

## Information Guide



## Funding from the European Union

**A guide to information sources on funding opportunities from the EU**

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## Overview

The EU provides funding for a broad range of projects and programmes covering areas such as:

- Regional & urban development
- Employment & social inclusion
- Agriculture & rural development
- Maritime & fisheries policies
- Research & innovation
- Humanitarian aid.

## Management of funds

Funding is managed according to strict rules to ensure there is tight control over how funds are used and that the money is spent in a transparent, accountable manner. As a group, the 28 EU Commissioners have the ultimate political responsibility for ensuring that EU funds are spent properly. But because most of the funding is managed within the beneficiary countries, responsibility for conducting checks and annual audits lies with national governments.

Over 76% of the EU budget is managed in partnership with national and regional authorities through a system of "shared management", largely through 5 big funds - the [Structural & Investment Funds](#). Collectively, these help to implement the [Europe 2020 strategy](#).

- [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF) – regional and urban development
- [European Social Fund](#) (ESF) – social inclusion and good governance
- [Cohesion Fund](#) (CF) – economic convergence by less-developed regions
- [European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development](#) (EAFRD)
- [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#) (EMFF)

Other funds are managed directly by the EU. These are provided in the form of:

- [Grants](#) for specific projects in relation to EU policies, usually following a public announcement known as a 'call for proposals'. Part of the funding comes from the EU, part from other sources.
- [Contracts](#) issued by EU institutions to buy in services, goods or works they need for their operations – like studies, training, conference organisation, IT equipment. Contracts are awarded through calls for tender.

[Recipients of tenders, grants, or development aid ear-marked for non-EU countries](#) are published online.

Each budget is subsequently scrutinised by the [European Court of Auditors](#) (ECA), which publishes an Annual Report on the budget. The ECA website provides the Courts Annual Report, together with press releases and the more detailed Information Notes.

Members of the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) and other EU information networks such as [Europe Direct](#) can help with enquiries about funding.

In 2014 the EU initiated its new funding period: 'A Budget for Europe 2020' ([COM\(2011\)500](#); see also [Financial Framework 2014-2020](#) and [MFF programmes](#) page)

## Grants

There is a common misconception that 'money from Brussels' is freely available for almost any purpose. The reality is that grants from the European Union are made available to support specific objectives and most money is not paid directly to

beneficiaries, but via national and regional authorities. In addition to the major funds, referred to as Structural Funds and the funding available under the Common Agricultural Policy, there are numerous other programmes and initiatives which support specific EU activities. Notices for some are published in the Official Journal C series; others in the Supplement to the [Official Journal](#) (the OJ S; available online as [Tenders Electronic Daily](#) - TED).

Introductions to EU funding and links to other sources are provided by the Commission on its [Public contracts and funding](#) page.

## Transparency and evaluation of funding

When the then European Commissioner for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud, Siim Kallas, launched the European Transparency Initiative (ETI; see [Summaries of EU legislation](#)) in November 2005, one of its declared goals was to enhance the transparency on funding from the EU. Commissioner Kallas suggested creating a central web portal to bring together data on all recipients of centrally managed EU funding (i.e. managed by the European Commission). The Commission would also work towards greater transparency of decentralised funding and funding subject to shared management between the Commission and national authorities. The latter includes most of the EU's total financial support, since it covers the bulk of funding under the Common Agricultural Policy, the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund (see Press Release [SPEECH/05/628](#)).

The European Commission's DGs for Development and for External Relations, together with the EuropeAid Co-operation Office, run a joint website where they make evaluation of their funding programmes publicly available. An [Inventory of EU evaluations](#) brings together 'the evaluations completed and released by the Evaluation Services of the 25 EU Member States and the European Commission of their external/development cooperation actions since January 2000.' There are also other evaluation websites:

- DG Agriculture and Rural Development: [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) 2014-2020: Monitoring and evaluation framework](#)
- Education, Audiovisual and Culture: [Evaluation Reports](#) (includes education, culture, audiovisual, sport, citizenship and volunteering evaluations)
- DG for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT): [Consultations and Evaluations](#)
- DG Regional Policy: [Evaluation](#)

## Funding opportunities in selected areas

The Commission's Directorates-General mentioned below issue 'Calls for proposals' and/or 'Calls for tender'; where available the relevant web pages are identified.

