finance](#) website.

LIFE

A new sub-programme of the LIFE programme is dedicated to [clean energy](#). It offers support to initiatives seeking to deliver on sustainable energy-related policies that contribute to reaching the European Green Deal objectives.

Projects are co-financed under the LIFE clean energy transition sub-programme in the following five areas of intervention:

1. building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition;
2. accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market;
3. attracting private finance for sustainable energy;
4. supporting the development of local and regional investment projects;
5. involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition.

The sub-programme aims to facilitate the transition towards an energy efficient, renewable energy-based and resilient economy by funding coordination and support actions across the EU. All LIFE calls for proposals are published on [CINEA's website](#).

Just Transition Mechanism

The [Just Transition Mechanism](#) is a financial tool that provides tailored support to the most vulnerable and coal-intensive regions in the transition to a greener economy.

The mechanism consists of three pillars:

1. a [Just Transition Fund](#) of €40 billion to primarily provide grants;
2. a dedicated scheme under [InvestEU](#) to encourage private investment;
3. a [public sector loan facility with the EIB Group](#) to mobilise additional investment and leverage public financing.

Under the Just Transition Mechanism, support is available to all Member States; it is focused on regions that are the most carbon-intensive or with the highest number of people working in the fossil fuels industry. Member States can get access by preparing territorial Just Transition plans that cover the period up to 2030, identifying the territories that should get the most support.

Concerning energy, the Just Transition Mechanism protects:

People and citizens most vulnerable to the transition, by:

- improving energy-efficient housing;
- investing to fight energy poverty;
- facilitating access to clean, affordable and secure energy.

Companies and sectors active in or comprising carbon-intensive industries;

Member States and regions with a high dependence on fossil-fuel and carbon-intensive industries, by:

- investing in renewable energy sources;
- improving energy infrastructure and district heating.

Modernisation Fund

The [Modernisation Fund](#) is a new instrument that supports 10 lower-income EU Member States in their transition to climate neutrality by helping them to modernise their energy systems and improve energy efficiency.

The beneficiary Member States are Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The Modernisation Fund supports [investment](#) in:

- generation and use of energy from renewable sources;
- energy efficiency;
- energy storage;
- modernisation of energy networks, including district heating, pipelines and grids;
- Just Transition in carbon-dependent regions: redeployment, reskilling and upskilling of workers, education, job-seeking initiatives and start-ups.

The Modernisation Fund operates under the responsibility of the beneficiary Member States, which work in close [cooperation with the European Investment Bank](#) (EIB), the Investment Committee set up for the fund and the European Commission.

The Modernisation Fund leaves the beneficiary Member States the freedom to decide on the form of support: they can use grants, premium, guarantee instruments, loans or capital injections.

The support granted by Member States using Modernisation Fund resources needs to be compliant with the State aid rules.

European Investment Bank

EIB investment is helping efforts to transform the energy sector in many ways. Investment in energy efficiency remains the most cost-effective way to meet the EU's energy and climate goals.

The EIB no longer supports traditional fossil fuel energy projects, including those focused on natural gas. It is the first international finance institution to have taken this step.

The EIB focuses its activities on four separate themes, where it can provide a high degree of additional value:

1. unlocking energy efficiency;
2. decarbonising energy supply;
3. supporting innovation and innovative energy infrastructure;
4. securing the enabling infrastructure.

The EIB provides companies with loans and other financial instruments. It also provides advice and expertise on administration and project development.

For further information regarding the energy projects supported by the EIB, please check the [European Investment Bank website](#).

Innovation Fund

The [Innovation Fund](#) is one of the world's largest funding programmes for the demonstration of innovative low-carbon technologies. It is the successor of the NER 300 programme.

The fund focuses on technologies and big flagship projects that can bring significant emissions reductions. Examples include:

- innovative low-carbon technologies and processes in energy-intensive industries;
- carbon capture, utilisation and storage;
- renewable energy generation;
- energy storage.

The Innovation Fund is managed by the [European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency \(CINEA\)](#).

European Energy Efficiency Fund

The [EEEF](#) aims to [provide](#) market-based financing for commercially viable public projects in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy and clean transport in the EU Member States, particularly in urban settings. Compared to the banking system, market-based finance is more capable of sharing risk and passing losses back to investors. Investment funds do not carry the same solvency risks as banks, as investors are entitled only to the market value of their investments.

