



# **GUIDANCE FOR BENEFICIARIES**

*of European Structural  
and Investment Funds  
and related EU instruments*

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## **Preamble**

The European Union's (EU) multiannual financial framework for 2014-20 allows the new generation of EU spending programmes to be implemented from 1 January 2014.

[Regulation \(EU\) N°1303/2013](#) lays down common provisions applicable to the European Regional Development Fund (**ERDF**), the European Social Fund (**ESF**), the Cohesion Fund (**CF**), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (**EAFRD**) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (**EMFF**). These Funds operate under a common framework known as the '**European Structural and Investment Funds**' or '**ESIF**'. The Regulation also sets out the provisions necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the ESIF and their coordination with one another and with other EU instruments.

Article 13 of the Regulation invites the Commission to prepare guidance for beneficiaries on how to effectively access and use the ESIF and on how to exploit complementarities with other instruments of relevant Union policies.

The term 'Beneficiaries' covers a broad public, ranging from small and medium size enterprises (SMEs)<sup>1</sup> to large enterprises, and from public bodies to

non-governmental and civil society organisations. These beneficiaries could also be universities, students, researchers, farmers or fishermen.

Potential funds and the application procedures are as varied as the beneficiaries. Specific guidance already exists and each Directorate General of the Commission has provided online information detailing their work and funding instruments.

This Guidance for Beneficiaries is not meant to be an exhaustive repertoire of available EU funds. It builds on the Common Strategic Framework (Annex 1 of Regulation (EU) N°1303/2013) which provides the basis for better coordination between the ESIF and other EU instruments.

For each **Thematic Objective or TO** identified in the ESIF Regulation, the guidance gives an overview of complementary instruments available at EU level complete with detailed sources of information, examples of good practices for combining different streams of funds, as well as a description of relevant authorities and bodies involved in the management of each instrument.

The links provided throughout the document will allow potential beneficiaries to find their way in the maze of material available online, leading them to the most immediate and useful websites and documents. An online check-list is also available to help potential beneficiaries identify the most appropriate funding sources.

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1 'Small or medium sized enterprise (SME)' means a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise as defined in Commission Recommendation No 2003/361/EC<sup>4</sup> that:

- is engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form;
- employs fewer than 250 people (expressed in annual working units: 'staff headcount');
- has annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Launched in 2010, Europe 2020 is the European Union's (EU) ten-year growth and jobs strategy.

The EU has five [headline targets](#) that it wants to reach by the end of 2020. These targets are in the areas of:

- employment;
- research and development;
- climate/energy;
- education;
- social inclusion and poverty reduction.

The Europe 2020 strategy is supported by seven '[flagship initiatives](#)'. These initiatives help EU and national authorities boost their efforts in areas that support the Europe 2020 priorities and include: innovation, the digital economy, employment, youth, industrial policy, poverty, and resource efficiency.

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The EU is committed to creating more and better jobs. It also wants to establish a socially inclusive society. These goals are at the centre of the [Europe 2020](#) strategy<sup>2</sup> for generating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth across the continent.

By supporting the Europe 2020 strategy, the ESIF help reduce the varying levels of development in regions and islands across the EU. And in order to maximise the ESIF's impact, eleven thematic objectives (TO) are outlined in the Regulations (Article 9, Regulation (EU) N°1303/2013).

Other EU instruments also contribute to these TOs and Member States are encouraged to take advantage of all the available funding instruments at European, national, regional and local levels.

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2 The mid-term review of Europe 2020 strategy is on-going, starting with a public consultation. The results of the review will be available in 2015 on the Europe 2020 website.

**THEMATIC OBJECTIVES (TO)**

1. strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
2. enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT;
3. enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF);
4. supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors;
5. promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;
6. preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
7. promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;
8. promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
9. promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
10. investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning;
11. enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

Financial support can be a number of incentives including grants, prizes, contracts, repayable assistance and financial instruments<sup>3</sup>.

For the potential beneficiaries of EU financial support, the process of accessing funding has recently been made much simpler. The changes include:

- A single reimbursement rate known as a 'one project-one funding rate';
- A flat rate for indirect costs and other simplified cost options;
- A 90-day payment deadline for beneficiaries in cohesion policy;
- Electronic exchange of data between beneficiaries and managing authorities foreseen in 2016 across all EU-Member States.

Over 75 % of the EU's budget is managed by the member countries themselves. The rest is centrally managed by the European Commission, sometimes with the support of its Executive Agencies.

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<sup>3</sup> Service, work and supply contracts finance by the EU budget (calls for tenders) are not the main subject of this guidance. More information on these is available on the European Commission website under [Public contracts and funding](#).



## 2. THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS (ESIF)

### 2.1. Overview and general principles

The ESIF are jointly managed by the European Commission and the Member States in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. This principle means that the EU does not take action unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. To avail of funding, there are various eligibility criteria:

- **Time period:** there are limits on the period during which operations and expenditure can take place.
- **Scope of intervention:** there are restrictions on the types of activities that can be co-financed.
- **Cost categories:** certain cost categories are excluded.
- **Geographical location of operations:** only certain locations are eligible.
- **Durability of operations:** investments may have to be maintained for a minimum period after the operation is completed.
- **Types of beneficiaries:** only certain enterprises, bodies or economic actors are eligible for support.

Member States must draw up strategic plans with their investment priorities covering the five ESIF. These are called **Partnership Agreements (PAs)**. Details of the objectives they intend to achieve with the available resources are given in national and/or regional **Operational Programmes (OPs) (Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)** for the EAFRD). The OPs are designed to meet the socio-economic and environmental challenges in the country or region in question. Member States must concentrate the Funds where they are most needed and will have an impact and may not use all the possible funding themes and models provided under the Regulations.

**Managing/national authorities** appointed by each Member State are responsible for managing the actual programmes. Together with monitoring committees<sup>4</sup>, they are in charge of:

- drawing up and applying selection procedures and eligibility criteria;
- providing information to potential beneficiaries such as, the minimum or maximum size of the project, the financing plan and time-frame;
- ensuring that projects fall within the scope of the Funds concerned;
- the financial management and control of the programmes.

Applications for funding should be submitted to the national or regional authority managing the relevant programme. Before applying for a grant, potential beneficiaries should check the investment priorities, eligibility criteria and application procedure of the programmes in their region and country. Contact details for all the relevant managing/national authorities can be found on the links below.

[ERDF/CF](#) – [ESF](#) – [EAFRD](#) – [EMFF](#)

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<sup>4</sup> Monitoring committees are usually made of competent regional and local authorities including competent public authorities, economic and social partners, relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, NGOs, bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination, in accordance with each Member State's institutional and legal framework.

## 2.2. Scope of the ESIF

Negotiations between Member States and the European Commission decide what can be funded by the ESIF. Priorities are set out within national or regional multi-annual programmes. In practice, Member States may choose to emphasise different activities in different regions of the EU; eligibility therefore depends on the scope of the programme in each region or country.

In order to reduce differences between the levels of development among countries, cohesion policy funding targets the poorest regions and Member States <sup>5</sup>.

### EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF)

The ERDF aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by correcting imbalances between its regions.

The ERDF will contribute to all 11 TOs. However, it will devote the majority of its resources to <sup>6</sup>:

- R&D – EUR 39.9 billion;
- SMEs – EUR 32.8 billion;
- Low carbon economy – EUR 30.1 billion;
- Transport and energy infrastructure – EUR 25.6 billion

The ERDF will also support cross-border transnational and interregional cooperation under the European Territorial Cooperation goal. This could include partnering with the EU's neighbouring third countries,

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5 For more information go to the [map of regions' eligibility](#).

6 Provisional amounts based on 28 Partnership Agreements submitted to the Commission; the exact amounts will be known once all Operational Programmes are adopted.

through programmes under the [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#) and the [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance](#).

### COHESION FUND (CF)

The CF is aimed at Member States whose Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90 % of the EU average<sup>7</sup>. It aims to reduce economic and social disparities and to promote sustainable development.

The CF will support TOs 4, 5, 6 and 7 only. Its projected financing structure <sup>8</sup> is:

- Transport and energy network infrastructures – EUR 33 billion
- Environmental protection – EUR 17.2 billion
- Low carbon economy – EUR 7 billion

### EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF)

The ESF is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens.

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7 Member States eligible for funding from the CF are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia

8 Provisional amounts based on 28 Partnership Agreements submitted to the Commission; the exact amounts will be known once all Operational Programmes are adopted.

The ESF will focus on a limited number of priorities in order to make a real impact in addressing Member States' key challenges, which are:

- Employment – EUR 30 billion;
- Education – EUR 26 billion;
- Social inclusion – EUR 21.3 billion;
- Institutional capacity – EUR 3.6 billion.

Together with the EUR 3.2 billion special allocation for the Youth Employment Initiative, this means that more than EUR 86 billion<sup>9</sup> will be invested in Europe's people over the next seven years.

### EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (EAFRD)

The EU's rural development policy helps the rural areas of the EU to meet the wide range of challenges and opportunities that face them in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – economic, environmental and social.

The EAFRD is a funding mechanism under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and it has a budget of EUR 95.57 billion. In line with Europe 2020 and the overall CAP, the rural development policy is revolved around three cross-cutting objectives:

- competitiveness of agriculture;
- the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action;
- the balanced territorial development of rural areas.

In order to effectively manage rural development policy through Rural

Development Programmes (RDPs), these three objectives are supported by six key priorities:

- knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas;
- enhancing the competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability;
- promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture;
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry;
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

### EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND (EMFF)

With a budget of EUR 5.7 billion, the EMFF encourages sustainable fishing and sustainable aquaculture. It will improve scientific data collection and fisheries control and enforcement. It will also support job creation and diversification in fisheries-dependent communities and promote the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy.

### FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

In some cases, the ESIF may be used to support **financial instruments** that help financially viable investments come to fruition. Financial instruments aim to enhance the leverage effect of EU investment by attracting additional resources from public and private investors.

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9 The amount of EUR 86 billion is higher than the legally required minimum share guaranteed (i.e. EUR 80 billion). It is provisional, based on the 28 Partnership Agreements submitted to the Commission; the exact amounts will be known once all Operational Programmes are adopted.

A short reference guide for Managing Authorities on [Financial instruments in ESIF programmes 2014-2020](#) is available.

► **Find out more:** Information on where to find out more about the ESIF and how to access funding can be accessed via these links to each Fund.

[ERDF and CF](#) – [ESF](#) – [EAFRD](#) – [EMFF](#)

### 2.3. Sound financial management

With a total of EUR 366.9 billion for the 2014-2020 period, the ESIF make up more than one third of the EU's budget.

The **EU is committed to fighting fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities that could impact its budget.** The management and control systems set up by the Member States' authorities aim at the prevention, detection and correction of irregularities –

including fraud. These authorities will monitor the fraud risks associated with the ESIF. The risk of reputational damage associated with fraud and corruption is also taken very seriously at all levels.

