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# European Funding Toolkit

for Social Enterprises & their Support Organisations



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**Euclid Network is the European network of social enterprises and impact-driven leaders. With our members and partners, we deliver events, EU projects, peer exchanges and policy work for social entrepreneurs and impact-driven leaders. Euclid Network currently has 46 member organisations based across 26 countries, operating in 45 countries, and representing over 100,000 social enterprises and NGOs.**



This guide has been published with the financial support of the European Commission (ESF+ Programme). The information set out in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

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**Last revision:** November 2022

**Please use this reference to cite the report:**

Yaghil, A., Schmidt, G. (2022). "EN Funding Toolkit". Euclid Network.

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# Foreword

## by Brigitte Fellahi

**The European Commission is committed to further developing the potential that the social enterprise ecosystem offers, ensuring that the Twin Transition is a just transition and is working towards the achievement of the aspirations of the EU Action Plan for the Social Economy.**

Every day, social enterprises are offering concrete and innovative solutions to the key challenges that Europe is facing. Social entrepreneurs are driving sustainable and inclusive economic and industrial development, creating and retaining quality jobs as well as driving the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). They are promoting the active participation of citizens in our society and are playing an active role in providing services in European Union (EU) member states' welfare systems. They also undertake many other activities, contributing to the EU's strategic objectives in a variety of ways, including by supporting the digital transition through teaching digital skills to make Europe fit for the digital age and mainstreaming considerations for the environment and social inclusion through the way they run their businesses.

The EU Social Economy Action Plan, which was launched in December 2021, recognises this potential and has already in its first year begun to drive forward new initiatives and momentum for the economy of tomorrow. The Action Plan will help to tap the major economic and job creation potential of the social economy, working in harmony with the

Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy and paving the way to a Council Recommendation on the Framework Conditions for the Social Economy. This will enhance social investments and support social economy actors and social enterprises to start up, scale up and innovate.

The ambition of the European Commission is to increase the level of support for the social economy in the period between 2021 and 2027, as this will enable the startup and development of social economy actors.

**One of the key challenges social enterprises face is a lack of funding.**

To address this, the European Commission will provide dedicated grant funding and investment instruments to enhance the support for social impact and innovation. As social enterprises operate across different policy fields, there is a wide array of financing opportunities offered by a wide variety of direct and indirect funding programmes. The EU offers schemes addressing innovation, business development, digitalisation, rural development and circular economy through programmes such as InvestEU, Horizon Europe, the Single Market Programme,

European Social Fund+, European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe and the LIFE Programme among other notable programmes.

The European Commission understands however, that EU provision of funding is only one element of the action needed to address the funding gap for social enterprises and the organisations that support them. Resources such as the EU Funding Toolkit are essential for providing clear, succinct and accessible information on what funding is available and how it can be accessed. The European Commission also welcomes the inclusion of information in the toolkit on some other sources of funding which may support social enterprises across Europe as change in investment decisions among all groups of stakeholders is essential for achieving the UN SDGs by 2030.

The European Commission seeks to address the persistent issue that social economy stakeholders are not always sufficiently aware of the funding opportunities available to them. The European Commission is therefore proud to support Euclid Network in its efforts to assist social enterprises and their support organisations in accessing financing opportunities.

### **Brigitte Fellahi,**

Head of Unit at European Commission in charge of social and inclusive entrepreneurship, DG EMPL



# A fundraising guide for social enterprise support organisations

**This toolkit has been designed to facilitate the formulation of your fundraising strategy and your funding application processes. It is therefore primarily intended to inform social enterprise support organisations and intermediaries. This guide will also help you advise your beneficiaries in their own fundraising endeavours.**

The toolkit focuses on both public and private funding. While it does not seek to be exhaustive, it will facilitate the identification of potential funding sources for your organisations and get you started!

## Who is this guide for?

This guide has been designed for social enterprise support organisations and intermediaries. It therefore caters, as much as possible, to organisations that identify themselves as supporting the broad social entrepreneurship and social economy ecosystem. These 'intermediaries' can be:

- National federations and networks of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs.
- Incubators.
- Accelerators.
- Research centres.
- Universities and dedicated academic departments.
- Vocational education and training institutions (VET) and informal training organisations.
- Public institutions.
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including civil society organisations (CSOs).

This guide can be used by individuals and teams who occupy roles connected to fundraising and business development or simply by those who wish to share knowledge on the topic with their beneficiaries.

If you are a social enterprise this guide will be relevant to you too, as we included a chapter on early-stage finance opportunities, and because many of the funding streams mentioned can be used by delivery organisations or social enterprises themselves.

However, you will find even more tailored information in the *Finance YOUR Social Innovation Toolkit* available [here](#).

## How to use this guide?

This guide provides detailed information on the relevant funding and non-financial support programmes made available to social enterprise support organisations by various public institutions and private organisations. You will be able to gather practical advice on how to access funding and non-financial support from these stakeholders and develop your own fundraising framework. You will also be better equipped to define, plan and navigate through all the potential support you and your beneficiaries could access.

**In Part I**, we will guide you through the most relevant European Commission funding streams as well as the EEA and Norway Grants. For each of these programmes, you will understand their objectives, their eligibility criteria, their application processes and the amounts available.

**In Part II**, we will dive into the world of philanthropy and corporate fundraising. With a step-by-step guide to approaching these types of organisations for support, we will help you diversify your revenue streams and build long-term strategic partnerships.

**Finally, Part III** offers you a roadmap to concretely help you fundraise. It will give you the right tips and tricks at each step of the way to help you make the most informed decisions, anticipate risks and plan ahead.

## This toolkit has been designed so that you can either:

- Access the chapters in a mix-and-match manner according to your objectives, needs and context.
- Read through it in a linear fashion from beginning to end, section by section.

**We are conscious that your organisations are diverse and that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' fundraising approach. Donors are almost as diverse in their shapes and scopes, so be curious, be bold and fundraise away!**

## Enjoy the read!

### Disclaimer:

Please note that this is a living document. It was updated in November 2022 and may therefore require additional changes and updates in future.