Sustainable energy investment promoted by local, regional and (where justified) national public authorities, could include but is not limited to:

- energy-saving measures in public buildings;
- investment in high efficiency combined heat and power (CHP), including micro-co-generation and district heating/cooling networks;
- investment in decentralised renewable energy sources, including micro-generation;
- clean urban transport;
- the modernisation of infrastructure, such as street lighting and smart grids;
- sustainable energies with a potential for innovation and growth.

Potential beneficiaries:

- municipal, local and regional authorities as well as public and private entities acting on behalf of those authorities;
- local energy utilities;
- energy service companies;
- district heating companies using combined heat and power;
- social housing associations;
- public transport providers.

The website of the fund offers an [eligibility check](#) for potential applicants.

Recovery and Resilience Facility

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#) is the key instrument at the heart of Next Generation EU, the EU's plan for emerging stronger from the coronavirus pandemic. It is structured around six pillars: green transition; digital transformation; economic cohesion, productivity and competitiveness; social and territorial cohesion; health, economic, social and institutional resilience; and policies for the next generation. The Member States' [national recovery and resilience plans](#) should devote at least 37 % of total expenditure to investment and reforms that support climate objectives. The RRF will help the EU achieve its target of climate neutrality by 2050.

Some useful links include:

- information on [energy instruments in regional policy](#) (Commission's DG Regional Policy);
- information on the EU's range of financing opportunities that can support sustainable energy projects in cities: [financing local sustainable energy](#);
- European Commission report with technical guidance on [financing the energy renovation of buildings with cohesion policy funding](#);
- EU [support schemes and initiatives](#) to accelerate energy efficiency investments.

REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe

REPowerEU is a plan for saving energy, producing clean energy and diversifying our energy supplies. It sets out a series of measures to rapidly reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and speed up the green transition, while increasing the resilience of the EU-wide energy system. Amongst other things, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is at the heart of the REPowerEU Plan implementation, providing additional EU funding. Member States can use the remaining RRF loans and new RRF grants funded by the auctioning of Emission Trading System allowances, currently held in the Market Stability Reserve as well as the Innovation Fund. REPowerEU may fund a number of actions.

REPowerEU promotes a number of measures such as the common purchases of gas, LNG and hydrogen via the EU Energy Platform for all Member States who want to participate as well as Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the Western Balkans. It also promotes new energy partnerships with reliable suppliers, including future cooperation on renewables and low carbon gases, rapid rollout of solar and wind energy projects combined with renewable hydrogen deployment and projects to increase the production of biomethane. In the long term, new national REPowerEU Plans under the modified Recovery and Resilience Fund are to support investment and reforms worth €300 billion. Industrial decarbonisation is to be supported with projects under the Innovation Fund. New legislation and recommendations for faster permitting of renewables, especially in dedicated 'go-to areas' with low environmental risk, and investments in an integrated and adapted gas and electricity infrastructure network are part of REPowerEU. Envisaged measures are implemented to reach energy savings and increase the European renewables target for 2030 from 40 % to 45 %. New EU proposals to ensure industry has access to critical raw materials and regulatory measures to increase energy efficiency in the transport sector are also envisaged, as well as constructing electrolysers to fuel EU industry with homegrown production of 10 million tonnes renewable hydrogen.



EU4Health

Being the biggest EU health programme to date, [EU4Health](#) makes a significant contribution to the post COVID-19 recovery. Four overarching objectives show the broad range and ambition of the programme:

1. improve and foster health in the EU;
2. protect people from serious cross-border health threats;
3. improve access to medicinal products, medical devices and crisis-relevant products;
4. strengthen health systems.

The programme applies, where possible, the 'One Health' approach, recognising that human health is connected to animal health and to the environment.

EU4Health paves the way to a [European health union](#) by investing in urgent health priorities, such as:

- [responding to the coronavirus pandemic](#) and reinforcing the EU's resilience towards [cross-border health threats](#);
- [Europe's beating cancer plan](#);
- the [pharmaceutical strategy](#).

Activities in other areas, such as [digitalising](#) health systems, reducing the number of [antimicrobial-resistant infections](#) and [improving vaccination rates](#), are also being boosted.

The programme works to prevent diseases and promote health and international health cooperation. It supports actions to prevent, prepare for and respond to cross-border health threats; complements national stockpiling of essential crisis-relevant products; and establishes a reserve of medical, healthcare and support staff. EU4Health makes medicinal products, medical devices and crisis-relevant products more available and accessible. Finally, EU4Health contributes to digitalising healthcare and ensuring equal access to healthcare and will support evidence-based decision-making.