### Agriculture and Fisheries

European Commission: [DG Agriculture and Rural Development](#) ([Calls for tender](#)), [DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](#) ([Calls for proposals](#) / [Calls for tender](#))

[Financing the Common Agricultural Policy](#) - includes a general introduction, Financial Reports, information on distribution of aids and the Clearance of Accounts of Member States' expenditure (see also Summaries of EU legislation: [European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development](#) (EAFRD), [Financing the common agricultural policy](#)).

In 2013 CAP reform introduced a new system of direct support through [direct payments](#). The reform has designed compulsory and voluntary schemes. This gave considerable

flexibility to Member States in how they implement the direct support system while requiring them to notify the Commission of the main policy choices.

This informative note reflects the content of Member States' notifications available to the Commission services in June 2016. It is made available without prejudice to any finding in respect of their compliance with the regulatory framework.

For individual plant and animal products, which might qualify for specific support schemes, see also the DG's website on [agricultural markets](#).

[Support for Promotional measures](#), both within the Internal Market and in third countries.

[Information measures relating to the Common Agricultural Policy](#) - support for projects aimed at explaining the CAP, promoting the European model of agriculture, informing farmers and raising public awareness.

To support [Bioenergy](#), and to promote agricultural produce to children via the [School Milk Scheme](#) and [School Fruit Scheme](#).

There are rules on [State aid in the agricultural sector](#) which can be offered to the agricultural sector and details are available of the [Beneficiaries of CAP payments](#). Background information can be found in the ESO [Information Guide: Common Agricultural Policy](#) and [Information Guide: Common Fisheries Policy](#).

European Commission: [DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](#) provides information on [Contracts and funding](#), including the [Common Fisheries Policy CFP](#) – (previously the European Fisheries Fund); for background on the CFP and related topics, see [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

## **Consumers**

European Commission: [DG Health and Consumers: Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency \(Calls\)](#)

The [Consumer Programme 2014-2020](#) provides the financial framework for consumer policy (see [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The European Commission's DG Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Agency offers information on its [website](#), including details of [calls for proposals](#) and [call for tenders](#) for relevant activities.

For background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Consumer Policy](#).

## **Education, audio-visual sector and culture**

European Commission: [Education, Audio-visual and Culture Agency](#)

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the management of certain parts of the EU's funding programmes in the fields of education, culture, audiovisual, sport, citizenship and volunteering.

The EACEA is responsible for [Erasmus+ \(Calls\)](#). For nearly 30 years, the EU has funded this programme, which has enabled over three million European students to spend part of their studies at another higher education institution or with an organisation in Europe. Erasmus+ brings such opportunities to all - students, staff, trainees, teachers, volunteers and more. It's not just about Europe or Europeans either - with Erasmus+, people from all over the world can access opportunities.

Erasmus+ has opportunities for individuals of all ages, helping them develop and share knowledge and experience at intuitions and organisations in different countries. Erasmus+ can offer students support during their period of [study abroad](#).

Erasmus+ supports [traineeships](#) (work placements, internships, etc.) abroad for students enrolled in higher education in a [Programme Country](#). These opportunities are also open to recent graduates.

With [Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees](#), students can receive a full degree scholarship for a Master-level international study programme. Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees have a high level of integration of the courses between multiple higher education institutions across countries.

Erasmus+ Master Degree Loans are EU-guaranteed loans with favourable pay-back terms that can help students finance a Master course (1 or 2 years) in an Erasmus+ [Programme Country](#).

For additional background information, see also Summaries of EU legislation collections on [Lifelong learning](#) and on [Education, training, youth: cooperation with non-EU member countries](#).

For students with physical, mental or health-related conditions [additional funding](#) is available.