# Glossary - Key terminology and abbreviations

**AMIF:** Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

**CERV:** Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

**Cohesion Policy:** the EU Cohesion Policy seeks to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU. It aims to correct imbalances between countries and regions.

**COSME:** EU's programme for small and medium-sized enterprises (former name - now within the Single Market Programme).

**CSO:** civil society organisation.

**DG Connect:** Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology.

**DG EMPL:** Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion.

**DG GROW:** Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs.

**DIGITAL:** Digital Europe programme.

**EACEA:** European Education and Culture Executive Agency.

**EaSI:** EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

**EC:** European Commission.

**EDIH:** European Digital Innovation Hubs.

**EEA:** The European Economic Association.

**EFSD+:** European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus.

**EISMEA:** European Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency.

**ERC:** European Research Council.

**ERDF:** European Regional Development Fund.

**ESF(+):** European Social Fund Plus.

**ETC:** European Territorial Cooperation.

**EU:** European Union.

**EPSR:** European Pillar of Social Rights: the Pillar of Social Rights is about better delivering on rights for citizens by building on 20 key principles. These key principles represent the beacon towards a stronger social Europe.

**Executive Agency:** a decentralised body of the EU, distinct from the EU institutions. Agencies are there to accomplish specific advisory, management and implementation tasks.

**FEAD:** Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

**Funder:** a person or organisation that provides money for a particular purpose.

**GECES:** the Commission Expert Group on the Social Economy and Social Enterprises was constituted to advise the European Commission on policy initiatives related to the social economy and social enterprise. It is a consultative body composed of 40 experts from the private sector, 40 experts from the public sector and observers from organisations such as the OECD and the UN.

**Grantee:** a person or organisation to whom a grant is given.

**JRC:** Joint Research Centre.

**Managing Authority:** a managing authority is a national body/organisation responsible for the efficient management and implementation of an operational programme at national level.

**MFF:** Multiannual Financial Framework.

**NGOs:** Non-governmental organisations.

**NCPs:** National Contact Points.

**NEET:** Not in education, employment or training.

**NUTS:** Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics.

**SBI:** Social Business Initiative. It was launched in 2011 by the European Commission and established an EU level action plan with concrete measures to establish a favourable environment for social enterprises.

**SEAP:** Social Economy Action Plan.

**SESO:** social enterprise support organisation.

**SME(s):** small and medium sized enterprise(s).

**VET:** Vocational education and training institutions.

**YEI:** Youth Employment Initiative.





# Part I

Accessing EU Funding

# An evolving EU policy for the sector

## **The first comprehensive EU-level policy initiative for social entrepreneurship was the 2011 Social Business Initiative (SBI), presented as part of the Responsible Business Package.**

The SBI contained an Action Plan to create a favourable ecosystem for social enterprises and focused on three priority areas: funding, visibility and the legal environment. Within these three areas the European Commission (EC) identified 11 priority measures such as: social investment funds; microcredit; a register of social enterprises; labels and certifications; public procurement; and state aid. It was then decided that the SBI's priority areas should be supported by an Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship and Social Economy (also known as [GECES](#)), which had a six-year mandate to set the direction for European policy development in this field.

In 2016, the Expert Group published 13 recommendations for how policy-makers could support the development of social enterprises as part of the [European Action Plan for the Social Economy and Social Enterprises](#). In parallel that year the recognition of the potential for innovation of social enterprises was reiterated in the [European Start-up and Scale-up Initiative](#). In particular, lack of or poor access to finance was identified as one of the most significant barriers to the creation and growth of social enterprises.

The Expert Group's mandate was renewed in

October 2018 with a different structure (for details of the new Expert Group, see [here](#)). This group - known as GECES II and possessing a mandate until 2024 - will give feedback to the EC on existing policies and instruments for the sector. The group will also actively support the development of all future European initiatives in favour of social entrepreneurship and social finance.

## **Since 2011, the EC has launched a wide range of initiatives providing financial and non-financial support to European social enterprises.**

Since 2011, the EC has launched a wide range of initiatives providing financial and non-financial support to European social enterprises and their support organisations. In particular, social enterprises are recognised as contributors to employment and social inclusion by the EU and as key to the implementation of the rights and principles laid out in the European Pillar for Social Rights (EPSR). Building on the results of the SBI and the European Start-up and Scale up Initiative, the European Commission launched the EU Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) in December 2021, highlighting concrete steps and EU funding programmes to improve access to finance for social enterprises and their support organisations.

The SEAP is the EU's way of further contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the principles of the European Pillar for Social Rights. To reach these goals and to enable the social economy to thrive, the SEAP focuses on three key areas:

- creating the right frameworks.
- opening up opportunities for development.
- enhancing the recognition and potential for the social economy.

Within these three key areas the EC identified around [10 series of actions](#) it will take to further support the development of the social economy until 2030, including developing policy and legal frameworks, State aid, providing better access to markets, promoting the social economy at regional, local and international levels, support and capacity building, improving access to funding, the green and digital transition, boosting social innovation, and enhancing recognition of the social economy.

These series of actions were set up after the EU recognized, together with stakeholders, some of the key challenges social enterprises are currently facing. One such challenge is that; public authorities and recipients often do not make the most of existing State aid possibilities. Furthermore, the amount of existing State aid available is not always adequate. When it comes to public procurement, State officials often award public tenders on the basis of criteria. Therefore, the promotion of socially and environmentally-responsible public procurement is needed. Lastly, evidence has shown that the general public is not sufficiently aware of the positive impact the social economy has. The SEAP was developed to improve the situation within the social economy with regards to these challenges,

and its implementation will require the cooperation and commitment of stakeholders and officials at all levels, from international to local.

The SEAP is currently the most important EU policy document on the social economy. SESOs and SEs can and should refer to it and all its related documents when building up a funding proposal.



# The EU's concrete support to social enterprise intermediaries

**In 2017, there were 2.8 million social enterprises in the EU employing some 19.1 million people, which accounts for 6.3% of the total paid workforce in Europe (EESC, 2017).**

Though not a new concept or practice, social entrepreneurship moved into the spotlight in the aftermath of the 2008 financial and economic crisis. Pioneers in fighting social exclusion, delivering high-quality welfare services and combating environmental issues, social enterprises were identified by the EC as playing a key role in the EU's response to the crisis. Supporting entrepreneurs from all backgrounds and focusing on enhancing people's skills will help the EU to achieve its goal of 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' and to implement the EPSR.