EU4Health supports a broad range of projects under four general objectives:

- crisis preparedness;
- disease prevention;
- health systems and the healthcare workforce;
- digitalisation.

Cancer is a major priority across all four strands.

Potential beneficiaries:

- research foundations and universities;
- international organisations active in the area of health;
- public authorities;
- NGOs;
- commercial enterprises.

EU4Health is implemented in direct management and indirect management, mainly by the [European Health and Digital Executive Agency](#). Funding takes the form of grants, prizes and procurements. Direct grants may be signed with international organisations active in the area of health.

Synergies and complementarities with other funds

Health challenges are cross-cutting by nature. EU4Health works together with a number of other EU programmes, policies, instruments and actions:

- the [European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#) to support vulnerable groups in accessing healthcare;
- the [European Regional and Development Fund](#) to improve regional health infrastructure;
- [Horizon Europe](#) for health research;
- the [Union Civil Protection Mechanism / rescEU](#) to create stockpiles for emergency medical supplies;
- the [Digital Europe and Connecting Europe Facility](#) for creating the digital infrastructure needed for digital health;
- the [InvestEU programme](#);
- the [Single Market programme](#);
- the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#);
- the [Erasmus+ programme](#);
- the [Emergency Support Instrument](#).

The EU's response to the coronavirus pandemic

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the EU has been mobilising all its available resources to help Member States coordinate their national responses and adopt a common approach to the situation. This help includes the provision of objective information about the spread of the virus, effective efforts to contain it and measures to repair the economic and social damage inflicted by the pandemic.

A number of EU funds have been deployed in order to tackle challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. As many of these have already been mentioned in detail in previous sections of the funding guide, they will only be mentioned very briefly here. EU action has taken place on many fronts:

EU funds to support EU Member States' economies and to tackle health emergencies

The EU put together a recovery package worth €2.018 trillion (in current prices), which combines the EU budget for 2021-2027 and the funds in [Next Generation EU](#). Under this arrangement, the Commission will be able to borrow up to around €800 billion (in current prices) on the markets. The EU also agreed on [temporary State aid rules](#) so governments can provide liquidity to the economy to support citizens and save jobs in the EU. The EU also triggered the 'escape clause' that allows maximum flexibility in the application of the budgetary rules. This helped EU countries to support their healthcare systems and businesses, and to secure people's jobs during the crisis. This was backed up with action by the European Central Bank to support financial stability. For more information on Next Generation EU, check the dedicated section in this funding guide.

To tackle the crisis, the EU promoted an investment initiative to provide Member States with immediate liquidity. The first liquidity boost consisted of unspent cohesion policy funds. The first package of measures was proposed on 13 March 2020 (including the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative](#) followed by the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus](#)). Measures also included new methods to reach the most vulnerable under the [Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived](#), such as home deliveries and the use of electronic vouchers to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

The EU's [temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency \(SURE\)](#) was designed to help people keep their jobs during the crisis. SURE support is issued as social bonds, to make sure every euro has a clear social impact. To support farmers and the agriculture sector, the EU has launched [exceptional measures to support and stabilise agricultural markets](#).

The European Investment Bank has agreed to deploy the European Guarantee Fund ([EGF](#)) to tackle the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic; this has enabled the EIB Group to scale up its support for mostly small and medium-sized EU companies.

Other EU actions in brief

EU COVID Certificate

The [EU Digital COVID Certificate](#) has been a success in providing citizens with a tool that is accepted and trusted across the EU. It has prevented the emergence of a fragmented system of multiple national certificates. The EU Digital COVID Certificate system is sufficiently flexible to be adapted, if necessary, to possible future developments and new scientific evidence.

Vaccines strategy

The contracts put in place under the EU vaccines strategy give Member States access to as many doses of vaccines (including adapted vaccines if they prove necessary) as they need in 2022 and 2023. The EU will need to continue to invest in developing and producing better, more advanced vaccines against COVID-19 and its variants.

The EU has built a diversified portfolio of vaccines for EU citizens at fair prices. Contracts have been concluded with eight promising vaccine developers, securing a portfolio of up to 4.2 billion doses. The EU has mobilised funds under Horizon 2020 since January 2020 to develop vaccines, new treatments, diagnostic tests and medical systems to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and save lives. With the HERA (Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority) Incubator, launched in February 2021, the EU prepared for the detection of variants and the development, regulatory approval and production of adapted vaccines. The EU has made a major effort to strengthen its capacity to rapidly detect and characterise variants of concern.