Another programme falling under the EACEA is [Creative Europe \(Calls\)](#). The programme's aim is to help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation; Enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs, and social cohesion; Give Europe's culture and media sectors access to new international opportunities, markets, and audiences. (see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The website also gives details of other initiatives, including a [European award for Contemporary Music or European Border Breakers Awards](#) and [prizes](#) in cultural heritage, architecture, literature and music.

The [MEDIA](#) programme supports the European audiovisual sector. Media aims to support initiatives that can generate an impact for the sector across Europe, including supporting individual works, initiatives that promote new skills in the sector, and initiatives that promote international cooperation in the sector. Its sub-programmes include television programming of audiovisual European works, videogame development and film festivals. A complete list of these programmes is [available](#).

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Education Policy](#). For extra information concerning legislation see [Summaries of EU legislation](#).

## **Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion**

European Commission: [DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#) ([Calls for proposals](#) / [Calls for tender](#))

The [European Social Fund](#) (ESF) was set up to promote economic and social cohesion by reducing differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions. In the period 2014-2020 the ESF plans to provide €80 billion. This funding will be spent on [training people and helping them get into work](#), promoting [social inclusion](#), improving [education & training](#) and improving the quality of [public services](#) in EU countries. [More on ESF objectives for 2014-20](#).

The [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund](#) (EGF) supports workers who lose their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns, with the aim of helping them find another job. Member States can apply to the EGF for funding when significant job losses are experienced.

The programme for [Employment and Social Innovation](#) (EaSI) will span the 2014-2020 period. It supports Member States' efforts in the design and implementation of employment and social reforms at European, national as well as regional and local levels by means of policy coordination, the identification, analysis and sharing of the best practices. EaSI integrates and extends the coverage of three existing programmes: [Progress](#) (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity), [EURES](#) (European Employment Services) and the [European Progress Microfinance Facility](#). (see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The aim of the [European Progress Microfinance Facility](#) (EPMF) is to give micro businesses (those employing fewer than 10 people) easier access to credit. It also aims to help provide microloans for vulnerable groups and unemployed people wanting to set up or further develop their own businesses.

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Employment and Labour Market Policy](#).

## Energy

European Commission: [DG Energy \(Calls\)](#), [Horizon 2020 \(Tenders\)](#)

[Intelligent Energy - Europe](#) (IEE) provides support for removing market barriers, changing behaviour, creating a more favourable business environment for growing energy efficiency and renewables markets, and promoting greater understanding of EU energy policies.

Energy is a major area of research for the EU, with funding available for a number of areas, including:

- Solar Energy ([Photovoltaics](#), [Concentrated Solar Power](#))
- [Wind Energy](#)
- [Bioenergy](#)
- Other renewable energies ([Ocean](#), [Hydro](#), [Geothermal](#))
- [Fuel cells and hydrogen](#)
- Energy networks ([Smartgrids](#))
- Clean coal/CCS ([Clean Coal / CCS](#), [Coal and steel - RFCS](#))
- Energy efficiency ([Energy efficiency](#))
- Horizontal aspects ([Socio-economic research](#), [Materials & future and emerging technologies](#))

For further information see [Horizon 2020](#) which is an EU research programme that funds research and programmes on energy research and innovation.

[Funding](#) is also available for infrastructure which integrates the EU's energy market and which can help meet its energy and climate goals.

Further background information can be found in the [Summaries of EU legislation](#).

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide on Energy Policy](#).

## **Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy**

European Commission: [DG Enlargement \(Calls\)](#)

Two countries are currently candidates to join the EU: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Six are potential candidates: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Iceland.

The main form of financial assistance to candidates or potential candidates is the [Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance](#) (IPA II), intended to help the countries concerned introduce political, economic and institutional reforms. The IPA has five components:

1. Transition Assistance and Institution Building
2. Cross-Border Cooperation (with EU Member States and other countries eligible for IPA)
3. Regional Development (transport, environment and economic development)
4. Human Resources Development (strengthening human capital and combating exclusion)
5. Rural Development

Components 1 and 2 are open to all beneficiary countries. Components 3, 4 and 5 are open to candidate countries only (see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

[Sigma](#) is a joint initiative of the EU and the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD). Primarily funded by the EU, it focuses not only on the candidate and potential candidate countries, but also on the 16 countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (see below) and Russia.