In recognising the importance and potential of the contribution of social enterprises to European socio-economic development, the EC has also put a focus on helping and promoting their support organisations, also known as 'intermediaries.' This focus includes both the demand and supply sides of social finance. For example, through the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), more intermediaries and investors have become aware of social economic entities and are in return providing business support and finance to social enterprises.

**Civil society organisations, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and public authorities are all encouraged to apply for EU funding.**

In practice, social entrepreneurship and social finance fall under the responsibility of two Directorate-Generals (DGs) at the EC – [DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion](#) (DG EMPL) and [DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs](#) (DG GROW).

However, the EC have also been pushing this agenda throughout various other areas of action, including research, regional cohesion and international development (see chart on pages 20-21).

Civil society organisations, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and public authorities are all encouraged to apply for EU funding. This funding takes the form of grants, loans and guarantees as well as the opportunity to bid for contracts (tenders) to provide goods and services.

These organisations are all eligible to apply for EU funds where their areas of operation support EU policies. Public bodies (local, regional or national) can also apply for EU funding opportunities, including investment and financial assistance for building capacity, efficiency and local infrastructure.

In many cases the EC only finances a part of a project or programme. The EU contribution to a project or programme is referred to as the 'co-financing rate' and is expressed as a percentage of the total programme cost. This guide specifies the maximum co-financing rate per funding stream.

European funding mechanisms may be managed in different ways: jointly by the EC and national authorities, directly by the EC, or indirectly by other authorities inside or outside the EU. About 80% of EU funding is jointly administered by the EC and national authorities. This means that in most cases looking for EU funding begins with finding the relevant body in your country.

#### Disclaimer:

Please note that this guide's intention is to give an overview of some of the European programmes and funds that Euclid Network has identified as relevant for social enterprises, impact-driven leaders and their support structures. It does not seek to be exhaustive and other relevant EU initiatives could be added in the future.

**The EC provides funding in various forms, including:**



**Grants**  
Given to organisations (and occasionally to individuals). Grants are awarded in many different fields, usually on the basis of project proposals submitted by applicants in response to calls for proposals. Calls are published regularly and seek to fulfil the overall objective of the relevant funding programme.



**Financial instruments**  
Such as loans, guarantees and equity provided to businesses.



**Cash prizes**  
For businesses as part of organised competitions, in which businesses often also benefit from free publicity and promotion.



**Purchasing services**  
Works and goods from the market by inviting businesses to tender for public contracts.



## Find your best fit - a tool to navigate the EU funding maze!

In 2022, EN ran a survey of its members to identify their main areas of interest with regards to future funding applications. Based on their answers, we want to help you navigate the EU funding maze in the most efficient manner.

### What is this section?

This section aims to support you in finding the most suitable stream(s) of EU funding, whether you are looking to implement projects on specific themes of work or to tackle sector-wide challenges. Additionally, we take the opportunity to explain how the EU defines those themes and challenges.

### What is it not?

This is not all-encompassing and you may have identified 1) other themes that you would like to address through EU-funded projects or 2) other streams of funding that are relevant to your interests.



# You are looking to address...

## ...specific themes of work

### Sustainable Development & Green Transition

The EU defines sustainable development as a development that “meets the needs of the present whilst ensuring future generations can meet their own needs. It has three pillars: economic, environmental and social.”

**Where to look first?** [Horizon Europe](#), [SMP](#), [ERDF](#), [Interreg](#), [Erasmus+](#)

### Social Inclusion

With this term, the EU refers to the social inclusion of people with disabilities, younger and older workers, low-skilled workers, migrants and ethnic minorities such as the Roma, people who live in deprived areas, and women in the labour market.

**Where to look first?** [ESF+](#), [SMP](#), [CERV](#), [AMIF](#), [Erasmus+](#)

### Digitalisation

The EU defines digitalisation as “the ongoing integration of digital technologies and digitised data across the economy and society.”

**Where to look first?** [Digital Europe](#), [Horizon Europe](#), [Erasmus+](#), [ESF+](#)

### Employability & Skills

The EU defines employability as “a combination of factors (such as job-specific skills and soft skills) which enable individuals to progress towards or enter into employment, stay in employment and progress during their careers.”

**Where to look first?** [Erasmus+](#), [SMP](#), [ESF+](#), [ENI](#), [Global Europe](#)

### International Cooperation & Development

The EU works with 150 partner countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, as well as civil society and international organisations. It provides financial aid, facilitates cooperation and conducts research.

**Where to look first?** [Global Europe](#), [AMIF](#), [Horizon Europe](#), [Erasmus+](#)

	ESF+	Horizon Europe	InvestEU	The European Single Market Programme	Erasmus+	Interreg	European Neighbourhood Instrument	European Regional Development Fund	Citizens, Equality, Rights & Values	Global Europe	AMIF	Digital Europe (DIGITAL)	EEA & Norway Grants
Sustainable Development & Green Transition		●		●	●	●		●					
Social Inclusion	●				●				●		●		
Employability & Skills	●			●	●		●		●	●		●	●
Digitalisation	●	●			●								●
International Cooperation & Development		●			●					●	●		

# You are looking to address...

## ...challenges specific to social enterprises and their ecosystem

### Access to skills

There is a specific skills gap when it comes to social entrepreneurs and enterprises, and therefore a need for dedicated training through formal and non-formal education.

**Where to look first?** Erasmus+, SMP, ESF+, Interreg, ENI

### Access to finance

A lack of financial sustainability is often mentioned as one of the main barriers to the creation, development and growth of social enterprises.

**Where to look first?** ESF+, InvestEU, SMP, ERDF

### Access to markets

Developing the capacity to trade with both the public and the private sectors is still considered a challenge for many social enterprises.

**Where to look first?** ESF+, SMP, InvestEU, ERDF

### Access to networks

Networks play a crucial role in social enterprise development, from fostering peer learning to creating critical mass for lobbying public institutions.