EU health actions

A number of [crisis preparedness and response measures](#) were implemented, such as strengthening coordination at EU level when facing cross-border health threats and revising the mandates of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and of the European Medicines Agency to provide stronger surveillance, scientific analysis and guidance before and during a crisis.

The **Union Civil Protection Mechanism** remains available to galvanise support from less affected Member States to those under the strongest pressure. Since the beginning of October, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre has facilitated the delivery of immediate life-saving assistance from several Member States to Romania and Latvia.

Tackling disinformation

During the coronavirus crisis, platforms reported [monthly](#) to the Commission providing an overview of their actions to promote authoritative content, improve users' awareness, take action against harmful content and identify advertising linked to coronavirus disinformation. [Guidance](#) was published in May 2021, asking signatories to make it a strong, efficient and flexible tool to fight disinformation.

Global action

From the beginning, the EU has been leading the global response to the pandemic by supporting neighbours and partner countries in facing its health and socioeconomic consequences. It has also been a driver of vaccine research, the world's biggest exporter of vaccines, and at the forefront of vaccine sharing. It has also been leading support to countries facing the combination of severe health impacts and an economic slump.

The EU, its Member States and financial institutions, acting as Team Europe, have been at the forefront of the global response to COVID-19, pooling their resources and expertise. The EU has led the way in global solidarity as the world's largest exporter of COVID-19 vaccines, with over 2.1 billion finished doses exported to 166 countries by March 2022, about two-thirds of its overall manufacturing to date, starting from the very early stages of the pandemic. COVAX is leading efforts to secure fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines in low and middle-income countries. Team Europe is one of the lead contributors to COVAX with over €2.2 billion.



Common foreign and security policy

The [common foreign and security policy \(CFSP\)](#) contributes to the EU's objectives of preserving peace, strengthening international security, promoting international cooperation, and developing and consolidating democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Within the CFSP budget, the EU funds different types of civilian common security and defence policy missions, the EU special representatives, stabilisation actions and multilateral and bilateral non-proliferation and disarmament projects. These are implemented through agreements with international organisations such as the United Nations.

For example, the EU funds:

- [civilian stabilisation missions](#);
- [EU special representatives](#);
- [the Kosovo Specialist Chamber](#);
- actions in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament;
- the [European Security and Defence College](#).

The following types of projects/actions are funded:

- technical assistance, capacity-building, training and transfer of skills;
- actions contributing to strengthening of the capacities of states to improve the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles, thus contributing to the global reduction of the risk of accidental explosions and illicit diversion, ensuring safer communities and more stable states and societies;
- provision of experts, police officers and rule-of-law experts.

Potential beneficiaries:

- International organisations, including for example the [Ammunition Management Advisory Team](#) and the [European Union advisory mission in support of sector reform in Iraq](#) – one of the 11 ongoing civilian missions under the EU's common security and defence policy.

The budget is implemented through indirect management for civilian common security and defence policy and through both indirect and direct management for non-proliferation and disarmament actions. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

Overseas countries and territories

The EU aims to promote the economic and social development of the [EU's 13 overseas countries and territories \(OCTs\)](#), to increase their resilience and competitiveness, and to reduce their economic and environmental vulnerability. The bulk of the funding supports actions in areas of mutual interest to OCTs and the EU – green, digital, sustainable growth and human development. EU funds also support OCTs in building their capacities and promote their cooperation with their regional partners.

The types of actions that are being supported (these actions are determined in a programming exercise consulted with the OCTs) include:

- in Greenland, education sector reforms, leading to increased education levels and resulting in better prospects for pupils and students;
- in the Caribbean and Pacific region, actions targeting sustainable energy, marine biodiversity, resilience and climate change challenges.

A primary financing modality is budget support through direct management by the partner OCTs.

Potential beneficiaries:

- various stakeholders in the EU's 13 OCTs.

Pre-accession assistance – IPA III

Pre-accession assistance supports the EU candidate countries and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey) in transforming their societies, legal systems and economies on the path to EU membership. It is an investment in the future of the EU, making it safer and more prosperous by supporting the stability and prosperity of its closest neighbours. It also helps the EU reach its own objectives, such as peace and stability, sustainable economic growth and combating climate change.

It facilitates political, institutional, social and economic reforms; fosters sustainable socioeconomic development; and brings the societies closer to the EU's values and standards.

The general objective of the **IPA III instrument** is to support the beneficiaries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by those beneficiaries to comply with EU values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to EU membership, thereby contributing to their stability, security and prosperity.