The [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) provides funding for projects in the enlargement countries in the form of individual loans, intermediated loans and venture capital, with a focus on supporting investment to meet the requirements of EU legislation and to aid economic development ahead of membership negotiations.

The EU is part of the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#) (EBRD), which is the largest single investor in central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The EBRD provides loan and equity finance, guarantees, leasing facilities and trade finance.

The [European Fund for Southeast Europe](#) (EFSE), in which the European Commission is an investor, is the largest microfinance investment fund worldwide and the first Public-Private Partnership (PPP) of its kind, providing sustainable, long-term funding to financial institutions in Southeast Europe and supporting micro-enterprises and small businesses.

The [European Neighbourhood Policy](#) (ENP) governs the EU's relations with 16 neighbouring countries to the east and south: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. Financial support for the ENP is provided via the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Sustainable development is a focus of ENPI, which operates on the basis of funds being allocated to country programmes according to individual circumstances (see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

Background information can be found in the ESO [Information Guide: Enlargement of the European Union](#).

## Enterprise

European Commission: [Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs \(Calls\)](#)

[COSME](#) is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises running from 2014 to 2020 with a planned budget of €2.3 billion. The European Commission aims to promote entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for SMEs to allow them to realise their full potential in today's global economy.

COSME aims to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to [access finance](#) in all phases of their lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer. It aims to help businesses to [access markets](#) in the EU and beyond. Also it [supports entrepreneurs](#) by strengthening [entrepreneurship education](#), mentoring, guidance and other support services. Finally it aims to reduce the administrative and regulatory burden on SMEs by creating a [business-friendly](#) environment.

The [Enterprise Europe Network](#) helps small companies make the most out of business opportunities in the EU. It is a one-stop-shop for all business needs. It provides support on access to market information, overcoming legal obstacles, and identifying potential business partners across Europe.

The network offers a wide range of services to [small and medium-sized enterprises](#) (SMEs). It aims to:

- Help SMEs find international business, technology, and research partners in the EU, [COSME](#) participating countries, and other non-EU countries
- Develop a service helping SMEs become active in the [Single Market](#) and beyond
- Increase SME competitiveness through internationalisation and innovation support services
- Involve SMEs in the policy-making process by transmitting feedback to the European Commission
- Strengthen support to SMEs interested in participating in [Horizon 2020](#) and corresponding calls for proposals, and encourage SMEs to participate in the [SME Instrument](#)
- Enable SMEs to turn the resource efficiency challenge into opportunities that contribute to the future Climate Action and [Green Action Plan](#)
- Improve SMEs' awareness on [access to finance](#)
- Ensure visibility, recognition, and local awareness about the network.

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Enterprise Policy](#).

## Environment

European Commission: [DG Environment \(Calls\)](#)

[LIFE](#) is the Union's Financial Instrument for the Environment. Established in 1992, the latest incarnation of the initiative is LIFE+, which helps fund environment and nature conservation projects in the EU and selected other countries (for background to LIFE, see [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The European Commission ([DG Environment](#) and [DG Climate Action](#)) manages the LIFE programme. The Commission has delegated the implementation of many components of the LIFE programme to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises ([EASME](#)). External selection, monitoring and communication teams provide assistance to



the Commission and EASME. The [European Investment Bank](#) will manage the two new financial instruments (NCFE and PF4EE).

The [Natural Capital Financing Facility \(NCFE\)](#) is a new financial instrument which will provide financing opportunities in the form of loans or equity investments for revenue-generating or cost-saving pilot projects promoting the preservation of natural capital, including climate change adaptation projects.