Any suspicions of fraud should be reported to the relevant national authorities or to the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) through the [Fraud Notification System \(FNS\)](#).

### 2.4. Building synergies between the ESIF

The cumulative effect of the ESIF can really help local economies. In fact, there are a number of projects which have successfully and creatively used various investment forms from different ESIF programmes.

#### **TRAINING FUTURE CELEBRITY CHEFS**

Renowned chef Jamie Oliver's 'Fifteen Cornwall' restaurant in Cornwall, UK, successfully used both ERDF and ESF funding to kick-start its business and training programme for apprentices. The restaurant used vital ESF funding to give disadvantaged 16 to 24 year olds the opportunity to train as chefs in a nationally-recognised apprenticeship programme. The critically-acclaimed restaurant was itself built with financial backing from the ERDF.

Since May 2006, the Fifteen Cornwall Apprenticeship Programme has enrolled more than 140 apprentices, of which 70 % are still cooking today. Each year, the programme also invests £ 1 million in the local economy through a 70 % local sourcing policy. Crucially, it has created 80 jobs in addition to the 86 apprenticeships already completed.



### **AN INNOVATIVE FUNDING MIX TO CARE FOR THE ELDERLY IN RURAL GERMANY**

In Mecklenburg Lake District, the region's Leader Local Action Group (LAG) was asked to help secure funding to build a specialist residence catering for local people suffering from dementia. The aim was to give the residents the chance to live together with their life partner in a safe and supportive environment. An old textile factory was converted into the Malchow Island residence for dementia care and the project investments helped to conserve this building, which holds heritage value for the rural community. It took a cross-cutting project development approach and combined three different EU-funding sources: EAFRD, ESF and ERDF.

More information on the [Malchow Island project](#) and other examples of EAFRD linkages with other EU funds.

This last case study shows what a [community-led local development](#) (CLLD) initiative can achieve. It describes an approach that turns traditional 'top down' development policy on its head. Under CLLD, local people take control and form a local partnership (a LAG) that designs and implements an integrated development strategy.

CLLD strategies often arise from specific issues or problems facing a local community – the decline of traditional industries like fishing and farming, disaffected youth, climate change, or poor housing and services are a few examples. CLLD enables issues to be considered and addressed in their local context, while bringing together all the relevant policies and actors.

The strategy is designed to build on the community's social, environmental and economic strengths rather than simply paying out money for it to deal with its problems. The partnership receives long-term funding – and they decide how it is spent.

Although the CLLD approach was originally developed in rural areas through support from EAFRD, and then applied in fisheries and coastal areas with EFF<sup>10</sup>/EMFF funding, there is now an opportunity to extend it to fields normally dealt with by the ESF and ERDF.

In their Partnership Agreement, Member States must indicate which Funds they will use for CLLD, why they are using these Funds, in what types of areas they will be applied, and how the Funds will work together.

Another interesting way of bringing ESIF together is through an **integrated territorial investment (ITI)** approach, where an urban development strategy requires an integrated approach involving investments from the ESF, ERDF or Cohesion Fund that could be completed with the EAFRD or the EMFF.

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<sup>10</sup> The European Fisheries Fund for the period 2007-2013

### 3. OTHER EU FUNDS – OVERVIEW

Only EU funds with a strong potential for synergies with ESIF are addressed in this section. Most of them relate to more than one Thematic Objective. The majority of the other EU funds are centrally managed and allocated through calls for proposals.

#### 3.1. Horizon 2020

[Horizon 2020](#) is the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. It supports the development of activities from idea to market, with a focus on excellent projects regardless of geographical location. It is divided into three pillars corresponding to its main priorities:

- Excellent Science;
- Industrial Leadership;
- Societal Challenges.

The **Excellent Science** pillar supports world-class science in Europe, by developing, attracting and retaining research talent and supporting the development of the best research infrastructures.

Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
European Research Council (ERC) Frontier research by the best individual teams	13 095
Future & emerging technologies Collaborative research to open new fields of innovation	2 696
Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Opportunities for training and career development	6 162
Research infrastructures (including e-infrastructure) Ensuring access to world-class facilities	2 488

The **Industrial Leadership** pillar supports key technologies, such as microelectronics, and advanced manufacturing across existing and emerging sectors. It also aims at

attracting more private investment into research and innovation (R&I) and supporting innovative SMEs in Europe.

Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
Leadership in enabling & industrial technologies (LEITs) (ICT, nanotechnologies, materials, biotechnology, manufacturing, space)	13 557
Access to risk finance Leveraging private finance & venture capital	2 842
Innovation in SMEs Fostering all forms of innovation in all types of SMEs	616

**Societal Challenges** support R&I in areas such as climate, environment and transport that impact citizens and the wider society. This pillar aids the

development of breakthrough solutions coming from multi-disciplinary collaborations, which include social sciences and humanities.

Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
Health, demographic change & wellbeing	7 472
Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine/maritime/inland water research and the bioeconomy	3 851
Secure, clean & efficient energy	5 931
Smart, green & integrated transport	6 339
Climate action, environment, resource efficiency & raw materials	3 081
Inclusive, innovative & reflective societies	1 310
Secure societies	1 695

As well as the three pillars outlined above, two specific objectives have also

been defined under Horizon 2020.

Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
Specific objective: Spreading excellence and widening participation	816
Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
Specific objective: Science with and for society	462

## **HOW DOES HORIZON 2020 WORK?**

The Commission selects projects following **calls for proposals** with help from independent evaluators/experts<sup>11</sup>. Project ideas must be submitted within a certain deadline, comply with clearly defined themes and have the required partnership structure, which is usually trans-national.

After the deadline has passed, all proposals under a call are thoroughly examined to check their eligibility and to assess their quality. Funding is awarded to the best project proposals that are within the limits of the total available budget.

Horizon 2020 is open to any legal entity or international organisation. Applicants must meet the conditions laid down in [Regulation \(EU\) No 1290/2013](#) as well as any specific conditions set out in the relevant multiannual or annual work programme.

<sup>11</sup> More information on the [recruitment of experts and how they evaluate projects](#).



The minimum three-country principle prevails<sup>12</sup> but grants for individual firms' researchers are also available.

### ► Useful links

The **Participant Portal** was established as an Internet portal for applicants to EU research and innovation programmes. It offers various services to help potential beneficiaries secure funding. Applicants are encouraged to [register](#) with the

[portal](#) to fully avail of these services. The Participant Portal also houses the [H2020 Online Manual](#), where more information on the selection process can be found.

A network of [National Contact Points \(NCPs\)](#) provides guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of Horizon 2020. NCPs are national structures established and financed by governments of the 28 EU Member States. NCPs give personalised support in applicants' own languages.

► **Find out more about** your [Horizon 2020 area of interest](#).

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<sup>12</sup> Three legal entities must join under a consortium agreement. Each of the three must be established in a different Member State or associated country. All three legal entities must be independent of each other.

## 3.2. Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

The **Connecting Europe Facility** finances projects which fill the missing links in Europe's energy, transport and digital backbone. It also makes Europe's economy greener by promoting cleaner transport modes, high speed broadband connections and facilitating the use of renewable energy in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy. The CEF brings together public (EU) funding with the aim of mobilising additional private financing sources and innovative financial instruments, such as guarantees and project bonds, to gain maximum leverage.

The CEF is divided into three sectors:

- **CEF Transport;**
- **CEF Energy;**
- **CEF Telecom.**

CEF financial support takes 2 forms:

- [grants](#), which are non-reimbursable investments from the EU budget;
- [contributions to innovative financial instruments](#) such as the [Marguerite Fund](#), the [Loan Guarantee for TEN Transport](#) and the [Project Bond Initiative](#).

Beneficiaries are one or more Member States or, with the agreement of the Member State(s) in question, other bodies. If deemed appropriate, third countries and entities established in third countries may participate in actions contributing to projects of common interest.

CEF is centrally managed by the Commission with help from the [Innovation and Network Executive Agency \(INEA\)](#). Its investments are given through annual and multi-annual work programmes, which specify the set of priorities and the total amount of financial support to be committed.

The [Connecting Europe Facility regulation](#) sets out the rules for awarding EU financial support, priority projects and the maximum limits of EU co-financing per type of project. It also includes a list of projects where most CEF investments will be placed.



## CEF TRANSPORT

**Budget:** EUR 26.25 billion to co-fund TEN-T projects such as removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, improving cross-border sections, and the transition to innovative low-carbon and energy-efficient transport technologies.

► **More information on** [CEF Transport](#).

## CEF ENERGY

**Budget:** EUR 5.85 billion for key trans-European energy infrastructure projects between 2014 and 2020.

► **More information on** [CEF Energy](#).

## CEF TELECOM

**Budget:** EUR 1.14 billion, of which EUR 170 million is for Broadband activities, while EUR 970 million is dedicated to Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs).

► **More information on** [CEF Telecom](#).

### 3.3. Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME)

**COSME** is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) running from 2014 to 2020 and has a budget of EUR 2.3 billion. It will support SMEs in four areas:

- Access to finance.
- Access to markets.
- Support to entrepreneurs.
- Better conditions for business creation & growth.

#### ACCESS TO FINANCE

- **The Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF):** By sharing the risk, the COSME guarantees will allow the financial intermediaries to lend to more SMEs.
- **The Equity Facility for Growth (EFG):** The COSME budget will also be invested in funds that provide venture capital and mezzanine finance to SMEs – in particular those operating across borders.

Both the LGF and EFG instruments are managed by the European Investment Fund (EIF).

**Financial institutions** can apply by downloading application documents from the EIF website.

- [LGF](#) documents.
- [EFG](#) documents.

► **More information on** the [EIF's partner financial intermediaries](#).

► **More information about** [access to finance available under other EU initiatives](#).

#### ACCESS TO MARKETS

All businesses have access to the services of the **Enterprise Europe Network** and are welcome to approach their local contact point and/or business partner. With over 600 partner organisations in 54 countries, the network has the capacity to reach out to more than two million SMEs.

► **Your nearest partner can be found on** the [Network's website](#).

Services offered include:

- information on EU legislation and EU programmes;
- help finding a business partner abroad;
- advice on how to access finance;
- support for innovation and technology transfer;
- obtaining SME's views on EU legislation.

### **SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEURS**

Various initiatives are in place to offer [support to entrepreneurs](#) including:

- entrepreneurship education;
- improving the business environment so entrepreneurs can grow and flourish;
- mentoring and outreach to specific groups.

Networks already supported by the European Commission include:

- [European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#)

## **3.4. LIFE**

[LIFE](#) is the only EU instrument focused on the environment and climate change. With a budget of EUR 3.4 billion, the general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation. The LIFE Programme is run by the European Commission with help from the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME). Applications for funding can be completed online via an [e-proposal](#). However, integrated projects must be submitted in hard copy.