The **IPA III Programming Framework** is the European Commission's overarching strategic document for the use of EU funds assisting the IPA III beneficiaries for the duration of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF). It replaces the previous country-specific strategy papers. The 2021-2027 MFF reflects the

specific objectives of the IPA III Regulation and focuses on the priorities of the enlargement process according to five thematic windows, which mirror the clusters of negotiating chapters as per the revised enlargement methodology. Programming of EU assistance is based on EU thematic priorities rather than predefined country envelopes. This allows rewarding performance and progress towards key priorities and increased flexibility to respond to the evolving needs of the partners in their path towards accession.

The key areas of support are:

- the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy;
- good governance, alignment with EU legislation, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication;
- a green agenda and sustainable connectivity;
- competitiveness and inclusive growth;
- territorial and cross-border cooperation.

The following types of actions are funded (among others):

- investment in infrastructure;
- actions in the area of technical assistance;
- capacity-building;
- transfer of knowledge.

Pre-accession assistance is managed by the European Commission and the EU delegations (direct management), as well as the national authorities of EU candidate countries and potential candidates, international organisations and Member States' agencies (indirect management). It is primarily implemented through grants, procurements, budget support, contributions to EU trust funds and to financial instruments, and guarantees.

Potential beneficiaries:

- small and medium-sized enterprises;
- scientists;
- farmers;
- students;
- civil society;

- artists;
- media organisations;
- vulnerable groups in the EU candidate countries and potential candidates.

European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation

The main aim of the [instrument](#) is to ensure the safety and security of EU citizens and to protect the environment. The instrument promotes a culture of nuclear safety and radiation protection, safe management of spent fuel, radioactive waste and decommissioning of former nuclear sites, and the application of effective and efficient safeguards for nuclear materials in non-EU countries.

The INSC establishes cooperation with and supports beneficiary countries through a variety of means, including by providing services, equipment, technical assistance, training and tutoring and by exchanging information (including through twinning projects). The INSC can also provide budget support and facilitate participation in multilateral assistance/cooperation projects together with Member States or international organisations.

The instrument funds the following type of projects:

- transfer of EU expertise;
- promotion of transparency in nuclear-related decision making;
- support for the production and implementation of radioactive waste management strategies and remediation of former nuclear sites and installations;
- establishment of efficient and effective safeguards for nuclear material in non-EU countries.

The Commission manages these programmes through direct management from headquarters and/or through the EU delegations, and through indirect management by entities such as EU Member State agencies or international organisations that ensure a level of protection of the EU's financial interests equivalent to that under direct management. Indirect management may also be entrusted to partner countries or the bodies they designate. Innovative financial instruments, including in partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other international financial institutions, are used for blending activities.

Potential beneficiaries:

- nuclear regulatory authorities in the partner countries.



Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe)

The European Union is the world's biggest donor of development assistance.

The [NDICI – Global Europe instrument](#) merges several former EU external financing instruments. It aims to support countries most in need to overcome long-term developmental challenges and will contribute to achieving the international commitments and objectives that the EU has agreed to, in particular the [2030 Agenda](#) and its [sustainable development goals](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#). [NDICI](#) is the EU's main tool to contribute to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development, prosperity, peace and stability.

NDICI-Global Europe is organised around three key pillars:

1. **Geographical:** The geographical component promotes partnerships through cooperation with partner countries in the following regions: the European Neighbourhood, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas and the Caribbean.
2. **Thematic:** The thematic programmes fund actions linked to the sustainable development goals at global level, including support for civil society organisations. Thematic programmes focus on human rights and democracy, civil society, stability and peace, as well as on global challenges such as health, education and training, women and children, work, social protection, culture, migration and climate change.
3. **Rapid response:** The rapid response component is dedicated to financing the quick response capacity for crisis management, conflict prevention and peace-building. Actions financed within this component aim to strengthen the resilience of crisis-affected countries, link humanitarian and development actions and address foreign policy needs and priorities.

In addition to these three pillars, there is a 'cushion' of unallocated funds, to top up any of the above-mentioned programmes and the rapid response mechanism in case of unforeseen circumstances, new needs, emerging challenges or new priorities.

The EU combines different types of support to third countries, by providing funding in the form of grants to support projects and organisations, furthering their objectives. It also offers public contracts and provides budget and sector support. Visit the respective Commission websites to find information on all current funding opportunities:

- [Directorate-General for International Partnerships](#) (DG INTPA);
- [Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations](#) (DG NEAR);
- [Service for Foreign Policy Instruments](#) (FPI).