**Where to look first?** ESF+, SMP, Interreg, ENI

### Social innovation

For the EU, "social innovations are new ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations. These innovations can be products, services or models addressing unmet needs more effectively."

**Where to look first?** ESF+, SMP, Horizon Europe, Interreg, ENI

	ESF+	Horizon Europe	InvestEU	The European Single Market Programme	Erasmus+	Interreg	European Neighbourhood Instrument	European Regional Development Fund	Citizens, Equality, Rights & Values	Global Europe	AMIF	Digital Europe (DIGITAL)	EEA & Norway Grants
Access to skills	●			●	●	●		●					
Access to finance	●		●	●			●						
Access to markets	●		●	●			●						
Access to networks	●			●		●							

## Good to know

DG Employment and DG GROW often publish ad-hoc calls for proposals that are very relevant to your organisations and your beneficiaries. For that reason, we encourage you to monitor their websites and the [EU calls database](#).

## What has changed with the current EU programming?

**The new EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) - or 'budget' - runs from 2021 to 2027.**

It is therefore interesting to briefly mention the changes that this new MFF brought about. In a nutshell, looking at the programmes that are most relevant to SESOs, the key features to be aware of are:

- The EaSI programme now falls into the ESF+ programme.
- COSME has merged into the Single Market programme, the COSME SME instrument has also been transferred to the InvestEU programme.
- Erasmus+ has remained but has been enlarged, with some important updates linked to the adoption of the Pact for Skills and the need to transition towards more digitalisation and a greener economy.
- Horizon 2020 has become Horizon Europe, with interesting new features including the European Innovation Council.





# European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

More information here



Grants

**Theme** Employment / Skills / Inclusion

**Budget** €99.3 billion

**Managed by** National Agencies

**The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the successor to the European Social Fund (ESF). It is the EU's main instrument to build a stronger social Europe and promote the creation of fair and sustainable employment for all EU citizens. The ESF+ total budget is €99.3 billion for 2021-2027.**

### What has changed?

The ESF+ continues to invest in people, with a strong focus on helping European society face the challenges of recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact. Key elements of the new ESF+ are naturally the triple transition to a green, sustainable and digital economy as well as support for the realisation of the EPSR.

### You heard about ESF Social Innovation+?

Yes, the ESF+ continues to support social innovations with multiple measures. Member States are asked to support social innovation

with ESF funding through specific actions in their own national or regional contexts. Within ESF+, €197 million is dedicated to this new component, which includes EU-wide, multinational projects to develop, replicate and scale up innovative solutions. Multiple initiatives have been planned and are detailed here below.

### IMPORTANT: The ESF+ integrates the former European Social Fund (ESF) but also:

- The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).
- The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).
- The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) – with a dedicated financial budget of €676 million.

### What does it support?

The ESF+ focuses on employment, education and skills as well as social inclusion. It seeks to fund local, regional and national employment and social-innovation related projects

throughout Europe, from small charity initiatives helping people with mental health disorders to find suitable work to nationwide projects providing vocational training for everyone.

### ESF+ has determined six priority areas for the current programming period:

- **Reskilling and upskilling** people for the transition to a green and digital economy. A particular focus is put on supporting young people who have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 crisis to obtain qualifications, find a good quality job and engage in education and training.
- **Helping children in need** with targeted actions to combat child poverty and support the most vulnerable in society, who are suffering from job losses and income reductions, including providing food and basic material assistance to the most deprived.
- **Transnational cooperation for promoting social innovation across the EU.** This is a new initiative that includes EU-wide, multinational projects to develop, replicate and scale up innovative solutions. It is also establishing a European Competence Centre for social innovation that will collect, assess, develop, validate and disseminate suitable tools and methods for social innovation. The initiative offers mutual learning, capacity-building and

networking for ESF Managing Authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

- **Direct support to social innovation through the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand.** It builds on the former EaSI programme of 2014-2020, maintaining the focus on evidence-based policy-making and social experimentation, support for enhanced job mobility and the non-financial instrument activities related to the former Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis. This includes support for analytical activities, capacity-building and transnational/cross-border cooperation to strengthen social protection and social inclusion, fair working conditions, equal access to the labour market, social entrepreneurship and labour mobility.

The ESF+ continues to invest in people with a strong focus on helping European society face the challenges of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and regional disparities across the EU.

ESF+ is also here to make the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality on the ground!

### Who can participate?

The ESF+ offers funding to various types of beneficiaries:

- Public administrations.
- Workers' and employers' organisations.
- NGOs and charities.
- SMEs.

We note that the ESF+Direct (EaSI) strand funding is also open to any legal entity created under Union law or any international organisation.

### Eligible countries

> **ESF+ (all in shared management): all EU Member States**

> **ESF+Direct (EaSI) strand**

- EU Member States (and their overseas countries and territories).
- EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement.
- EU acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidate countries, in line with the framework agreements concluded with them.
- Third countries having signed an agreement to participate in the strand or a third country listed in the EaSI work programme, if necessary for the achievement of the objectives of an action. However, in the latter case, organisations established in such non-EU countries should in principle

bear the cost of their participation.

### How does it work?

The large majority (€98.5 billion) of the ESF+ budget has been allocated under shared management (in partnership) with the Member States. ESF+ Managing Authorities in each country allocate the money to projects, which allows for the funds to be used in the most efficient manner and respond to country and region-specific needs or challenges.

The EaSI strand of ESF+, however, is managed centrally and directly by the EC, which is a new feature of the ESF+.

### Who can I contact?

**The ESF+ funding has shared management with the Member States**

Organisations interested in an ESF+ funding for a project should contact the [ESF+ Managing Authority](#) in their country or region or consult their national and regional ESF/ESF+ websites.

**The ESF+Direct (EaSI) strand is directly managed by the EC**

Organisations interested in the EaSI Strand of the ESF+ can respond to the calls for proposals and tenders that are launched by the EC, which are available on the [EC Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

We note that international organisations implement a small part of the programme under indirect management. To find relevant information, have a look at the [annual work](#)

[programmes](#) which are drafted after consultation with EU Member States and stakeholders.

### Good to know

There is a lot happening with ESF+ and social innovation! Do not miss out!