Integrated projects aim at implementing plans or strategies in nature, water, waste and air on a large territorial scale. Complementary financing to LIFE

### **BETTER CONDITIONS FOR BUSINESS CREATION AND GROWTH**

In many areas of SME policy, the European Commission works closely with the Member States by identifying and exchanging examples of good practices. For many years, this process was rooted in the [European Charter for Small Businesses](#). This process has widened under the priorities of the [Small Business Act for Europe](#) and a [database of good practices](#) is available on the Small Business Act site.

#### **► Useful links**

The [Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises \(EASME\)](#) was set-up by the Commission to manage several EU programmes including COSME.

Published calls for tender and calls for proposals related to COSME can be accessed on the [Participants Portal](#).

integrated projects may come from any source.

The [LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017](#) sets the framework for the next four years. And for the first time, in addition to grants, LIFE project funding is also being provided through innovative financial instruments including the pilot Natural Capital Financing Financial instrument (NCFF), which falls under the Nature and Biodiversity project area and will help finance biodiversity projects.

### 3.5. Creative Europe

[Creative Europe](#) supports the cultural and creative sectors and has a total budget of some EUR 1.54 billion. The programme helps both sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation. It also enables them to contribute to the Europe 2020 goals of sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion. Crucially, it opens up new international opportunities, markets and audiences to these sectors.

#### The programme consists of:

- the MEDIA sub-programme dedicated to the audiovisual creative and cultural sectors.
- the Culture sub-programme for the non-audiovisual creative and cultural sectors.

- a cross-sectoral strand, which includes a EUR 121 million creative and cultural sector loan guarantee facility, providing relevant SMEs with opportunities to access finance.

Applications from individuals are not accepted. However, some 250 000 individuals will benefit from funds through the projects themselves. For more information on these opportunities, go to the [Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency](#) site.

[Creative Europe Desks](#) have been set up in all Member States to provide support and guidance to applicants.

### 3.6. Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme

The **EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)** is a financing instrument for promoting quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. Its total budget stands at EUR 919 million.

EaSI includes three axes:

- the modernisation of employment and social policies through the [PROGRESS axis](#);
- job mobility through the [EURES axis](#);
- access to micro-finance and social entrepreneurship through the [Micro-finance and Social Entrepreneurship axis](#).

The **PROGRESS axis** (61 % of the budget) helps Member States improve policies in three areas:

- [employment](#), in particular to fight youth unemployment;

- [social protection, social inclusion](#) and the reduction and prevention of [poverty](#);
- [working conditions](#).

Specifically the PROGRESS axis:

- develops and disseminates high-quality, comparative and analytical knowledge;
- encourages effective and inclusive information-sharing, mutual learning and dialogue;
- provides financial support to test [social and labour market policy innovations](#);
- gives organisations financial support to develop EU instruments and policies.

Beneficiaries can be:

- public and private bodies;
- employment services;
- specialist bodies provided for under EU law;
- non-governmental organisations;

- higher education institutions and research institutes;
- experts in evaluation and impact assessment;
- national statistics offices;
- the media.

The **EURES axis** (18 % of the budget) aims to strengthen [EURES](#), a European job mobility network that provides information, guidance and recruitment services to employers and jobseekers. It covers three areas:

- transparency of job vacancies;
- job applications;
- development of services for the recruitment process;
- cross-border partnerships.

### 3.7. Erasmus+

The **Erasmus+** programme supports education, training, youth and sport initiatives for the period 2014-2020. Specifically it offers opportunities to over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. In sport for example, it funds grassroots projects and deals with cross-border issues such as match-fixing, doping, violence and racism. The total budget for 2014-2020 is EUR 14.7 billion.

The Erasmus+ Programme's goals in education and training are to:

- improve key competences and skills for the labour market;
- introduce quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation in education and training institutions;
- raise awareness of a European lifelong learning area and modernise education and training systems.

Beneficiaries include national, regional and local authorities and employment services.

The **Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis** (21 % of the budget) supports:

- microcredit and microloans for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises
- social entrepreneurship.

Beneficiaries are public and private bodies that provide microcredit for individuals and microenterprises. Financing is also on offer for social enterprises in relevant countries.

► **For more information**, go to the [EaSI](#) site.

In order to implement these specific objectives, three Key Actions (KAs) are in place.

- **KA1** offers support to trans-national mobility to raise the level of relevant skills in the labour market and to enhance the skills of professionals to meet individual learners' needs.
- **KA2** focuses on transnational partnerships among education, training, and youth institutions as well as enterprises, public authorities and civil society organisations in different economic and social sectors.
- Support for policy reforms is provided under **KA3** through knowledge development, transparency and recognition tools, policy experimentation and support to various stakeholder organisations.

► **For more information**, go to the [Erasmus+](#) site.

### 3.8. Third EU Health programme

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The [EU Health Programme](#) ensures that human health is protected as part of all EU policies, and works with Member States to support them in improving public health and preventing human illness and risks to physical and mental health. The Programme contributes to the smart and inclusive goals under Europe 2020.

The EU Health Programme seeks to:

- promote health, prevent diseases and create environments that promote healthy lifestyles;
- protect citizens from serious cross-border health threats;
- contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable healthcare systems;
- introduce access to better and safer healthcare.

The [EU Health Programme](#) is implemented through annual work plans, which set out its priority areas and criteria for funding. The total budget for the Third EU Health Programme is EUR 449.4 million. Participation is open to a wide range of organisations, including research institutes and universities, public authorities, NGOs and private companies.

Funds under the EU Health Programme 2014-2020 and ESIF 2014-2020 can be

jointly used to reduce health inequalities in the following areas:

- facilitate access to better and safer healthcare;
- promote innovation in health research and healthcare;
- increase innovation in public health interventions and healthcare services;
- develop research tools to improve quality and cost-effectiveness such as the Health Technology Assessment (HTA);
- support and promote cooperation between Member States;
- increase access to cross-border medical care and expertise;
- health workforce support and training;
- promote health, prevent diseases and foster healthy environments;
- active and healthy ageing;
- health and safety at the workplace;
- better preparedness and capacities in health emergencies and towards serious cross-border health threats;
- health information and knowledge systems;
- e-health systems and capacities.

## 4. THE ESIF AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS PER THEMATIC OBJECTIVE (TO)

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The following general principles apply to funding projects:

- **Co-financing rule:** The EU only partly co-funds the project. Therefore, both the applicant and partners must have their own or third party financial resources to contribute to the costs of the project.
- **Non-profit rule:** the grant may not result in a profit being made. If it does, a financial gap analysis will be performed in order to assess the need for and potential grant amount.
- **Non-retroactivity rule:** co-funding is eligible only for the costs incurred after the starting date of the project set out in the grant agreement.
- **Non-cumulative rule:** only one grant is allowed per beneficiary.

All projects should:

- provide added value at EU level;
- be innovative and propose original solutions and methodologies;
- address European priorities and policies.

The **non-cumulative award principle** only applies to EU grants awarded to the same action and the same beneficiary under any type of management. It is therefore possible to **combine the resources of the ESIF with other EU instruments**. However, the non-cumulative award principle does not apply to Horizon 2020 funds and the ESIF that can be allocated to a same project and same beneficiary.

**No substitution** is permitted of national/regional or private co-funding to EU projects/programmes under direct Commission management by the ESIF (and vice-versa).

**No double financing rule:** in no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice under any budget.

The ESIF act mainly at national and regional levels, with some leeway towards cross-territorial activities. Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes and instruments are usually centrally managed and often cover transnational projects. This means that the same beneficiary can apply for different funding sources, for unrelated or complementary activities. The applications will be assessed on the basis of their own merit in accordance with the rules of each funding source.

The following section outlines the potential for synergies and complementarities by Thematic Objective (TO), both between the five European Structural and Investment Funds, and between ESIF and other EU funding instruments.

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## 4.1. TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation



The EU's research and innovation policies until 2020 are outlined in the '[Innovation Union](#)' flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy. These include five European Innovation Partnerships in the smart, social and environmental areas. The initiative also includes the entire innovation cycle from research to commercialisation.

Member States should develop national and/or regional '[smart specialisation strategies](#)' by involving national or regional managing authorities and stakeholders such as higher education institutions, industry and social partners in an entrepreneurial discovery process.

Smart specialisation strategies include:

- 'Upstream actions' to prepare regional research & innovation (R&I) participants for Horizon 2020.
- 'Downstream actions' to exploit R&I results from Horizon 2020 and preceding programmes, with particular emphasis on creating an innovation-friendly environment for business and industry, including SMEs.

It is important to identify joint financing opportunities for R&I infrastructures, promote international collaboration, undertake peer reviews, and introduce exchange of good practice as well as training throughout regions.

### TO 1 AND ESIF

The **ERDF** enhances R&I infrastructures and capacities to develop and promote centres of excellence and business investment in R&I. The ERDF also develops links between enterprises, R&D centres and the higher education sector, with the aim of boosting investment in:

- product and service development;
- technology transfer;
- social innovation;
- eco-innovation;
- public service applications;
- demand stimulation;
- networking;
- clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation.

Investment in pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and production and the diffusion of general purpose technologies are also foreseen.

Potential R&I projects are judged on their likely contribution to the economic development of the Member State or region as well as on their scientific or technological merits.

The **ESF** supports postgraduate studies, training of researchers, networking activities and partnerships between higher education institutions, research institutes and enterprises.

The **EAFRD** strengthens links between agriculture, food production, forestry and R&I, knowledge transfer and investments in new technologies, processing and marketing. A prominent role is also played by the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity



and sustainability, which seeks to create new and innovative practices in agriculture. The EAFRD supports the technological development of products, practices and techniques in the agriculture, agri-food and forestry sectors. It funds new clusters and networks, activities between research centres and innovative companies, as well as technological and applied research.

### **TO 1 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS**

Funding is often available for a research organisation or company under the ESIF in order to take the first tentative research steps or to develop an innovative technology or product. The conditions for granting this funding are usually flexible, especially in the least developed regions. This allows the research organisation or companies in question to grow to the point where they can enter the more competitive environment of Horizon 2020.

Should funding be needed during a Horizon 2020 project to continue the activity or to enable an innovation idea to go to market, this may not be possible, given the very competitive nature of the process. In this situation, the ESIF could provide the necessary funding to make these ideas happen.

**Funding the same project through several grants from Horizon 2020 and ESIF is permitted** but is subject to the absence of double funding as Horizon 2020 and the ESIF cannot cover the same item.

The right to combine ESIF and Horizon 2020 does not waive the obligation to provide the necessary national/regional/private co-funding.

### **A GERMAN SCIENCE PARK BRIMMING WITH IDEAS (REGIOSTARS AWARDS FINALIST 2009)**

Established in the mid-1990s, the science park at Golm on the outskirts of Potsdam has grown into the largest and most important research centre in Brandenburg. The science park hosts three Max Planck Institutes, two Fraunhofer Gesellschaft Institutes, a business incubation centre called GO:IN and many other innovative enterprises.

Founded in 2007, GO:IN provides ideal start-up conditions for entrepreneurs, offering such services as conference rooms and facilities, marketing solutions and coaching expertise. More than 1 300 scientists work at the park, which has benefited from an ERDF contribution of EUR 74.3 million. Since its creation, many joint research projects have been funded under various EU-funded research framework programmes.