At least 25 % of the budget is allocated specifically to the European Neighbourhood and at least 36 % specifically to sub-Saharan Africa. A target of 93 % of all funds must go towards official development assistance, 30 % towards climate-related projects and, indicatively, 10 % towards addressing migration and forced displacement, including fighting the root causes. Funding is provided in the

form of grants, procurements and budgetary support to partner countries.

Potential beneficiaries:

- NGOs, international organisations, associations;
- development-foreign aid workers, volunteers.

Humanitarian aid

Based on international humanitarian principles, the EU provides needs-based humanitarian assistance to people hit by manmade crises and natural hazards, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable victims. Humanitarian interventions, which mainly consist of funding projects, are carried out by humanitarian organisations, most of the time in complex, risky contexts.

Funded projects include:

- actions in the area of food and nutrition, shelter, healthcare (including the humanitarian response to COVID-19), water and sanitation, in countries outside the EU;
- education and training;
- disaster-preparedness activities, empowering communities or individuals to better respond and cope with the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Potential beneficiaries:

- over 200 partner organisations, including United Nations agencies;
- other international organisations, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement;
- non-governmental organisations.

A minimum of 10 % of the EU humanitarian aid budget goes to projects on education in emergencies. Over the past six years, more than 9.5 million children in 59 countries have benefited from such education projects. The EU's humanitarian aid operations are implemented through direct and indirect management. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements.

EU-Ukraine relations 2014-2021

Ukraine and the EU have an important relationship that predates the current war crisis. Since 2014, the EU and European financial institutions have allocated over €17 billion in grants and loans to the country. For instance, €5.6 billion has been provided to Ukraine through five [macro-financial assistance](#) programmes to support the implementation of a broad reform agenda in areas such as the fight against corruption, an independent judicial system, the rule of law, and improving the business climate.

The [association agreement](#) including its [deep and comprehensive free trade area](#) (DCFTA), signed in 2014 and in force since 2017 after several years of provisional application, is the legal framework bringing Ukraine and the EU closer together, promoting deeper political ties, stronger economic links and respect for common values. The DCFTA constituted a major milestone in bilateral trade relations, offering new economic opportunities to both the EU

and Ukraine. Ukrainian businesses received stable and predictable preferential access to the largest market in the world, of almost 500 million consumers. EU businesses have been able to benefit from easier access to the Ukrainian market and build new relationships with Ukrainian suppliers and partners. Since 2014, yearly funds of up to €200 million have been mobilised from the bilateral pillar of the [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#), for a stronger economy, stronger governance and stronger society in Ukraine.

At the [23rd summit between the European Union and Ukraine](#) on 12 October 2021, a number of important milestones were reached. The main achievements were 1) the Common Civil Aviation Agreement, and Ukraine's association to 2) Creative Europe, and to 3) the Horizon Europe and Euratom Research and Training programmes. The summit also welcomed the start of the second stage of the pre-assessment of Ukraine's readiness to start negotiations on an Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA) and the start of new initiatives, such as the cybersecurity dialogue and the Green Deal Dialogue. For further information on the relationship before 2022, see the [EEAS website](#).

EU support for Ukraine since the 2022 Russian invasion

According to the [European Commission](#), since the start of Russia's war of aggression, the EU, its financial institutions and its Member States, in a Team Europe approach, have made available €37.8 billion to support Ukraine's overall economic, social and financial resilience. This has come in the form of macro-financial assistance, budget support, emergency assistance, crisis response and humanitarian aid. In addition, military assistance measures amount to around €12 billion, of which €3.6 billion has been mobilised under the European Peace Facility. This brings the total support made available to Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's war to around €50 billion. In addition to this, the Commission is working towards a €1 billion contribution to rapid recovery. Together with the resources made available to help Member States cater for needs of Ukrainians fleeing the war in the EU, the overall support to Ukraine and Ukrainians amounts to around €67 billion.

To address Ukraine's significant short-term financial needs, the EU institutions proposed granting additional exceptional macro-financial assistance in the form of loans of up to €9 billion in 2022, as well as adopting a [longer-term reconstruction](#)

[framework](#). In 2022, the EU provided over €700 million of humanitarian aid and in-kind assistance through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) consisting of over 38 000 tonnes of aid. Since the beginning of the war, the EU has stepped up its immediate support to strengthen Ukraine's cyber-resilience funding for equipment, software and other related support. Through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the 27 EU Member States are channelling aid to Ukraine. This includes items such as first aid kits, protective clothing and disinfectant, as well as tents, firefighting equipment, power generators and water pumps offered in-kind, constituting the largest ever response in the history of the mechanism to date. A further €15 million has been provided to support resilient digital transformation. The EU has launched a [€20 million support](#) programme for Ukrainian start-ups through the European Innovation Council.