[Private Finance for Energy Efficiency instruments \(PF4EE\)](#) is a new financial instrument which will provide loans for investments in energy efficient projects prioritized by National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

The Commission prepared a new [Financing Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook](#) for the period 2014-2020. The document is designed to help EU Member States strengthen the uptake of EU funds for the management and conservation of their Natura 2000 sites in the new multiannual financial framework.

The Handbook analyses and describes opportunities for financing investments in Natura 2000 from different funds and instruments. It provides guidance on complementarities between different funds and policies which can be of benefit to the network. There are also practical tips on better integration of Natura 2000 in the operational programmes and some guidance on possible use of innovative financing instruments.

The Handbook has a two-part structure, with separate volumes for Part I and Part II:

- [Part I: Description of EU funding opportunities in 2014-2020](#)
- [Part II: Analysis of Natura 2000 management measures eligible for financing together with case studies](#)

The [Horizon 2020](#) project funds [environmental research and innovation](#) with the following specific objectives:

- to achieve a resource – and water - efficient and climate change resilient economy and society,
- the protection and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems, and
- a sustainable supply and use of raw materials, in order to meet the needs of a growing global population within the sustainable limits of the planet's natural resources and eco-systems.

Further details can be found on the DG Environment's pages on [Funding opportunities](#) and [LIFE financial instruments](#).

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Environment Policy](#).

### **External aid and external relations**

European Commission: [DG EuropeAid \(Funding\)](#), [European External Action Service \(Grants\)](#).

The European Union is the world's biggest aid donor, providing financial assistance via both the EU budget and the European Development Fund (EDF). The Commission's DG EuropeAid manages EU external aid programmes, implementing relevant projects and activities by making grants for actions under Commission-run programmes, awarding operating grants to cover expenditure incurred by EU-based organisations carrying out

approved work, and offering aid-related contract opportunities. Details of grants and contracts offered by EuropeAid can be found via its [Funding](#) page.

EuropeAid draws on a range of EU financial instruments and programmes to collaborate with partners from the following regions:

- [Africa](#)
- [African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) region](#)
- [Asia](#)
- [Central Asia](#)
- [Gulf region](#)
- [Latin America](#)
- [Neighbourhood & Russia](#) (European Neighbourhood Policy - ENP)
- [The Pacific](#)

Other programmes relevant to EuropeAid include the [European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights](#) (EIDHR). The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) provides assistance to the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and the respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The [PADOR](#) database (Potential Applicant Dated Online Registration), managed by EuropeAid, contains the organisations and their partners who apply for Commission grants in the field of external assistance.

For more background information see [Summaries of EU legislation](#) and the ESO [Information Guide: ACP-EU relations](#).

## Health

European Commission: [DG Health and Consumers](#) ([Calls](#)), [Executive Agency for Health and Consumers](#) ([Calls](#))

The [third health programme \(2014-2020\)](#) has 4 overarching objectives. It seeks to:

1. Promote health, prevent diseases and foster supportive environments for healthy lifestyles taking into account the 'health in all policies' principle,
2. Protect Union citizens from serious cross-border health threats,
3. Contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems,
4. Facilitate access to better and safer healthcare for Union citizens.

The Programme is managed by the Commission with the assistance of the [Executive Agency for Health and Consumers](#) (EAHC) ([Calls](#)) which was created in 2005 to support implementation of the first EU Public Health Programme. In 2008, the Agency's scope was extended to include actions in the field of consumer protection and training for safer food.

The DG Health and Consumers page on [Health and Structural Funds](#) highlights the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) and the [European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#) as sources of health-related funding. Measures supported include health infrastructure, e-health, health promotion and training.

For more background information see [Summaries of EU legislation](#) and the ESO [Information Guide: Public Health](#).

## Justice and Home Affairs

European Commission: [DG Justice \(Calls\)](#)

From 2016 calls for proposals under the Justice Programme, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme and the Consumer Programme are published on the Participant Portal originally developed for the [Horizon \(2020\)](#) Research Programme.