► **More on** [Wissenschaftspark Potsdam-Golm.](#)



### **A SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN MARINE OBSERVATION AND DATA NETWORK**

The EU's Research Framework Programmes have all developed tools for increased stewardship and the distribution of marine data. These are the foundations of a sustainable European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) that will be supported by the direct management component of the EMFF. The aim of the network is to develop a high quality marine data and knowledge base, which can be used by various parties, avoiding duplication of effort.

► **More on [EMODnet](#).**

### **CREATING CLUSTERS ACROSS EUROPE**

Clusters Linked Over Europe (CLOE) started as an INTERREG project that helped seven regions to exchange experience and information about how to successfully manage and develop clusters. Clusters are networks of compatible or competitive interrelated companies working together to strengthen an industry in a particular area.

Transnational contacts between clusters continued after the project ended and this was the starting point for many activities financed under the seventh research framework programme (FP7) and the CIP, which was COSME's predecessor.

► **More on [CLOE](#).**

### **COLLABORATION GIVES BOOST TO RESEARCH FUNDING**

The Regional Coordination Commission of the North Region of Porto (CCDRN), which manages the Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF), opened a call for proposals to support projects designed to increase collaboration between universities and local industry in the region. One of the project's goals was to help local players apply for funding under FP7.

A successful project submitted by the University of Porto called I-CITY focused on boosting human resources and training activities and complements the 'Future Cities' project, which aimed at improving, equipment, infrastructure and international exchange. This collaboration between the two projects meant that the university could hire more researchers than would have been possible with just the FP7 grant. Both projects worked in tandem which increased their ability to deploy and operate test beds, which were used to gauge research results under Future Cities.

The Regional Coordination Commission added visibility to the Competence Centre for Future Cities, which in turn helped attract more industrial partners and gathered the support of the municipality and local communities. This type of political support, which came with the Structural Funds, was vital for achieving the objectives of the project.

Moreover, once the University of Porto received the FP7 grant, it became clear that its research potential would have a strong international and economic impact.

This motivated the Regional Coordination Commission to include the findings in its strategy document on smart specialisation presented to the European Commission for the 2014-2020 programming period.

► **More information on these [joint initiatives](#).**

The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT) aims to enhance Europe's ability to innovate. The EIT has a budget of EUR 2.7 billion as part of Horizon 2020 and finances **Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC)**.

**A KIC** is a highly autonomous partnership of top-tier higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders involved in the innovation process.

KICs carry out a wide range of activities, including training and education programmes, innovation projects and business incubators.

While KICs are funded up to 100 % by the EIT for 'added value activities', the 'complementary activities' are not. It is therefore the KIC's task to find alternative funding sources for these activities. Among them can be the ESIF and RDI actions within Horizon 2020.

Three KICs were launched in 2010:

- Climate-KIC: climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- EIT ICT Labs: Information and Communication Technologies;
- KIC InnoEnergy: sustainable energy.

In addition, two new KICs address the areas of:

- Innovation for healthy living and active ageing;
- Raw materials: sustainable exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and substitution.

In 2016, two additional KICs will be launched:

- Food4future;
- Added value manufacturing.

And in 2018, one KIC will be established in the field of:

- Urban mobility.

#### ► Useful links

The **Participant Portal** is an internet portal for those involved in EU research and innovation programmes. It provides potential beneficiaries with a set of services to help their participation in the programmes and simplify interactions with the Commission. Potential beneficiaries are encouraged to [register](#) with the portal to benefit fully from its [services](#).

[Ideal-IST](#) is a partner search facility.

Guidance for policy-makers and implementing bodies called '[Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes](#)' thoroughly explores the concept of synergies among programmes to shape the smart specialisation strategies. It details funding options and various funding scenarios.

## 4.2. TO 2: Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT



The availability of high-speed broadband Internet and access to digital service infrastructures are both building blocks of a modern Single Market, allowing communication, services and business to grow.

The [‘Digital Agenda for Europe’ flagship](#) is part of the ‘smart growth’ pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy. It aims to reboot Europe’s economy and help Europe’s citizens and businesses to get the most out of digital technologies. Its objectives include:

- the creation of a digital single market including on-line content development, e-commerce solutions and the use of e-signatures;
- inter-operability of ICT services;
- fast and ultra-fast internet access: ‘Next Generation Access’ networks to reach the EU’s high-speed internet access targets;
- ICT research and innovation;
- ICT-enabled benefits such as e-government, e-health and e-procurement.

### TO 2 AND ESIF

The **ERDF** helps:

- develop ICT products and services;
- extend broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks;

- support the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy;
- strengthen ICT applications for e-commerce, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health.

The **ESF** supports

- the development of ICT skills and competences in work and ICT in public administrations;
- funds better accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies through digital literacy, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-skills and entrepreneurial skills.

The **EAFRD** helps improve rural broadband and develops ICT in rural areas. Specifically it funds:

- infrastructure investment;
- IT services and IT businesses in rural areas;
- technological innovations in agriculture and forestry;
- IT systems in the agri-food industry;
- clusters and networks;
- vocational training in ICT and the provision of specific ICT advisory services for rural SMEs and farmers;
- ICT applications for e-government, e-inclusion, e-learning, e-culture, e-commerce, etc.

### TO 2 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS

Priority EU networks are financed through the **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)** while **ERDF** and **EAFRD** support complementary local and regional infrastructure. Following the non-cumulative principle, combining grants for the same project is not possible.

The CEF and European Investment Bank (EIB) provide **seed funding and technical assistance** for a limited number of broadband initiatives. Projects that wish to benefit directly from the CEF will need to demonstrate state-of-the-art technological solutions and represent either innovative business models or highly replicable solutions. **Financial instruments under CEF may be combined with grants from other EU sources.**

Selecting the most appropriate funding instrument takes into account the revenue generating potential of the operation and its risk level.

Information and communication technology (ICT) can also be found in many areas of **Horizon 2020**. With this in mind, a guide to help potential projects find ICT-related topics across Horizon 2020 was developed and can be accessed on the [Digital Agenda for Europe](#) site.

### **SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY COMBINES ERDF, ESF AND EU RESEARCH FUNDING**

In past programming periods, ERDF helped the University of the Highlands & Islands (UHI) boost its research capacity and IT Infrastructure, while ESF funding was key for developing their course materials and curriculum to support non-traditional learners.

The so-called MERIKA or Marine Energy Research Innovation and Knowledge Accelerator is an ambitious initiative by the UHI, which has transformed the University's faculty of science, health and engineering into a reference research and innovation hub for marine energy. Funded by the 7th Research Framework Programme, predecessor of Horizon 2020, the MERIKA Project runs from 2014 to 2017.

Objective 3 of the **EU Health Programme**, which focuses on innovative, effective and sustainable health systems, includes support for e-health systems and capacities.

#### **► Useful links**

EU funding available for **Digital Agenda**-related topics and projects can be directly accessed via the [Digital Agenda for Europe](#) site.

**Connected Communities** is a Commission initiative to support regions and cities in developing their broadband networks. It helps a number of innovative pilot projects deploy high speed broadband, which can be replicated across the EU. Potential beneficiaries can [submit ideas](#). Please also email [EC-CONNECTED-COMMUNITIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-CONNECTED-COMMUNITIES@ec.europa.eu) for more detailed information.

The **European Broadband Portal** is an information platform for stakeholders, which provides information on broadband projects, strategies and actions plans for each Member State. Potential beneficiaries can register with the [Broadband Portal](#).

### 4.3. TO 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)



Cohesion policy is vital for SME development. As stated in the Europe 2020 Strategy, guaranteeing SMEs full access to credit is crucial to enhance innovation and long term stability within the EU.

Pillar II of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is another support instrument for SME development, in particular for agriculture, forestry and rural areas.

#### TO 3 AND ESIF

The **ERDF** will nurture entrepreneurship by:

- funding business incubators;
- developing new business models for SMEs;
- supporting the creation and extension of advanced capacities for product and service development;
- helping SMEs to expand into regional, national and international markets;
- engaging in the innovation process.

The **ESF** encourages self-employment and the creation of innovative SMEs. It also:

- helps entrepreneurs and employees adapt to change;
- promotes social enterprises and a social economy;
- increases SME competitiveness by promoting the adaptability of enterprises and workers;

- supports bodies providing vocational education and training.

The **EAFRD** funds all agricultural sectors, forestry businesses, as well as rural micro- and small enterprises. It does this by:

- encouraging cooperation between various businesses and stakeholders, networks and clusters;
- stimulating innovation in agriculture via the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability;
- encouraging SMEs' to adapt to climate change by providing various types of targeted support including green advisory services.

The **EMFF** increases the competitiveness of SMEs in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Funds are on offer to strengthen technological development and innovation in the following areas:

- energy efficiency, and knowledge transfer;
- advisory services that give counsel on business and marketing strategies as well as on environmental sustainability;
- partnerships between fishermen and scientists;
- diversifying and improving safety and working conditions on fishing vessels.

Where [financial instruments](#) offer financing to companies, including SMEs, such support shall encourage the establishment of new enterprises, through:

- providing seed, start-up, and expansion capital;
- offering capital for strengthening the company or for new projects;
- helping companies enter new markets.

Such support may include investment in both tangible and intangible assets as well as working capital within EU State aid rules. It may also include the costs associated with proprietary rights transfer, provided that such transfers take place between independent investors.

### **TO 3 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS**

SMEs are encouraged to avail of funding from [COSME](#) and [Creative Europe](#).

SMEs are also encouraged to participate across the whole **Horizon 2020 programme** and in particular its **Industrial Leadership** component:

**Leadership in enabling & industrial technologies (LEITs) actions** focus on ICT, nanotechnologies, advanced materials, biotechnology, manufacturing and space.

**Access to risk finance** encourages private finance & venture capital. Under 'Access to Risk Finance', Horizon 2020 will help companies and other types of organisations engaged in R&I to gain easier access to loans, guarantees, counter-guarantees and hybrid, mezzanine and equity finance.

**Innovation in SMEs** is a forward looking complement to the ESIF, including the **SME instrument**, the support to the **EUREKA/Eurostars initiative** that provides funding for transnational collaborative projects of research-intensive SMEs and various actions that aim at developing and providing better innovation support services to SMEs.

With some EUR 3 billion in funding for 2014-2020, the **SME Instrument** helps SMEs to develop groundbreaking innovative ideas that are ready for commercialisation on the global market. Activities that can be supported and calls for proposals are outlined in the 2014-2015 [work programme](#).

**Horizon 2020's financial instruments work together with those under COSME**. More information on banks and funds that provide [EU-supported risk finance](#).

The [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#) and the [European Investment Fund \(EIF\)](#) play an important role in implementing each financial instrument facility on behalf of and in partnership with the Commission.