A major global financial effort will be required to rebuild Ukraine after the widespread destruction caused by Russia's invasion. The EU has been at the forefront of international fora to support Ukraine. An international coordination platform, the '[Ukraine reconstruction platform](#)', co-led by the Commission and the Ukrainian government, has been announced. The platform would be responsible for endorsing a reconstruction plan, drawn up by Ukraine, with administrative capacity support and technical assistance from the EU. In light of the war, the EU agreed to provide support to the Ukrainian government for its immediate needs and, once the Russian onslaught has ceased, for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine. To that end, European leaders agreed on developing a [Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund](#) and invited international partners to participate. The '[Stand Up for Ukraine](#)' global pledging event and campaign has raised €9.1 billion for people fleeing the Russian invasion, inside Ukraine and abroad, including €1 billion from the European Union. Finally, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has announced an additional loan of €1 billion to cover the needs of the people displaced by the invasion.

The EU has [suspended](#) import duties on all Ukrainian exports to the EU for one year. The measure would also see the suspension for one year of all EU anti-dumping and safeguard measures in place on Ukrainian steel exports. This far-reaching step is designed to help boost Ukraine's exports to the EU and alleviate the difficult situation of Ukrainian producers and exporters. The EU has also set out an action plan to establish '[solidarity lanes](#)' to ensure Ukraine can export grain, but also import the goods it needs, from humanitarian aid to animal feed and fertilisers.

The EU has mobilised resources to enable people fleeing the war in Ukraine to receive temporary protection in any EU country, including residence permits,

access to the labour market and housing and medical assistance. On 3 March 2022, the EU unanimously agreed to trigger the [Temporary Protection Directive](#). Ukrainian citizens who were permanently residing in Ukraine, and left the country to escape war from 24 February 2022 onwards, may be entitled to temporary protection in any EU country. Temporary protection will last for at least one year, this may be extended depending on the situation in Ukraine. Rights under the Temporary Protection Directive include a residence permit, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance, and access to education for children. Anyone residing legally in the EU also has a right to open a basic bank account. The Commission launched a [dedicated phone helpline](#) in Ukrainian and Russian to provide information and assist those fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Telecom operators based in the EU and in Ukraine have signed a [joint statement](#) on their coordinated efforts to secure and stabilise affordable or free roaming and international calls between the EU and Ukraine. The joint statement aims to establish a more stable framework to help Ukrainians displaced throughout Europe to stay in touch with family and friends back home.

The [MSCA4Ukraine](#) scheme is part of the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#) to support displaced researchers from Ukraine in continuing their work in academic or non-academic organisations in Europe. The scheme will also allow them to re-establish themselves in Ukraine to rebuild the country's research and innovation capacity. The [European Research Area for Ukraine](#) portal is a one-stop-shop for information and support services to Ukraine-based researchers and researchers fleeing Ukraine.

The EU emergency response was drawn from various budgetary resources: humanitarian aid, geographic and thematic programmes under the **Global Europe/NDICI** instrument, and others. [Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe](#) (CARE) allows for swift reallocation of available funding under the cohesion policy to provide emergency support to people fleeing from Russian aggression in Ukraine. More than €3.5 billion in advance payments has gone to EU Member States to help them manage the arrival of people fleeing the war in Ukraine on their territory.

The [FAST \(Flexible Assistance for Territories\)-CARE](#) rules, which are the subject of a European Commission proposal that the European Parliament approved in October 2022, further simplify the procedures for Member States' use of financial resources to address the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The new rules provide for additional pre-financing worth €3.5 billion in 2022 and 2023. Given that refugees may relocate several times, the location requirement was removed. Member States are now allowed to declare expenditure for already

implemented projects related to the needs of refugees; moreover, until mid-2024 Member States can get projects promoting socioeconomic integration of third-country nationals financed 100 % by the EU. For these projects, at least 30 % of the amount must be granted to local authorities and civil society organisations operating in local communities. The proposal will also help with the implementation of investments threatened by supply and workforce shortages.