**Social Innovation Transnational Cooperation Platform**

The platform works as an intermediary platform until the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation is operational, coordinating lessons learned and information sharing between Managing Authorities. Along with social innovation, the platform has been holding a series of cross-cutting events, and also developed the following communities of practice:

- Employment, education and skills.
- Social inclusion.
- Results-based management.

Check it all out [here](#).

**National Competence Centres for social innovation**

Since May 2021 six projects, covering 25 countries and including 148 organisations, have been selected to spend two years building national competence centres for social innovation across nearly all Member States. See the list of selected projects [here](#). These centres will help Managing Authorities to programme and implement social innovation actions, and will also support

organisations on the ground with capacity-building and networking measures.

Check out the Centres' objectives and initial factsheets [here](#).

**The European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) 2022**

This is a very new tool, which provides a comparative analysis of innovation performance in EU countries, other European countries, and regional neighbours. It allows countries to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and identify challenges that they need to address.

Why not use the [EIS tool](#) to contextualise and/or problematise your project proposals!



# Some inspiration

## A National Competence Centre for Social Innovation

**Countries** Spain, Latvia, France and Sweden.

**Lead** Secretary of State for Social Rights of the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, Spain.

**Focus area** Support to social innovators.

**Project name** BuiCaSus.

**Total budget** €1,060,000.

**ESF+ contribution** €850,000.

**Consortium partners** Unidad Administradora del Fondo Social Europeo (Spain), Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030 (Spain), Sabiedrības integrācijas fonda (Latvia), Avise (France), Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (Sweden), Inkludera (Sweden), Reach for Change (Sweden).

The aim of the project is to promote the concept of social innovation in order to set up and strengthen National Competence Centres for Social Innovation.

### Edited and available:

- Analytical grid and methodology for country mapping.
- Mapping of social innovation ecosystems in Sweden, France, Spain.

### Forthcoming:

- Mapping of social innovation ecosystems in Latvia (forthcoming).
- Analytical grid and methodology for defining roadmaps for institutional design of National Competence Centres for Social Innovation.
- Roadmaps for institutional design of National Competence Centres for Social Innovation in Sweden, France, Spain and Latvia (forthcoming).

“The new programming cycle of the ESF+ puts more emphasis on social innovation. BuiCaSuS has helped to clarify concepts and is structuring proposals for institutionalising support at member states level.”

— Patricia Bezunartea,  
Directora General de Diversidad Familiar y Servicios Sociales, Government of Spain

More  
information  
here

## Avise: an ESF+ intermediary organisation

In addition to its activities as an engineering agency for the development of the social and solidarity economy, Avise has been an intermediary body for the ESF at national level since 2004. This mission consists of providing financial support, through calls for projects, to initiatives aimed at creating, maintaining and developing jobs in the SSE.

“For 20 years, Avise has been working to make the European Social Fund (ESF) accessible to SSE structures. As a national ESF intermediate body, Avise mobilises the leverage effect of this funding to enable social innovations to spread across territories, to support the scaling-up of high-impact projects and to improve tools and support for SSE projects, all available on our website [www.avise.org](http://www.avise.org)”

— Cécile Leclair, General Director of Avise

More  
information  
here



# The European Single Market Programme



Grants  
Purchasing services  
Financial instruments

**Theme** Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Finance

**Budget** €4.21 billion

**Managed by** European Commission

The Single Market Programme funds activities that support the good functioning and governance of the EU internal single market. In the current programming period, the programme focuses on Europe's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The total budget of the programme for 2021-2027 is €4.21 billion.

## What has changed with the current MFF?

The Single Market Programme (SMP) brings together several activities that were previously financed through different programmes, namely COSME, the European Statistical Programme (ESP) and Reporting and Auditing. Moreover, it is enhancing consumers' involvement in EU policy-making in the fields of Financial Services, Food and Feed and Consumer Programmes. Former COSME financial instruments have been transferred to the InvestEU programme.

For the purpose of this toolkit, we will focus on the SMP's pillar that looks at supporting SMEs. The SME pillar of the SMP is a continuation of the most impactful actions of the former COSME programme.

## What does it support?

The SME support pillar of the programme provides different types of support to businesses and in particular to SMEs. The general objective is to boost their competitiveness and sustainability. Specific objectives of the programme include:

- Facilitating access to markets.
- Promoting entrepreneurship and the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.
- Promoting the modernisation of industry and addressing global and societal challenges.

The Single Market Programme brings together several activities that were previously financed under various programmes.

The SMP supports SMEs through five tools:

- **Enterprise Europe Network**, which provides an integrated package of advice to SMEs on how to innovate, be more sustainable and resilient and access international markets.
- **SME envoy network** to promote SME-friendly regulation and policy-making at EU and national levels.
- **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs**, which promotes the creation of new businesses and skills development through business mentoring.
- **Joint cluster initiatives**, which comprise a set of new actions involving industrial clusters. These are groups of specialised enterprises, often SMEs, and other related supporting actors in a location that cooperate closely.
- Other actions covering this objective of the SMP and implementing the **EU SME strategy**.

## Who can participate?

The SMP's SME support pillar offers funding to:

- Civil society organisations.
- SMEs.
- Local, regional, or national authorities.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders.

## Eligible countries

- EU Member States.
- Iceland.
- Norway.
- Lichtenstein.

**Acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates:**

- Kosovo.
- Montenegro.
- Serbia.
- Türkiye.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- North Macedonia.
- Ukraine.

More information here

### How does it work?

In the case of the SME support pillar of the SMP, the EC offers funding through grants and tenders. They are, for the most part, launched and managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) on behalf of DG GROW.

### Grants

EISMEA and DG GROW give organisations the opportunity to bid for grants through calls for proposals.

**Frequency of calls for proposals:** ongoing

**Requirements:** consortium-based

**Where to find the calls:** click [here](#)

### Zooming in...

#### Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme

This is a cross-border programme promoting the exchange of entrepreneurial and management experience. The exchange entails a newly-established or potential entrepreneur visiting another country to learn from an experienced entrepreneur running a SME. Between 2009 and 2022, more than 10.7k exchanges have been established. Only organisations willing to coordinate exchanges can respond to calls for proposals (if successful, they are called Intermediary Organisations or IOs). Individual entrepreneurs who wish to participate in the programme should do so by applying directly to the Intermediary Organisations or local contact points in their country. Learn more about Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs [here](#).