The [Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises \(EASME\)](#) was set-up by the Commission to manage several EU programmes, including most of COSME, the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and part of Horizon 2020 – in particular Innovation in SMEs and the Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies.



**Creative Europe:** The Commission's Europe 2020 Communication underlines that the EU should provide more attractive framework conditions for innovation and creativity. The cultural and creative sectors are therefore a source of innovative ideas that can be turned into products and services, which can in turn help generate growth and jobs and address societal changes. To help these sectors fully reach their economic potential, access to finance should be improved, maintains the Communication.

**The culture and creative sectors Guarantee facility**, which will be introduced in 2016, responds to these needs and, thanks to its multiplying effect, should generate up to EUR 750 million<sup>13</sup> for small **businesses active** in these two sectors.

There is no exception from the non-cumulative principle in the regulations on Creative Europe and COSME<sup>14</sup>. However, financial instruments may be combined with grants, interest rate subsidies and guarantee fee subsidies.

### ► More information

A new version of the [Beneficiary Register tool](#), which was released on 28 February 2014, includes a questionnaire to determine whether an organisation is an SME according to the EU Recommendation 2003/361/EC and whether it is eligible to apply for funding under certain Horizon 2020 actions.

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13 Total amount of the guarantee including the part financed by financial institutions.

14 Note however that Article 10(2) COSME Regulation allows the following: 'The Enterprise Europe Network may also be used to deliver services on behalf of other Union programmes such as Horizon 2020. This may include dedicated advisory services encouraging SME participation in other Union programmes'. Some services directly delivered to SMEs by the Enterprise Europe Network partners might also be covered by objectives of OPs and could therefore possibly be separated and supported by ESIF grants and at ESIF conditions.

#### 4.4. TO 4: Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors



The ERDF, CF and EAFRD are each expected to accelerate the implementation of EU legislation in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The Common Provisions Regulation applicable to the ESIF also requires Member States to provide information on how they will combat climate change. This is in line with the EU's target of devoting at least 20 % of its budget to curbing climate change.

##### TO 4 AND ESIF

Both the **ERDF** and **CF** focus on:

- energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- high-efficiency cogeneration;
- smart distribution grids and integrated low-carbon and sustainable energy action plans for urban areas.

In addition, the ERDF supports research and innovation in low-carbon technologies.

The **EAFRD** supports the conversion of buildings located inside or close to rural settlements – this should improve energy efficiency, cut costs, create jobs and attract investment. Investment in on-farm production and the use of renewable energy in rural areas is also foreseen.

The **EMFF** improves energy efficiency on fishing vessels, by investing in equipment and by introducing energy efficiency audits and other schemes. Support is also available to increase resource efficiency in aquaculture.

The shift to a low-carbon economy also requires new skills in the construction sector. Here the **ESF** could offer training and education, and provide mechanisms to match supply and demand for green skills.

##### TRAINING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

With over £ 800 000 in ESF-funding, the Greenways to Work project ran from August 2009 to July 2012 in the UK. The project provided training in recycling, renewable technology and energy efficiency.

One of the project's aims was to reduce the so-called fuel poverty for residents of its social housing. The project provided training to its own staff as well as frontline social care staff to give them the skills to advise residents on how to make their homes more fuel efficient.



Training was also on offer for local construction and plumbing companies, teaching them installation techniques for solar voltaic cells, domestic heat pumps and solar thermal hot water systems. Once trained, these workers could help their customers obtain free Government grants for the installation of energy saving equipment.

The project ran in parallel with an ERDF programme aimed at improving house insulation in West Cumbria. The funding has also inspired the training providers to develop and run relevant courses themselves.

Similarly, a combination of **ERDF** and **EAFRD** funding could be used to develop renewable sources of energy. Examples include installing biomass or wood chip fuelled boilers and promoting biomass-based agriculture.

### **PROMOTING ENERGY CROPS**

Energy crops provide alternatives to fossil fuels and can contribute to the EU's climate change mitigation objectives. Under EAFRD, a local action group in Sud du Pays de Saint-Brieuc in France encouraged farmers to think about energy crops as a green opportunity to diversify business.

One such farmer received funding to test the potential of miscanthus as a bio-fuel, and results have been inspiring. 'Miscanthus are much easier to produce than other crops. Each year, a single hectare of this energy crop can absorb some 36 tonnes of carbon dioxide. It can be used in chips or pellets for heat and can be converted to ethanol,' he explains.

## **TO 4 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS**

The **LIFE sub-programme for Climate Action** funds projects in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and climate governance and information.

There are several areas where the ESIF and LIFE can work together:

- **Integrated projects** requiring a combination of LIFE grants and other funding sources aimed at implementing regional, multi-regional or national plans or strategies required by EU climate policy or legislation.
- **Sequential projects** where LIFE could support various energy efficient pilot projects. These projects could then be up-scaled and replicated through ESIF investment, or disseminated with the help of ESIF transnational networks.
- The ESIF could support **innovative projects** with LIFE funding in order to support evaluation and dissemination activities.

**Horizon 2020's 'Secure, clean and efficient energy' Societal Challenge** aims for a competitive energy system, through seven specific research areas:

- reducing energy consumption and carbon footprint;
- low-cost, low-carbon electricity supply;
- alternative fuels and mobile energy sources;
- a single, smart European electricity grid;
- new knowledge and technologies;
- robust decision making and public engagement;
- market uptake of energy and ICT innovation.

**Horizon 2020's 'Smart, green and integrated transport' Societal Challenge** supports the development of resource efficient transport that respects the environment, and global leadership in the European transport industry. It also pushes for better mobility, less congestion, more safety and security.

**Joint projects between the ESIF and Horizon 2020** could take place in various areas including:

- the market uptake of energy innovation for projects on energy policy implementation;
- preparing the ground for investments;
- capacity building;
- acting on public acceptance;
- funding project initiators such as research centres.

Horizon 2020 support for commercialisation activities could also be combined with ESF funding for 'green skills' training and education.

### **ESF SUPPORTING GREEN JOBS IN ROMANIA**

Romanian companies have come together in an ESF-supported project that helped people who have been laid off in the energy sector. The 'From Restructuring to Employment' project helped some 100 unemployed people in south-eastern Romania. Given their qualifications and experience, they had the right background to work in the emerging renewable energy sector. Opportunities were identified in the sector and the job-seekers were helped to acquire the additional skills they needed to gain employment in this industry.

The ESIF could also provide the necessary funds to sustain or commercialise a Horizon 2020 project as can be seen in the example below.

### **EAFRD SUPPORTING RURAL INNOVATION IN GREEN TECHNOLOGY**

Supporting rural innovation is a cornerstone of rural development. An example of a LEADER project from a pig farm in France showed how such support can be used to improve energy efficiency in livestock sheds. An innovative manure management system was created that reduces ammonia and therefore the need for air-cleaning. Robust insulation was also installed to further improve the building's environmental footprint. Results led to energy savings of 99.6 % for heating and 75 % for ventilation.

**CEF Energy** and the ESIF are complementary as the CEF supports energy infrastructure and the ERDF, CF and EAFRD can finance smart electricity distribution networks.

## 4.5. TO 5: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management



### TO 5 AND ESIF

The **ERDF** and **CF** focus on developing strategies and action plans for climate change adaptation and risk prevention at national, regional and local level. They also help develop tools and investment for disaster management systems.

The **EAFRD** supports:

- sustainable water management;
- improved soil management;
- maintaining genetic diversity.

The **ESF** can complement activities in this area through targeted education, training and up-skilling of the labour force with regard to risk prevention, risk management and adaptation to climate change.

The Funds can combine on various issues including:

- climate change mitigation;
- environmental protection and resource efficiency;
- innovation and technological development for adaptation to climate change;
- support for businesses in taking up adaptation measures and technology;
- actions to reduce water pollution from agriculture.

### TO 5 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS

The **LIFE sub-programme for Climate Action** supports projects in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and climate governance and information.

Three 'Societal Challenges' under **Horizon 2020** are relevant for this thematic objective:

- Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy;
- Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials;
- Secure societies - protecting the freedom and security of Europe and its citizens.

The **Civil Protection Financial Instrument** aims at supporting and complementing the efforts of Member States to protecting people, the environment and property, including cultural heritage, in the event of natural and man-made disasters, acts of terrorism and technological, radiological or environmental accidents. Its budget amounts to EUR 368 million. Work programmes and details on the annual calls for proposals are published on the Commission's [Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection](#) website.

The Civil Protection Financial Instrument covers, among other things, disaster prevention and preparedness studies and projects, which are the areas of intervention most likely to complement cohesion policy projects including:

- **Prevention projects** aimed at achieving a higher level of protection and resilience against disasters by preventing or reducing their effect;

- **Preparedness projects** that enhance awareness of civil protection and marine pollution professionals and volunteers in disaster preparedness.

Potential projects can:

- study, design, develop, test and implement innovative practices;
- evaluate and improve existing practices;
- develop general guidelines;
- identify and disseminate best practices thanks to transnational cooperation.

The work of these projects could then be mainstreamed through the ESIF.

### **NEW TECHNOLOGIES PROVIDE ECO-SENSITIVE APPROACH TO FLOOD PROTECTION**

New technologies are already improving the environmental footprint of traditional dykes in Germany. An EAFRD project using such technology in the Rhine valley shows how EU rural development funds can be used to provide eco-sensitive approaches to flood-related environmental services.

Under this project, specific assistance for flood works was included in the Rural Development programme. EAFRD support has enabled a more rapid implementation of the flood protection construction programme and this applies to the rehabilitation of existing dykes, the construction of new dykes, as well as to the construction of flood retention facilities such as polders.

The support was also used to relocate dykes as the measures are not only designed to protect against flooding, they also target the improvement of the ecosystem. Dyke upgrading measures now always includes the possibility of dyke relocations, in order to create, for example, additional natural wetlands.

The **European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF)** was set up in 2002 to respond to major natural disasters and show European solidarity to affected regions within Europe. Since its creation, the Fund has been used to deal with different catastrophic events including floods, forest fires, earthquakes, storms and droughts. The EUSF supplements Member States' public expenditure for essential emergency operations in four main areas:

- immediate restoration of infrastructure;
- temporary accommodation and emergency services;
- immediate securing of prevention infrastructures and measures to protect the cultural heritage;
- cleaning disaster areas, including natural zones.

The Fund is limited to non-insurable damage and does not compensate for private losses. Long-term action – such as lasting reconstruction, economic redevelopment and prevention – are not eligible for EUSF aid but could qualify for aid under the ESIF.

► **More information on [the EU Solidarity Fund](#).**

## 4.6. TO 6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency



### TO 6 AND ESIF

The **ERDF** and **CF** invest in efficient water supply, waste-water treatment and water reuse, waste management and green infrastructure. They also invest in actions to reduce transport-related air pollution, improve public transport infrastructure and promote alternative forms of transport.

Separately, the **ERDF** supports investment to diversify local economies by protecting and enhancing cultural heritage and landscapes. It also funds sustainable and integrated urban development, through sustainable urban drainage, soil descaling measures, as well as the rehabilitation of both contaminated sites and cultural infrastructure.