In April 2022, the European Parliament [agreed to immediately release](#) around €3.4 billion (out of €10 billion available) from the REACT-EU funds for EU countries sheltering people fleeing Ukraine. The new rules will increase the initial pre-financing of REACT-EU resources from 11 % to 15 % for all EU countries. EU countries bordering Ukraine (Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and those that have received a significant number of refugees from Ukraine equivalent to more than 1 % of their national population (Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia and Estonia) can immediately get 45 % (rather than 11 %) of their recovery funds without any invoices to be presented at this time. In June 2022, the European Parliament also [gave the green light](#) to a €1 billion macro-financial loan to help Ukraine cover its external financing needs, which have ballooned due to the war.

The EU has stepped up its political, humanitarian and financial support to Ukraine and is imposing massive [sanctions](#) against the Kremlin to degrade its war machine. The EU has adopted a number of far-reaching and hard-hitting [sanctions packages](#). The EU sanctions are designed to weaken the Kremlin's ability to finance the war and impose clear economic and political costs on Russia's political elite responsible for the invasion. In addition, the EU has adopted several measures against Belarus for its involvement in the war against Ukraine.

Last but not least, the Commission presented its [opinion](#) on Ukraine's application for EU membership and recommended to the Council that the country should be granted candidate status on the understanding that steps are taken in a number of areas. By a huge majority, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the [granting of EU candidate status to Ukraine](#), thus paving the way for the European Council to reach a similar [decision](#).

EU BUDGET IN NUMBERS

The amounts available from some of the 2021-2027 programmes are set out below (commitments, current prices, in € billion):

Heading and programmes*	Total** amount 2021-2027
Single market, innovation and digital	
Horizon Europe	86.12
<i>in addition to the allocation under NGEU</i>	5.41
InvestEU	3.07
<i>in addition to the allocation under NGEU</i>	6.07
Connecting Europe Facility	20.73
Digital Europe	7.59
Single market (incl. COSME)	4.21
CUSTOMS, Fiscalis and anti-fraud	1.40
Connecting Europe Facility	20.70
Space (COPERNICUS, GALILEO, EGNOS)	14.88
Cohesion, resilience and values	
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	226.05
Cohesion Fund	48.03
REACT EU	
<i>allocation under NGEU</i>	50.62
Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)	
<i>allocation under NGEU</i>	723.82
Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU)	1.26
<i>in addition to the allocation under NGEU</i>	2.06
EU4Health	2.45
<i>in addition to the allocation under MFFR Article 5***</i>	3.30

Heading and programmes*	Total** amount 2021-2027
European Social Fund+ (ESF+)	99.26
Erasmus+	24.57
<i>in addition to the allocation under MFFR Article 5</i>	1.94
European Solidarity Corps	1.01
Creative Europe	1.84
<i>in addition to the allocation under MFFR Article 5</i>	0.69
Justice, citizens, equality, rights and values	0.95
<i>in addition to the allocation under MFFR Article 5</i>	0.91
Natural resources and environment	
European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF)	291.09
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	87.44
<i>in addition to the allocation under NGEU</i>	8.07
European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)	6.11
Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)	5.43
Just Transition Fund	8.45
<i>in addition to the allocation under NGEU</i>	10.87
Migration and Border Management	
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMF)	9.88
Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF)	6.25
<i>in addition to the allocation under MFFR Article 5</i>	1.14

Heading and programmes*	Total** amount 2021-2027
Security and defence	
Internal Security Fund (ISF)	1.93
European Defence Fund (EDF)	7.95
Military mobility	1.69
Neighbourhood and the world	
Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe)	79.46
<i>in addition, indicative use of reflows from the European Development Fund</i>	1.13
Humanitarian Aid	11.57
European Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (EI-INSC)	0.30
Common foreign and security policy (CFSP)	2.68
Overseas countries and territories	0.50
Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)	14.16

* The list of programmes is not exhaustive.

** The total amount only considers the period covered by the concerned programme. Figures as of November 2020.

*** Programme Specific Adjustment, revenue from fines.

Source: European Commission, [The EU's 2021-2027 long-term budget & Next Generation EU: facts and figures](#).

GETTING UPDATED INFORMATION ON EU FUNDING

Further advice on how to apply for EU funding

The [European Commission's website](#) contains information on EU funds. In EU Member States, information on EU funds can also be found on the webpages of ministries and national authorities in charge of EU funding.

You can find open and upcoming calls for funding proposals, get background information on funding processes and programmes, and apply online at the European Commission's [webpage on public contracts and funding](#), which is updated regularly.

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The EU offers financial support to regional and local authorities, NGOs, businesses, professionals and citizens through a wide variety of funds. This guide produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service provides easily accessible information on the full range of EU funding sources, conveniently grouped by area of action.

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