Applicants are advised to get familiar with the priorities, the submission opening and closure dates of all already published topics and also the new application procedure available in the topic description and topic condition sections of each topic.

Access grants from DG Justice and Consumers via three Programmes:

- [Justice Programme](#)
- [REC Programme](#)
- [Consumer Programme](#)

European Commission: [DG Home Affairs](#)

In order to promote the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a common Union approach to asylum and immigration, the [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund](#) (AMIF) has been set up for the period 2014-20, with a total of €3.1 billion for the seven years.

Background information on current initiatives and details of previous ones can be found in the Summaries of EU legislation collections on: [Citizenship of the Union](#), [Combating discrimination](#), [Combating drugs](#), [Fight against organised crime](#), [Fight against terrorism](#), [Fight against trafficking in human beings](#), [Free movement of persons, asylum and immigration](#), [Judicial cooperation in civil matters](#), [Judicial cooperation in criminal matters](#), [Police and customs cooperation](#).

See also the ESO [Information Guide: Justice and Home Affairs](#).

## Research and technological development

European Commission: [DG Research & Innovation \(Calls\)](#)

The Directorate-General for Research and Innovation defines and implements European Research and Innovation (R&I) policy with a view to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy and its key flagship initiative, the Innovation Union.

To do so, the DG contributes to the European Semester by analysing national R&I policies, by assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and by formulating country specific recommendations where necessary. It monitors and contributes to the realisation of the Innovation Union flagship initiative and the completion of the European Research Area. It funds excellent Research and Innovation through Framework Programmes taking a strategic programming approach.

Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe. It supports research in the following areas:

- [Agriculture & Forestry](#)
- [Aquatic Resources](#)
- [Bio-based Industries](#)
- [Biotechnology](#)

- [Energy](#)
- [Environment & Climate Action](#)
- [Food & Healthy Diet](#)
- [Funding Researchers](#)
- [Health](#)
- [ICT Research & Innovation](#)
- [Innovation](#)
- [International Cooperation](#)
- [Key Enabling Technologies](#)
- [Partnerships with Industry and Member States](#)
- [Raw Materials](#)
- [Research Infrastructures](#)
- [Security](#)
- [SMEs](#)
- [Social Sciences & Humanities](#)
- [Society](#)
- [Space](#)
- [Transport](#)

The [European Research Council](#) supports the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator driven frontier research across all fields on the basis of scientific excellence.

The [People Programme](#) aims to help improve the career prospects of researchers in Europe and to attract more high-quality young researchers, with a focus on the mobility and training of European researchers.

The [Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions grants](#) offer funding for all stages of a researcher's career, from PhD candidates to highly experienced researchers, which encourage transnational, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility. The MSCA will become the main EU programme for doctoral training, financing 25,000 PhDs.

Further information can be found on [Horizon 2020](#) and the [CORDIS site](#); see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#).

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Research and Development](#).

## **Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund**

European Commission: [DG Regional Policy \(Calls\)](#)

Regional Policy targets all regions and cities in the European Union in order to support job creation, business competitiveness, economic growth, sustainable development, and improve citizens' quality of life.

In order to reach these goals and address the diverse development needs in all EU regions, €351.8 billion – almost a third of the total EU budget – has been set aside for Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020.

Regional Policy is delivered through three main funds: the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#), the [Cohesion Fund \(CF\)](#) and the [European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#).

Together with the [European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development \(EAFRD\)](#) and the [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(EMFF\)](#), they make up the [European Structural and Investment \(ESI\) Funds](#).

The aim of the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) is to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by addressing imbalances between its regions.

The ERDF focuses its investments on several key priority areas. This is known as 'thematic concentration':

- Innovation and research;
- The digital agenda;
- Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- The low-carbon economy.

The ERDF resources allocated to these priorities will depend on the category of region.

- In more developed regions, at least 80% of funds must focus on at least two of these priorities;
- In transition regions, this focus is for 60% of the funds;
- This is 50% in less developed regions.

Under the [European Territorial Cooperation programmes](#), at least 80% of funds will be concentrated on these four priority areas mentioned above.