The **EAFRD** supports restoration, preservation and the enhancement of biodiversity, including Natura 2000 areas and farming systems with high nature value. It also protects European landscapes by promoting environmentally sound farming methods such as:

- organic farming;
- introducing wildlife zones in farm and forest areas;

- granting compensation to farmers and forest holders for costs incurred in Natura 2000 areas and designated wildlife corridors;
- increasing water use efficiency in agriculture;
- introducing measures to improve water and soil quality.

The **EMFF** supports the transition to environmentally sustainable fishing. This ensures a balance between fishing capacity and available fishing resources and helps avoid unwanted catches. The Fund invests in eco-innovations that reduce the impact of fishing and aquaculture on the environment. Monies are also available for aquaculture projects that demonstrate a high level of environmental protection and provide environmental services. The EMFF promotes better compliance with Common Fisheries Policy rules, improved fisheries control and a better supply and coverage of scientific data for assessing the biological state of fish stocks. In addition, it supports the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to achieve 'Good Environmental Status' for all EU marine waters by 2020.

The **ESF** can add to this thematic objective by improving education and training for scientists, students, teachers and the unemployed so that their environmental skills and qualifications are enhanced. The ESF can help create new jobs in the environment and tourism sectors. **EAFRD** and **EMFF** also have additional funding sources for sectoral skills development in agriculture and fisheries.



### **PROTECTING THE GREEN BELT AROUND VITORIA**

The Green Belt of Vitoria in Spain comprises a group of parks and areas with high ecological value surrounding the city. The Belt acts as a buffer zone, the so-called 'green lungs' between the urban area and the surrounding rural environment. The project provides a solution to restore and conserve degraded spaces of high ecological value and is helping to meet the public's demand for outdoor recreational facilities.

The initiative enhances biodiversity skills and creates jobs, by providing training courses for maintaining green areas, organic horticulture and gardening, as well as landscaping programmes for the long-term unemployed. In addition to CF funding, the project secured ESF support for training and research programmes in order to manage the Green Belt effectively.

► **More on** [the Vitoria Green Belt](#).

Projects can combine these two funding streams by setting up parallel projects on a specific site with LIFE financing. There follows some examples of LIFE projects, which have made use of a combination of complementary funds.

### **OUT OF LAPLAND**

A project in central Lapland helped promote ecotourism and recreation activities in the five largest protected areas in the region. The project combined LIFE+ and ERDF funding to construct the necessary tourism infrastructure such as hiking trails and bird watch towers. In addition, other projects combined funding following the same process.

► **See the** [BirdLife project](#) in Slovenia for another example.

### **INCREASING THE NUMBERS OF IBERIAN LYNX IN ANDALUCÍA**

An initial LIFE+ project run by Andalucía's regional government helped establish the best way to launch a recovery plan for the Iberian lynx. A follow-up LIFE+ project implemented a series of coordinated conservation actions, including:

- increasing the numbers of natural prey and improving connectivity between habitat features;
- reintroducing and monitoring lynxes in carefully selected sites;
- addressing problems in 'black spot' areas, where threats and risks to the species were particularly high;
- running awareness-raising campaigns to improve the local residents' and visitors' understanding of lynx conservation.

## **TO 6 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS**

The ESIF and [LIFE sub-programme for Environment](#) complement each other as their priorities towards the environment and resource efficiency are similar. The LIFE sub-programme for Environment supports projects in environment and resource efficiency, nature and biodiversity, and environmental governance and information.

The ERDF, CF and LIFE under its 'Environment and resource efficiency' priority can support investment in the waste and water sectors to promote resource efficiency. Similarly, they can co-finance projects that protect biodiversity and natural heritage.

The EARDF provided funding for ongoing habitat management works through payments to land users to make their land 'lynx friendly'.

Additionally, the ERDF co-financed high impact conservation actions, including the setting up of vital captive breeding centres and visitor facilities.

As a result of this integrated financing model, the Iberian lynx reared in the ERDF's breeding centres are safe and at ease in their new habitats with their numbers growing. This is down to the initial works by LIFE and recurrent input from the EAFRD.

► **More on [the Iberian lynx LIFE project](#).**

### **PROTECTING THE SUBMARINE HABITATS IN ANDALUCÍA**

The *Posidonia oceanica* submarine meadows of Andalucía is a unique ecosystem that improves air quality, protects the coast from erosion, and is home to ample fish populations. The habitat with its natural beauty also attracts many tourists. However, this ecosystem has been threatened due to pollution, boat anchoring, uncontrolled trawling and local fishing as well as an increase in exotic invasive species. This LIFE+ Nature project's main objective was to improve the conservation of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows.

The EFF supported this LIFE+ project by providing supplementary financial assistance for the construction of artificial reefs and demarcation buoys to mark the borders of the area.

In addition, thanks to much awareness raising, each year dozens of volunteers help to control the health state of this important and threatened ecosystem in the Mediterranean.

► **More information on [the Posidonia oceanica meadows](#).**

The **Horizon 2020** Societal Challenge of '**Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials**' aims to achieve a resource efficient and climate change resilient economy and society. In order to meet the needs of a growing global population, it also wants to protect and sustainably manage natural resources and ecosystems, and achieve a sustainable supply and use of raw materials.

Actions under this Work Programme address gaps in the knowledge base needed to understand changes in the environment, identify the policies, methods and tools that would most effectively tackle these challenges, and support innovators and businesses to bring green solutions to the market.

Joint projects could be set-up with the ESIF for funding waste infrastructure, for example.

Links can also be found with **Creative Europe**, under the European Territorial Cooperation Cross-Border programmes. ERDF<sup>15</sup> and CF support projects that conserve, protect, and develop natural and cultural heritage. Actions could include renovating cultural buildings, tourism initiatives education projects.

Creative Europe grants could potentially fund various transnational and cooperation projects. Below are two examples of projects financed through the ERDF under the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme that show how this financing can really add value to regions.

### **PROMOTING CULTURAL HERITAGE TO BENEFIT REGIONS**

Four southern Baltic regions – Bornholm in Denmark, Rügen in Germany, Świnoujście in Poland and Southeast Skåne in Sweden – are border areas rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage. As a result of the democratic developments in Eastern and Central Europe, and because the regions are so close geographically, it made sense that these four regions should work together in order to achieve common goals. Financed by the South Baltic Programme, the Four Corners Heritage project promoted each region as one single destination. It did this by highlighting the many

archaeological treasures and historical events that make this region such a fascinating place to visit and live in. Through professional networking and close cooperation, joint cultural, tourism, communications and infrastructure projects were developed and successfully implemented, benefiting the entire area. The project has ultimately positioned the Four Corners as a must see destination, while greatly improving its visibility on the international stage.

The SeaSide project is another initiative financed under the South Baltic Programme. Involving the coastal areas of Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, the project took advantage of the common maritime cultural heritage that unites these regions.

The project saw various maritime themed festivals that showcased the regions' common maritime cultural heritage being held across coastal cities. The so-called 'Baltic Sail' initiative linked to these festivals and offered sailing trips between the cities of Gdańsk in Poland, Klaipėda in Lithuania, Karlskrona in Sweden, Nysted in Denmark and Rostock and Sassnitz in Germany. These trips were promoted to international markets, increasing tourist numbers to the region significantly. Moreover, a joint exhibition on each region's common maritime cultural heritage proved a popular attraction. Overall, the SeaSide project has positioned the southern Baltic region as an important tourism destination both at home and abroad.

15 Note that investment in the renovation of historical buildings or cultural heritage will only be an ERDF priority if it is part of an overall economic development strategy and provides direct socio-economic benefits to the territory (e.g.: positive impact on tourism or on crafts and traditional sectors of industry) or to a specific disadvantaged community.



## 4.7. TO 7: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure



The Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) are a planned set of road, rail, air and water transport networks in Europe. From January 2014, the **EU has a new transport infrastructure policy that connects the entire continent.** This policy will close the gaps between Member States' transport networks, remove bottlenecks that still hamper the smooth functioning of the internal market and overcome technical barriers such as the current incompatible standards for railway traffic. It also promotes and strengthens seamless transport chains for passenger and freight, while embracing technology.

### TO 7 AND ESIF

**ERDF** and **CF** support various investments in the TEN-T network including:

- connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T;
- environmentally-friendly transport systems;
- interoperable railway systems;
- smart energy distribution, storage and transmission systems.

The **EAFRD** can complement investments

made by the ERDF and the CF in major TEN-T networks by supporting local and/or rural transport infrastructure as well as transport services in rural areas. In agriculture, innovative low-carbon and energy-efficient transport technologies could also be supported.

### TO 7 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS

Under Horizon 2020, the [Smart, Green and Integrated Transport](#) component has a budget of EUR 6.3 billion to help develop a resource efficient transport system that respects the environment.

Under [CEF Transport](#), EUR 26.25 billion will be made available to co-fund TEN-T projects. The CEF finances projects of 'common interest', such as high EU added-value infrastructure projects.

**CEF** is complementary to the **ERDF**, **CF** and **EAFRD**, and investments from these Funds to TEN-T should ensure that urban and rural areas benefit from the opportunities created by major networks. Member States are therefore encouraged to define in advance under which support scheme individual TEN-T infrastructure projects should be implemented. This makes proper planning and efficient investment possible.

**Geographical synergies:** The CEF mainly concentrates on pre-identified high EU added-value projects on the TEN-T Core Network Corridors. These key infrastructure investments can work in tandem with projects financed by the ERDF, CF and EAFRD located in other parts of the TEN-T core network, as well as on the comprehensive network.

Projects requesting CEF grants for high EU added-value projects of common interest can also apply for ESIF support. They include:

- projects on other sections of the TEN-T core network not pre-identified in the Annex I of the CEF Regulation;
- projects on the TEN-T comprehensive network;
- multimodal transport nodes connecting secondary infrastructure to the TEN-T network.

### IMPROVING RAIL CONNECTIONS IN THE BALTIC CORRIDOR

On the North Sea - Baltic Core Network Corridor, a pre-identified project for the construction of a new direct north-south railway line across Tallinn, Riga, Kaunas and Warsaw could benefit from CEF funding. The connection between the Rail Baltic line and the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius will be upgraded. As the Kaunas-Vilnius connection is also on the TEN-T core network, but it is not a cross-border or bottleneck project, it is a suitable candidate for ESIF financing.

For **Parallel projects** in a common area, the infrastructure development can be supported by CEF and the 'soft' activities supported by the ESIF. For example, in parallel to core network infrastructure construction or innovation funded by the CEF, the ESIF could support activities designed to promote inter-regional cooperation among stakeholders or reduce the environmental impact of this infrastructure such as the clean shipping initiatives developed in the Baltic Sea region.