**Frequency of calls:** every two years.

**Co-financing rate:** up to 90%.

**Consortia requirements:** minimum five partners from four different countries.

**Where to find the calls:** click [here](#).

### Tenders

EISMEA and DG GROW invite organisations to tender for EU public contracts to deliver works, supply or service contracts.

**Frequency of calls for tender:** ongoing.

**Requirements:** depending on the call, sole applicants or consortia are eligible

**Where to find the calls:** click [here](#).

### Who can I contact?

Calls for proposals and for tenders are published and managed centrally by EISMEA (and DG GROW). Organisations interested in the SME support pillar of the SMP can respond to the calls for proposals and tenders that are launched via the [EC Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

### Good to know

There is also a lot happening within the SMP for social entrepreneurship! Do not miss out!



### The European Cluster Collaboration Platform & Social Economy Clusters

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform is the European online hub for industry clusters, available [here](#).

The social economy clusters or “Clusters of social and ecological innovation” are “Groups of social economy enterprises and other related supporting and economic actors that cooperate in a particular location to increase their joint social and ecological impact by enhancing their cooperation, pooling resources and innovation capacity.”

To find out more about Social Economy clusters, check out the work of the GECES and this [article](#) by Euclid Network.

### The European Social Economy Regions & the Social Economy Missions

Launched in February 2018, the European Social Economy Regions (ESER) initiative was a response of the EC to the growing need of increasing the visibility of the social economy and building networks of stakeholders at regional and local levels. Between 2018 and 2020 EISMEA ran an annual ESER scheme, which was based on a series of awareness-raising events on the social economy being rolled-out in the course of the year in participating regions and cities. The EC was not, however, providing any financial support to regional/local events. More info [here](#).

Building on this initiative, EISMEA launched in 2020 and in 2021 the ‘Social Economy Missions’ (SEM) calls for proposals. The SEMs’ objectives are to build resilience and increase the capacity of regional or local public

administrations, social economy, SMEs and civil society to overcome difficulties and crises. They seek to develop transnational and inter-regional collaboration, boost peer-learning and share good practices between social economy stakeholders, including enterprises.

**The European Social Innovation Competition (EUSIC) has been running yearly since 2013 and is a flagship European initiative for social innovators.**



### The European Social Innovation competition

The European Social Innovation Competition (EUSIC) has been running yearly since 2013 and is a flagship European initiative for social innovators. EUSIC runs across all EU countries as well as Horizon Europe-associated countries, with the [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#) in the lead. Each year the competition leads to three awards in the category 'Challenge Prizes' and to one in the 'Impact Prize' category for the best socially-innovative projects for a more inclusive, just and sustainable Europe. In 2022 each winner received €50,000. All semi-finalists and finalists get access to training and visibility. The 2022 theme was: 'the future of living, innovation for affordable and sustainable housing districts'.

Under the 2021 EUSIC challenge, the consortium (consisting of Nesta Challenges, Euclid Network, GOPA.Com and Ashoka Spain) developed a tailored funding toolkit for early-stage innovators, available [here](#). This is a tremendous resource for you to share with your beneficiaries!

More about the competition [here](#) and in the [EIC work programme](#) for 2022.

## Some inspiration

More information here

### Erasmus for social entrepreneurs

**Countries** France, Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Germany, The Netherlands.

**Focus areas** Entrepreneurial skills, on-the-job mentoring.

**Project name** Social Entrepreneurs Exchange Development Plus 2 (SEEDplus2).

**Timeline** 2019-2023.

**Budget** €1,915,095,62.

**EC contribution** €1,653,038,86.

This project brought together aspiring and experienced social entrepreneurs to learn from each other (as part of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme).

The programme provided funding for would-be social entrepreneurs to spend 1-6 months in another European country collaborating with and job-shadowing an experienced social entrepreneur. For new entrepreneurs, this was a great opportunity to learn from the best and fine-tune their business case. For host entrepreneurs, the programme offered a unique chance to get a fresh perspective, gain access to international markets and help social enterprise grow in Europe.

More information [here](#).



Grants  
Purchasing services

**Theme** Employment/ Skills/ Cross-border cooperation

**Budget** €26.2 billion

**Managed by** National Agencies

**Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. For the period of 2014-2020, it provided studying, training and volunteering opportunities to over 4 million Europeans. For 2021-2027, it offers even more opportunities through a total budget of €26.2 billion. The EC's DG for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture is responsible for running this programme.**

### What has changed?

For 2021-2027, Erasmus+ has adapted to global challenges and to the Covid-19 pandemic by embedding three key priorities:

- **Inclusion & diversity:** Further stress on reaching people with fewer opportunities (due to socio-economic or to geographical constraints). This concerns people of all ages and backgrounds, people with

disabilities, early school leavers, unemployed, people living in remote areas, victims of exclusion and/or discrimination, etc.

- **Digital:** Increased access to digital learning, development of digital skills and hybrid programmes.
- **Green:** Cross-cutting topic supporting the ecological transition, building understanding and competences related to sustainability.

### What does it support?

The current Erasmus+ programme is made up of three key actions.

- **Key Action 1:** Mobility of individuals. This is about providing opportunities for individuals (students and staff) to improve their skills, enhance their employability and gain cultural awareness.

- **Key Action 2:** Cooperation among organisations and institutions. This is about enabling organisations and institutions to work together and create partnerships in order to improve their provisions for learners and share innovative and good practices.
- **Key Action 3:** Support to policy development and cooperation. This covers any activity helping to support public policy reform and modernise education and training systems.

### As an organisation, Erasmus+ may help you to implement:

- Networking activities.
- Strategic development of your staff's skills.
- Organisational capacity-building transnational partnerships.
- Exchanges of best practices.
- Concrete projects.

In this toolkit we focus on Key Action 2, which is probably the most relevant stream of funding for your organisations and your beneficiaries. Keep an eye out for Key Actions 1 and 3 though, as your beneficiaries might want to get involved!