The ERDF also gives particular attention to specific territorial characteristics. ERDF action is designed to reduce economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas, with a special focus on sustainable urban development. At least 5% of the ERDF resources are set aside for this field, through 'integrated actions' managed by cities.

Areas that are naturally disadvantaged from a geographical viewpoint (remote, mountainous or sparsely populated areas) benefit from special treatment. Lastly, the outermost areas also benefit from specific assistance from the ERDF to address possible disadvantages due to their remoteness.

The [European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#) is intended to help improve employment and education opportunities across the European Union. It also aims to improve the situation of the most vulnerable people at risk of poverty.

The ESF investments cover all EU regions. More than €80 billion is earmarked for human capital investment in Member States between 2014 and 2020, with an extra of at least €3.2 billion allocated to the Youth Employment Initiative.

For the 2014-2020 period, the ESF will focus on four of the cohesion policy's thematic objectives:

- promoting employment and supporting labour mobility
- promoting social inclusion and combating poverty
- investing in education, skills and lifelong learning
- enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration

In addition, 20% of ESF investments will be committed to activities improving social inclusion and combating poverty. This is known as thematic concentration.

For more information: see the [European Social Fund rules](#) and the [ESF website](#).

The [Cohesion Fund](#) is aimed at Member States whose Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90% of the EU average. It aims to reduce economic and social disparities and to promote sustainable development.

In addition, a number of other initiatives provide money to target specific objectives: the [European Union Solidarity Fund](#) (EUSF) responds to major natural disasters; the [European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation](#) (EGTC) facilitates and promotes cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, enabling regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different Member States to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality.

Additional details of the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund for 2014-2020 and for previous funding periods can be found in [Summaries of EU legislation](#) and in the ESO [Information Guide: Structural Policy](#).

## **Transport**

European Commission: [DG Mobility and Transport \(Calls\)](#), [Small and Medium-sized Enterprises \(EASME\) \(Tenders\)](#), [The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency \(INEA\) \(Calls\)](#)

As of January 2014, the EU has a new transport infrastructure policy – [TEN-T](#) - that connects the continent between East and West, North and South. This policy aims to 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 incompatible standards for railway traffic. It promotes and strengthens seamless transport chains for passenger and freight, while keeping up with the latest technological trends. This project will help the economy in its recovery and to grow, with a budget of €24.05 billion up to 2020.

The [NAIADES](#) Action Programme comprises numerous actions and measures to boost transport on inland waterways. The programme runs until 2020 and is to be implemented by the European Commission, the Member States and the industry itself. The European Commission regularly monitors the implementation of NAIADES.

Implementation of NAIADES is supported by the [PLATINA](#) project. Adopted under the 7th Framework Programme, PLATINA funds actions in five strategic fields: market conditions; fleet modernisation; human capital; the image of inland navigation; infrastructure.

Also funded via the 7th Framework Programme, the [CIVITAS](#) initiative helps cities across Europe to implement and test innovative and integrated strategies addressing energy, transport and environmental objectives. Areas of research include alternative motor fuels and urban mobility.

The CIVITAS initiative is a network of cities dedicated to cleaner and better transport. The knowledge garnered through these practical experiences is complemented, and supported, by a number of research and innovation projects ([ECCENTRIC](#), [PORTIS](#) and [DESTINATIONS](#)), also run under CIVITAS. These research projects look at ways of building a more resource efficient and competitive transport system in Europe.

The project works on 10 thematic areas, related to sustainable transport mobility covering: [Car-Independent Lifestyles](#), [Clean Fuels & Vehicles](#), [Collective Passenger Transport](#), [Demand Management Strategies](#), [Integrated Planning](#), [Mobility Management](#), [Public Involvement](#), [Safety & Security](#), [Transport Telematics](#), [Urban Freight Logistics](#).

For more background information see the ESO [Information Guide: Transport Policy](#) and [Information Guide: Trans-European Networks](#).