### UPGRADING THE RAIL BALTICA PROJECT

The pre-feasibility study for upgrading the 1 520 km cross-border Rail Baltica project was funded by the CF. Under the INTERREG programme, ERDF helped set up a regional stakeholder network and raised awareness among industry and the public. The cross-border section – [Tartu-Valga railways reconstruction](#) – was supported by a EUR 10.8 million CEF (TEN-T) grant.

Finding innovative solutions to transport issues like urban mobility and logistics is a common societal need. This is an area where many regions and Member States have identified their competitive advantages and potential research and innovation strengths. It is therefore important that such innovative and R&D-based solutions that could solve transport problems are embraced.

If prioritised in the annual work programmes, **Horizon 2020** funding could help public authorities pool their demand for innovative goods and services. It could also help with the pre-commercial procurement and public procurement of innovative solutions and the often complex procurement procedures.

Horizon 2020 can finance basic and applied R&I, while ERDF or CF can support its implementation.

### **TIGER PROJECT GETS ITS TEETH INTO FREIGHT LOGISTICS**

Funded under FP7, TIGER is a Large Scale Integrated Collaborative Project for developing rail transport in freight logistics chains. TIGER stands for 'Transit via Innovative Gateway concepts solving European- intermodal Rail needs' and takes four basic European transport constraints into consideration:

- Dealing with the substantial increase in freight mobility demand with poor infrastructure.
- The ports of entry into the EU, are congested due to difficulties in moving their traffic inland.
- The environmental situation and climate change call for more sustainable mobility. Modal shift is being encouraged.
- Costs and construction timing dictate that any infrastructure expansion will take at least a decade to produce benefits. It is therefore imperative that the best possible productivity is extracted from the available European infrastructures.

The issues are further demonstrated through four pilot projects under the TIGER DEMO initiative, financed by the ERDF.

► **More information on the [TIGER DEMO](#) project.**

### **A RAIL ENERGY SMART GRID**

The Ferro Smart Grid project developed the first smart grid for managing energy in the rail sector. It integrated trains connected to the grid as well as auxiliary installations and electric vehicles, in order to achieve an efficient, safe and sustainable electric supply.

To achieve its objective, an experimental demonstrator prototype was developed with ERDF support. The 7th Research Framework programme, under the MERLIN project, supported the next stage, to demonstrate the viability of integrated management systems to achieve a more sustainable and optimised energy usage across European electric railway systems.

► **More information on the [Ferro Smart Grid](#) project.**

#### 4.8. TO 8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility



Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the recent financial crisis is a major priority. Improving the resilience of the labour market and investing in human capital are essential to help companies recruit and adapt, and to allow more people to remain active and work. At the same time, Member States should do more to improve the employability of the long-term out of work as well as older and younger generations.

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU has agreed on a 75 % employment rate target for women and men by 2020. The **Agenda on New Skills for New Jobs** is one of the main Commission initiatives that will help the EU reach its employment target for 2020. It presents a set of concrete actions that will introduce reforms to improve flexibility and security in the labour market, equip

people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow, improve the quality of jobs and ensure better working conditions and enhance job creation.

##### TO 8 AND ESIF

Under this thematic objective, Member States should focus on achieving their national employment targets by using the **ESF** to support relevant policies.

Actions supported by the ESF aim at sustainable integration into employment through active inclusion, and occupational and geographical mobility. Successful projects also benefit from employer and education networks, and the development of local employment initiatives. Implementing youth guarantees requires strong cooperation with social partners, employment services, and education and training bodies. Cooperation with employers providing workplace learning places for young people is key.

Training courses, workshops and coaching could also be funded by the **EAFRD**. Support may cover short-term farm and forest management exchanges as well as farm and forest visits. It benefits people working in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors as well as SMEs operating in rural areas. Moreover, it helps develop skilled labour and enhances the quality of employment. The EAFRD also encourages the entry of young people into the agricultural sector through various young farmer schemes.

Increasing employment and territorial cohesion is a priority of the **EMFF** and will happen through community-led local development. The overall objective of economic growth is pursued by social

inclusion, job creation, providing support to employability and labour mobility in coastal areas, and inland communities.

The **ERDF** helps business incubators and provides investment support for the self-employed and micro-enterprises. It also promotes employment-friendly growth by developing declining industrial regions and improving accessibility to key natural and cultural resources.

Support may also include local development initiatives and aid for structures providing neighbourhood services to create jobs, if they are outside the ESF Regulation 1304/2013<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) supports the promotion of sustainable and quality employment, labour mobility, cross-border mobility, joint local employment initiatives, information and advisory services and joint training.

### **SOCIAL DAY-CARE CENTRE 'ZIEDUGRAVAS'**

ERDF and ESF funding has helped build a social day-care centre called 'Ziedugravas' in the Skrīveru region of Latvia. The centre provides temporary social care as well as alternative care services for disabled people in the region. Activities focus on developing social skills, learning and leisure services.

The ERDF finance was used to reconstruct the building where the centre is located. The works involved making the centre accessible for disabled people by installing an elevator and entrance ramp as well other vital equipment to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of operations.

ESF funding improved the employability and integration of various groups including:

- disabled people;
- people on pensions;
- large families and single-parent families;
- children with addictions and/or experiencing violence;
- people lacking basic employment and/or social skills.

Within the project, a social rehabilitation programme was set up that included homecare services. Training was also on offer for social workers.

By the end of 2013, some 162 people regularly availed of the centre's services. In addition, 523 people have at some point benefited from the improved social rehabilitation programme.

### **FUNDING TWO CARE CENTRES IN IRELAND**

The Obair Community Crèche in Newmarket-on-Fergus, County Clare, received support from both the ERDF and the ESF under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2000-2006.

<sup>16</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.



The funding was used to introduce a capital investment programme and to pay its staff. The crèche houses three rooms catering for children between the ages of three months and six years. The Obair Community Crèche is a non-profit organisation that provides affordable, accessible, high quality and safe childcare for Newmarket-on-Fergus and its surrounding area.

In addition, the Knockanrawley Resource Centre in Tipperary Town, also received support from the ERDF and the ESF under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme. This funding was also used to introduce a capital investment programme and to support staffing costs.

## **TO 8 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS**

In order to add value and impact, synergies should be developed between the **EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)** and the ESF and other EU programmes in particular in areas covered by the three EaSI axes:

- the modernisation of employment and social policies via the [PROGRESS axis](#);
- job mobility via the [EURES axis](#);
- access to micro-finance and social entrepreneurship via the [Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis](#).

EaSI will, through its PROGRESS axis, support social and labour market policy innovations that will provide innovative responses to social needs at a national level. This axis will also help gauge the feasibility of labour and social innovations prior to being repeated on a larger scale. There is more information on the [EaSi website](#).

**Erasmus+** can help equip learners on all levels with relevant skills and competences, and facilitate the transition from education to work. It gives opportunities to students, trainees, staff and volunteers to spend a period abroad to increase their skills and employability.

Erasmus + aims at:

- improving skills and competences through the trans-national mobility of both teachers and students;
- enhancing cooperation in education, training and youth by promoting partnerships between education institutions, public bodies, enterprises and youth organisations;
- supporting policy reforms through knowledge development, transparency and recognition tools, policy experimentation and support to stakeholder organisations.

### ► **Further information on [Erasmus+](#).**

Objective 3 of the **EU Health Programme** focuses on innovative, effective and sustainable health systems.

The ESIF can scale up activities developed within **EaSI**, **Erasmus+** and the **EU Health Programme** by combining funding sequentially. Using a combination of funds within the same project is however not possible.

The **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)** helps to better manage migration by offering support to migration authorities in Member States in accordance with their social and economic needs. It also promotes the effective integration of third-country nationals. ESIF can also support the integration of the third-country nationals to the labour market.

### ► **Further information on the [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund](#).**

## 4.9. TO 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination



The European platform against poverty and social exclusion is one of seven flagship initiatives of the [Europe 2020 strategy](#) for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It is designed to help Member States lift 20 million people out of [poverty and social exclusion](#) by 2020.

Social protection systems must counter the effects of the economic crisis, promote social inclusion and prevent poverty by:

- adopting inclusion strategies;
- providing efficient and adequate income support;
- introducing ways to tackle poverty, including child poverty;
- ensuring a broad access to affordable and high-quality services, such as social and health services, childcare, housing and energy supply;

- strengthening the link between social assistance and activation measures by offering more personalised services;
- improving the take-up of services on offer.

### **TO 9 AND ESIF**

20 % of the **ESF** budget at national level is earmarked for this TO.

The Fund will support active inclusion policies to ensure better coordination between education, benefit systems and labour market policies. This will guarantee social cohesion for the most disadvantaged and help the unemployed get back to work.

The income support component of the active inclusion strategy should be funded by the ESF. It should serve only as a temporary measure, paving the way for job creation. Public employment schemes would only be supported as a transitional measure to equip people with the necessary skills, competences and qualifications to reintegrate in the labour market.

Member States can use so-called poverty maps, when designing and implementing integrated strategies to support the most disadvantaged areas and groups such as Roma. The integration of marginalised communities could also include community-led local development (CLLD). To increase the effectiveness of ESF actions aimed at enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality social and health services, the ESIF should be used to invest in social and health infrastructure in less developed regions and in rural areas.



The **EAFRD** contributes to this TO by focusing on social inclusion through targeted actions. These could include investments in basic services and infrastructure such as childcare, e-inclusion, local development concepts, partnerships and investments involving various social services.

Additional support is on offer via start-up aid to help grow small farms, keeping small farmers outside the poverty trap. The EAFRD also supports the direct payment schemes of the CAP, which also play a significant role in combating poverty in agriculture.

The **ERDF** can support investments in healthcare and social infrastructure. These investments encourage national, regional and local development, reduce inequalities in accessing adequate health services, promote social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and help make the transition from institutional to community-based services.

This funding also helps deprived communities to regenerate. It is also important for the success of community-led local development strategies.

Under cross-border cooperation, ETC support is on offer for promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and dealing with various forms of discrimination. Moreover, the PEACE cross-border programme helps promote social and economic stability, through actions that aim at boosting cohesion between communities.

### **THREE SOCIAL EXCLUSION PROJECTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Three projects aimed at combating social exclusion have been set up in Most in the Czech Republic. All three are located in the Chanov quarter of the city and are closely inter-linked. Chanov is known for its high unemployment rate, low housing standards and its petty criminality. With a population of 1 500, 90 % of its residents are Roma. The projects are:

- A programme for integrating the socially excluded – ESF contribution: EUR 900 000.
- A youth centre, ERDF contribution – EUR 400 000.
- A multifunctional centre – ERDF contribution: EUR 700 000.

All three projects provide advisory services for the locals in various areas including, education, employment, family life and leisure activities.

In short, the three projects gave locals a place to learn IT skills, play sports and study. All projects liaised with the labour office, training centres, local schools and vocational training organisations.

### **LEAST DEVELOPED MICRO-REGIONS PROGRAMME (LDMR)**

The LDMR Programme is experimental and in this case involved using various EU financial instruments to boost economic and social development in a select number of regions in Hungary. A territorial approach was combined with resource-based planning involving local communities and authorities who decided amongst themselves what projects needed to happen in the region. Their work was helped by external experts; however, the final decision-making power remained in the hands of the micro-regions.