### Key Action 2 - Cooperation among organisations and institutions

Key Action 2 includes various strands of funding such as:

- **Partnerships for Cooperation.**
- **Partnerships for Excellence.**
- **Partnerships for Innovation.**

### Partnerships for Cooperation include:

- **Cooperation Partnerships:** Seeking to increase the quality and relevance of the organisations' activities, to develop and reinforce networks of partners, to increase capacity to operate jointly at a transnational level, to boost internationalisation of activities, to exchange or develop new practices and methods and to share or examine ideas.
- **Small-scale Partnerships (new!):** Aiming at widening access to the programme for small-scale actors, grassroots organisations, newcomers and individuals who are hard to reach in the fields of school education, adult education, vocational education and training, youth and sport.
  - > Lower grant amounts.
  - > Shorter duration.
  - > Simpler administrative requirements than Cooperation Partnerships.

### Partnerships for Excellence include:

- **European Universities:** supporting the emergence of bottom-up networks of higher education institutions, which will bring cross-border cooperation to the next level of ambition, through the development of joint long-term strategies for top-quality

education, research and innovation based on a common vision and shared values.

- **Centres for Vocational Excellence:** Supporting the development of transnational platforms for centres of vocational excellence closely integrated in local and regional strategies for growth, innovation and competitiveness, while supporting overall structural changes and economic policies in the European Union.
- **Erasmus+ Teacher Academies:** Creating European partnerships of teacher education and training providers to set up Erasmus+ Teacher Academies that will develop a European and international outlook in teacher education.

#### Partnerships for Innovation include:

- **Alliances for Innovation:** Fostering strategic cooperation between key players in higher education and vocational education and training, business and research to boost innovation and modernisation of education and training systems. Alliances need to identify and supply the right set of skills, knowledge and competences to match the future labour market demand in sectors and fields that are strategic for Europe's sustainable growth and competitiveness.
- **Forward-looking Projects:** Fostering innovation, creativity and e-participation, as well as social entrepreneurship, in different fields of education, training, youth and sport. It will support forward-looking ideas for improving education and training, youth

and sport systems; it will also bring a substantial innovative effect, through new methods and practices, to all types of learning and active participation settings for Europe's social cohesion.

- **Capacity-building projects in the field of youth:** Supporting cooperation and exchange in the field of youth between Programme and Partner Country organisations that cover non-formal learning activities, with a focus on raising the capacity of organisations working with young people outside formal learning while ensuring the active participation of young people.

**The Erasmus+ programme offers funding to organisations through calls for tenders and grants.**

#### Eligible countries

- EU Member States.
- North Macedonia.
- Iceland.
- Liechtenstein.
- Norway.
- Turkey.
- Republic of Serbia.
- Partner countries.

Eligible countries are divided into two groups: programme countries and partner countries. More information on eligibility [here](#).

**Beware:** The eligibility of individuals and organisations depends on the country in which they are based!

The Erasmus+ programme offers funding to organisations through calls for tenders and grants. While the EC manages Erasmus+, it does not implement the programme directly. [The Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency \(EACEA\)](#) is responsible for Erasmus+ implementation at European level, while at the national level this is done by national agencies in programme countries and national offices in some partner countries (list available [here](#)).

#### How does it work?

Organisations should submit applications online to the [National Agency](#) in the relevant country, via the [Erasmus+ forms website](#), or to the [EACEA](#).

#### Grants

General and specific calls for proposals are published by the EC, the EACEA, or the National Agency. Every year an [annual work programme](#) is published which outlines the priorities for that year.

**Frequency of calls:** Ongoing.

**Co-financing rate:**

**Key action 1:** Up to 80%.

**Key actions 2 and 3:** Up to 100%.

**Consortia requirements:** Depending on the call, sole applicants or consortia are eligible.

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

#### Tenders

The Erasmus+ programme also includes actions implemented via calls for tender, or through works, supply or service contracts.

**Frequency of the calls:** Ongoing.

**Requirement:** Depending on the call, sole applicants or consortia are eligible.

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

#### Who can I contact?

The Erasmus+ programme is implemented by the [EACEA](#), by national agencies in programme countries, and by national offices in some partner countries (list available [here](#)).

Outside the EU, in partner countries participating in Erasmus+ in the area of higher education, most of the work of the national agencies is carried out by [National Erasmus+ Offices](#).

#### Good to know

Online platforms such as [eTwinning](#), [the EPALE](#), the [School Education Gateway \(SEG\)](#) and the [European Youth Portal](#) offer virtual collaboration spaces, partner-finding databases, communities of practice and other online services for:

- Teachers.
- Trainers.
- Youth workers.
- Policy-makers and other practitioners.
- Pupils.
- Young people.
- Adult learners in Europe and beyond.

# Some inspiration

To find potential partners to team up with for Erasmus+ projects, check EPALE, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe.

## More information

Your national agency's website - find out which one is yours [here](#)!

To find potential partners to team up with for Erasmus+ projects, check EPALE, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe. EPALE exists in multiple languages and is a community for teachers, trainers, researchers, academics, policy-makers and anyone else with a professional role in adult learning across Europe. Click [here](#).

Communities of practice are available [here](#).

## Empowerneurship for Newcomers in Europe

More information here

**Countries:** Norway, Greece, Italy, Austria, Cyprus.

**Lead beneficiary:** Oslo International Hub (NO).

**Focus area:** Development of competences for adult trainers supporting migrants.

**Timeline:** 2021-2024.

**Total budget:** €312,415.

**EC contribution:** €312,415.

**Consortium partners:** Oslo International Hub (coordinator), Systematically Designed (Norway), Academy of Entrepreneurship (Greece), PRISM (Italy), Glocal Factory (Italy), BEST (Austria), SYNTHESIS (Cyprus).

The aim of the project is to make self-employment a viable option for migrants and displaced people in transition in Europe, and also for those who wish to return to their country of origin, through extending and developing the competencies of educators and other personnel who support adult learners to directly empower and support the up-skilling of persons with a migration background towards becoming the sources of entrepreneurship training for others in their communities.