## Loans and venture capital

The [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) gives loans to public and private borrowers and to projects in all sectors of the economy - from communication, environment and energy infrastructure to industry, services and agriculture. The EIB finances up to 50% of large-scale projects by means of individual loans (€25 million plus) which are arranged directly with promoters or through financial intermediaries. Smaller projects are funded indirectly through global loans made available to banks or financial institutions operating at European, national or regional level. Details of projects supported can be found in the Bank's [Press Releases](#).

The [European Investment Fund](#) (EIF) is a financial institution established as a joint venture by the European Investment Bank, the European Union (represented by the European Commission) and private and public financial institutions from the EU Member States. The EIF is not a lending institution and it does not provide or manage grants or subsidies. Instead, it offers guarantees on debt finance and invests in venture capital funds.

## Public procurement

Businesses can benefit by selling direct to EU institutions and agencies as - in common with other public bodies - they spend money on a wide range of goods and services. There is a constant need for equipment, consumables, consultancy, surveys and so on. All of the EU's institutions have budgets for items such as office machinery and supplies, vehicles, furniture, security systems, clothing and publicity.

Invitations to tender appear in the Supplement to the Official Journal (OJ S) which is available electronically as the [Tenders Electronic Daily](#) (TED) database. Many Commission DGs also maintain their own lists of invitations to tender (relevant pages are noted under the selected themes above; the list below also includes pages for additional DGs; the Commission also maintains a page on [public contracts](#)).

## European Commission DGs and Services

### **Policies**

- [Agriculture and Rural Development](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Climate Action](#) - [Contracts & grants](#)
- [Communications Networks, Content and Technology](#) - [Calls and work programmes](#)
- [Competition](#) - [Calls for tenders and proposals](#)
- [Development and cooperation programs](#) - [Funding](#)
- [Economic and Financial Affairs](#) - [Procurement and grants](#)
- [Education, culture, citizenship, youth and volunteering funding](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Erasmus+](#) - [Calls](#)
- [Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Energy](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [European Fund for Strategic Investments](#) - [Financing](#)
- [Horizon 2020](#) - [Funding](#)
- [Internal Market, industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Environment](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Mobility and Transport](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Health and Consumers](#) - [Tenders \(consumers\)](#), [Tenders \(health\)](#)
- [Home Affairs](#) - [Financing](#)
- [Justice](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Regional Policy](#) - [Grants and procurements](#)
- [Research](#) - [Calls for tender](#)

- [Taxation and Customs Union](#) - [Calls for tender](#)

### **External relations**

- [Enlargement](#) - [Tenders](#)
- [EuropeAid](#) - [Funding](#)
- [Humanitarian Aid](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Trade](#) - [Calls for tender](#)

### **General services**

- [Communication](#) - [Contracts](#)
- [European Anti-Fraud Office](#) - [Calls](#)
- [Eurostat](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Joint Research Centre](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Publications Office](#) - [Procurement](#)

### **Internal services**

- [Budget](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Human Resources and Security](#) - [Public procurement](#)
- [Informatics](#) - [Public procurement](#)
- [Infrastructures and Logistics - Brussels](#) - [Contracts and public procurement](#)
- [Infrastructures and Logistics - Luxembourg](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Office For Administration And Payment Of Individual Entitlements](#) - [Calls for tender](#)
- [Translation](#) - [Tenders and contracts](#)

The European Commission's [SIMAP](#) website offers background information on procurement in the EU, together with online submission forms. Information on procurement policy and legislation is available on the website of the [DG Internal Market and Services](#) and the Commission's Publications Office also has a page on [tenders](#).

### **Further information sources on the internet**

- Europa
  - [Public contracts and funding](#)
  - [Public procurement in the EU - rules and guidelines](#)
  - [EU funding](#)
  - Summaries of EU legislation
    - [Public procurement](#)
    - For other topics, select relevant pages via the [main menu](#).
- European Commission: DG Budget
  - [Financial programming and budget](#)
- European Parliament
  - [Invitations to tender](#), [Grants](#)

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