The ERDF and ESF co-funded the LDMR Programme.

### **BERLIN'S NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

The introduction of Neighbourhood Councils in deprived districts of Berlin has seen local residents deciding what projects should be financed to improve living conditions there. To counteract the social segregation and other social issues in certain areas of Berlin after reunification, the Neighbourhood Management Berlin intervention strategy was launched in 1999 by the city's authorities. For over a decade, it has been a valuable tool for enhancing the 'Socially Integrated City' of Berlin.

These areas have suffered from a demonstrable neglect of public space as well as unemployment, dependence on State aid and a lack of social and ethnic integration.

The aim of the EU-supported Neighbourhood Management Berlin (NMB) programme has been to change this situation and create neighbourhoods of solidarity with equal development opportunities for the neighbourhood and its inhabitants.

Key partners in the project were the local residents who worked together with the city's Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, the local boroughs and the Neighbourhood Management Teams. A vital role was also played by local bodies such as housing societies, schools, businesses and community centres.

## **TO 9 AND OTHER EU PROGRAMMES**

The PROGRESS axis and the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of **EaSI** are of particular importance for TO 9.

Various objectives under the **EU Health Programme** are also considered vital and include:

- Objective 1: Promote health, prevent diseases and foster supportive environments for healthy lifestyles taking into account the 'health in all policies' principle.
- Objective 3: Contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems.
- Objective 4: Facilitate access to better and safer healthcare for EU citizens.

For these programmes, a combination of funds within the same project or action is not possible, but parallel or sequential projects can be set up.

## 4.10. TO 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning



### TO 10 AND ESIF

Investments under **ESF** should:

- support equal access to quality education at all levels;
- restructure and modernise processes;
- improve the match between skills supply and labour market demand;
- prepare education systems for the transition to a low-carbon economy;
- Successful investments require partnerships between higher education, the vocational education and training (VET) sector, research and business and the labour market.

The **EAFRD** contributes to this TO by:

- supporting vocational training and skills acquisition actions such as training courses, workshops and coaching;
- funding demonstration activities and information actions for the benefit of those working in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors, land managers and SMEs operating in rural areas;
- short-term farm and forest management exchanges as well as farm and forest visits;
- funding advisory services for SMEs and education establishments in rural areas.

The **ERDF** can help develop education and training infrastructures. In addition, education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning can receive investment through European Territorial

Cooperation programmes.

### TO 10 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS

**Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA)** under Horizon 2020 can support employment in research and labour mobility for researchers. It should be coordinated with ESF investments in this area.

ESF can also be used to complement **Erasmus+** funding for outgoing students/trainees/apprentices (KA1) at national or regional level. Erasmus+ grants are designed to cover a range of expenses such as travel, living expenses, books and equipment. It is not possible to use ESF to top-up grants to individual beneficiaries already in receipt of Erasmus+ grants. However ESF can be used to fund grants for the so-called 'Zero-EU-mobility' participants in Erasmus+, who do not receive Erasmus+ grants but go to Erasmus+ participating institutions that receive management funds.

ESF could also be used to fund preparatory, complementary or directly-related activities in partner institutions participating in Erasmus+ under the **Strategic Partnerships /Knowledge Alliances/Sector Skills Alliances** (KA2). ESF could be used to scale up activities first developed within Erasmus+ policy support (KA3).

In any of these scenarios, the funding would need to take place either sequentially, in parallel or as an alternative. A combination of funds within the same project is not possible.

Objective 3 of the **EU Health Programme** on innovative, effective and sustainable health systems includes actions on the health workforce education and training.

#### 4.11. TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration



The quality of public administration has a direct impact on the economic environment and is thus crucial to stimulate productivity, competitiveness and growth. Modernisation of public institutions was thus listed as one of the key priorities of the EU for the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Institutional capacity building in the administration and the judiciary is supported by ESF and ERDF in order to create institutions which are:

- stable and predictable;
- flexible enough to react to the many societal challenges;
- open for dialogue with the public;
- able to introduce new policy solutions and deliver better services.

The investment in the human capital of the public sector is oriented towards more efficient organisational processes, modern management, motivated and skilled civil servants and magistrates.

##### TO 11 AND ESIF

**ESF** support should focus on horizontal reforms for the promotion of good governance. Key actions can include:

- development of skills at all levels of the professional hierarchy;
- modernising and optimising the internal processes in the public institutions and services;
- improving the formulation and implementation of policies;
- improving the interaction between institutions and with stakeholders;
- improving the delivery and quality of services;
- developing appropriate organisational structures;
- introducing human resources strategies and policies;
- developing the informational and technical resources.

This type of support will only be possible in Member States with at least one less developed region or in Member States which are eligible for Cohesion Fund assistance.

In addition, the ESF will support capacity-building across all types of regions by:

- enhancing the capacity of stakeholders, such as social partners and non-governmental organisations;
- developing sectorial and territorial pacts in the employment, social inclusion, health and education domains at all territorial levels.

**ERDF** and **CF** support will be available to public institutions, social partners and other non-governmental organisations for:

- strengthening institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF and CF;
- supporting and complementing ESF actions, including where necessary the provision of equipment and infrastructure to support the modernisation of public services in areas such as employment, education, health, social policies and customs;
- administrative capacity related to European Territorial Cooperation (ERDF only).

## **TO 11 AND OTHER EU INSTRUMENTS**

The **Justice Programme**<sup>17</sup> promotes judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, helps train judges, prosecutors and other legal professionals, and supports EU action to tackle drugs. The Programme helps ensure proper access to justice for people and businesses in Europe.

The programme is implemented through analytical activities, preparation of guides and reports, conferences, training activities, different forms of mutual learning and cooperation, as well as development and maintenance of systems and tools, including further development of the European e-justice portal. The budget is EUR 378 million.

The programme is managed by the European Commission through calls for proposals. Participation is open to all bodies and legal entities. Profit-oriented bodies can apply in conjunction with non-profit or public organisations.

► **More information on the [Justice Programme](#).**

The **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** promotes and protects specific rights and freedoms of persons deriving from EU law. It promotes gender equality, combating all forms of discrimination and fighting racism. In addition it aims at effective and consistent application of the EU's law instruments and policies in the Member States, promoting cross-border cooperation and mutual knowledge.

The support activities will include analytical activities, conferences, training activities, different forms of mutual learning and cooperation, as well as support for NGOs in the implementation of actions with European added-value, and support for Member States for implementation of European instruments and policies. The budget for this programme is EUR 439 million.

The programme is managed by the European Commission through calls for proposals. Participation in the programme is open to all bodies and legal entities. Profit-oriented bodies can apply in conjunction with non-profit or public organisations.

► **More information on the [Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme](#).**

The **Europe for Citizens Programme**<sup>18</sup> aims to promote citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity. It also focuses on European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation by developing citizens' understanding of the EU's policy-making process and promoting opportunities. The total budget of the programme is EUR 185 million.

The programme is managed by the

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<sup>17</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) No 1382/2013](#)

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<sup>18</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) No 390/2014](#)

European Commission, through the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Applications to the open calls for proposal can be submitted by all stakeholders promoting European citizenship and integration, in particular local and regional authorities, twinning committees, civil society organisations, etc.

► **More information on the [Europe for Citizens Programme](#).**

The Hercule III Programme<sup>19</sup> counters fraud and any other illegal activities affecting the EU's financial interests, including the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting. It contributes to an increased transnational cooperation and coordination at EU level, between Member States' authorities, the Commission and OLAF. The programme provides technical assistance to Member State authorities in order to strengthen their operational and investigative capacity. It also funds training, conferences and seminars for law enforcement professionals to improve their skills and to allow for the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

► **More information on the [Hercule III Programme](#).**

The Internal Security Fund was established to strengthen police cooperation and to fight organised crime. Enhancing national capacities to fight corruption, protecting the economy against criminal infiltration and reducing incentives by seizing and confiscating criminal assets are among its major priorities. The primary target groups are law enforcement and other security services.

► **Further information on the [Internal Security Fund](#).**

The **Pericles Programme**<sup>20</sup> funds exchanges, assistance and training for authorities, banks and others involved in combating euro-counterfeiting – both in the eurozone and in EU countries outside the eurozone. Its aim is to have better protection for euro banknotes and coins in Europe and worldwide – by ensuring anti-counterfeiting measures throughout the EU have equivalent effect, while respecting distinct national traditions and by improving cooperation between authorities. The overall budget available for the Programme during the current multi-annual financial framework is EUR 7.3 million and it is implemented on the basis of annual work programmes.

► **More information on the [Pericles Programme](#).**

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19 Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 – OJ L84, 20.3.2014, p. 6.

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20 Regulation (EU) No 331/2014 – OJ L 103, 05.04.2014



## 5. OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

### 5.1. On-line Checklist for Beneficiaries

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A checklist is available on-line to help narrowing down EU Funds that could be available for different types of

investment and categories of beneficiaries.

### 5.2. Visibility of EU Funding

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Beneficiaries of EU funds are obliged to acknowledge EU funding in their own communications. For this purpose, they should include the EU emblem and appropriate text highlighting the nature of the funding.

[Guidelines](#) entitled 'The use of the EU emblem in the context of EU programmes: Guidelines for beneficiaries and other third parties' explains the entire process and is available in all EU languages.

### 5.3. EU Funding and the Charter of Fundamental Rights

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Operations supported by EU funds must comply with EU law and relevant national laws. The broad catalogue of relevant applicable Union law covers, among others, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is legally binding since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty.

It applies to Member States whenever they implement EU law. It is therefore important that beneficiaries ensure that their projects are conducted in full respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.<sup>21</sup>

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21 More information on the [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) and the [full text of the Charter](#) can be consulted on the Commission website. A useful online tool that allows users to access information about fundamental rights in the EU and its Member States is the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' [Charterpedia](#).



## 6. GLOSSARY

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
COSME	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
DG	Directorate-General
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EaSI	Employment and Social Innovation programme
EASME	Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network
EFG	Equity Facility for Growth
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERC	European Research Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
EURES	European Employment Services, the European jobs network
EUSF	European Union Solidarity Fund
FNS	Fraud Notification System
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme
GNI	Gross National Income
H2020	Horizon 2020
HTA	Health Technology Assessment
ICT	information and communication technologies
INEA	Innovation and Network Executive Agency
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
KA	Key Action

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KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
LAG	Local Action Group
LEITs	Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies
LGF	Loan Guarantee Facility
LIFE	'L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement' / The financing instrument for the environment
MA	Managing Authority
MERIKA	Marine Energy Research Innovation and Knowledge Accelerator
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions
NCFE	Natural Capital Financing Financial instrument
NCPs	National Contact Points
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OLAF	European Anti-fraud Office
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Partnership Agreement
PEACE	EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland
R&D	research and development
R&I	research and innovation
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TO	Thematic Objective
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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