## Open Business for Community Development (OBCD)

More information here

**Countries** Greece, Italy, Spain and Finland.

**Lead** University of Patras (Greece).

**Focus areas** Open business, research, curricula to address skills gaps for social enterprise professionals (higher education and vocational training), social enterprise ecosystems, innovation, incubator pilot.

**Project name** Open Business for Community Development (OBCD).

**Timeline** June 2022-May 2025.

**Budget** €1,843,643.

**EC contribution** €1,474,914.

**Consortium partners** Development Agency of Karditsa (ANKA), Associazione Generale Cooperative Italiane (AGCI), Base3, Helsinki Business College (BCH), Cámara de Comercio Italiana (CCIB), Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (DIAK), Euclid Network (EN), Olympic Training & Consulting (OT), Spanish Representative Platform for People with Physical Disabilities (PREDIF), Silta-Valmennusyhdistys Ry (Silta), University of Patras (UPatras), University of Tor Vergata (UTV), University of Valladolid (UVA).

OBCD seeks to research, identify and address skills gaps among (current and aspiring) social entrepreneurs by creating and testing new curricula (with a particular focus on open business principles) at the levels of vocational and higher education. The project will also establish social enterprise ecosystems involving diverse stakeholder groups, and develop a local incubator pilot to support the growth of social enterprises.

## EU3Digital

More information here

**Countries** Portugal, Spain, Croatia, UK and the Netherlands.

**Lead** Eslider Portugal.

**Focus area** Digital skills and competences for social enterprises.

**Project name** EU3Digital.

**Timeline** 2020-2023.

**Budget** €288,958.

**EC contribution** €288,958.

**Consortium partners** ABD Associació Benestar i Desenvolupament, DKolektiv, Euclid Network, The Open University, University of Porto.

EU3Digital aims to gather and develop learning resources for third sector organisations and social enterprises to increase individuals' and organisations' digital competences. The EU3Digital outputs serve to support them in advancing their digital strategies, engaging with existing digital support and software, and building capacity.



# INTERREG - European Territorial Cooperation

More information here



Grants

**Theme** Cross-border collaboration

**Budget** €4.21 billion

**Managed by** National Agencies

**Interreg forms part of European cohesion policy. The programme facilitates the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States. The total budget of Interreg 2021-2027 is €7.95 billion.**

The core objective of the programme is to promote a sustainable and harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the EU. Interreg consists in four strands of cooperation:

- Cross-border (Interreg A).
- Transnational (Interreg B).
- Interregional (Interreg C).
- The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) (within Cross - Border Cooperation).
- European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) (within Cross - Border Cooperation).

## What has changed with the current MFF?

**The Interreg programme has evolved in the following ways:**

- More resources are expected to be spent on climate action and social programmes, including public health.
- Increased support for small projects and people-to-people projects: up to 20% within an Interreg programme may be allocated to small project funds.
- Pre-financing levels (funds made available to Member States following the approval of the Interreg programmes) are set at 3% for the years 2023 to 2026, resulting in more liquidity for programmes.
- The co-financing rate from ERDF of 80% is being set up with higher rates for cooperation at the EU external borders.

## What does it support?

Interreg supports the following types of actions (or “strands”):

- **Cross-border cooperation** between adjacent regions to promote integrated and harmonious regional development.

**This includes:**

**Interreg A**, which supports cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them.

**Interreg IPA CBC**, which supports cross-border cooperation between candidate countries, potential candidate countries and EU Member States to contribute to their accession preparations, with a territorial and cross-border focus.

**The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)**, which with 15 programmes, covers 12 land borders, one sea crossing and three sea basins, stretching from Finland and Russia in the north, to countries like Hungary and Ukraine in the east, and Italy, Northern Africa and the Middle East in the south. (see next chapter)

- **Transnational cooperation** over larger transnational territories or around sea-basins (Interreg B). It involves regions from several countries forming bigger areas where it aims to promote regional development and better cooperation within the Union in tackling common issues.

- **Interregional cooperation** to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy ‘or Interreg C’ includes the following programmes: Interreg Europe, Interact, Urbact and Espon. These interregional programmes are geographically “pan-European”, covering vast areas.

## Who can participate?

Interreg’s core target group is any organisation responsible for regional development policy: national, regional, or local public authorities in addition to other relevant bodies responsible for developing and/or implementing regional development policies. This includes job creation and growth programmes in the thematic fields addressed by the programme.

**Interreg’s core target group is any organisation responsible for regional development policy.**

The programme also targets other types of organisations provided that their relevance and competence in regional development policy can be demonstrated. These include for instance, (not exhaustive):

- Business support organisations (e.g. development agencies, innovation agencies, chambers of commerce, clusters).
- Environmental organisations (e.g. environmental agencies, energy agencies, NGOs).
- Education and research institutions (e.g. universities, research centres).
- Other organisations of relevance to regional development policies.

### Eligible countries

- EU Member States.
- Switzerland.
- Norway.

### How does it work?

In this toolkit we focus on two streams of action of INTERREG:

#### 1. Transnational cooperation (Interreg B)

This stream involves regions (created by several EU countries forming bigger areas) and seeks to promote the best possible cooperation and regional development through a joint approach to tackle common issues. Interreg B supports a wide range of project investments related to innovation,

environment, accessibility, telecommunications and urban development, amongst other topics. The programmes here look at adding the extra European dimension to regional development.

#### 2. Interregional cooperation (Interreg C)

The programme supports interregional cooperation projects between regional policy actors. An interregional cooperation project is a project in which partners from at least three different countries work together on a shared regional policy issue by exchanging their experiences and practices in order to integrate the lessons learnt from this cooperation into their policies. It builds on the experience of the participating regions and focuses on the identification, analysis and transfer of good practices and policy experiences among these regions.

- Interregional cooperation projects are partnerships between policy organisations from different countries in Europe, who work together for 3-5 years to exchange experiences on a particular policy issue. Each region involved in the cooperation project produces an action plan, specifying what will be done in the region to ensure that lessons learned are put into action. Project participants are also required to monitor the progress of their action plans. Calls for project proposals are launched throughout the programming period.
- The Policy Learning Platform is an online space for continuous learning, where any organisation dealing with regional development policies in Europe can find solutions and request expert support to improve the way they manage and implement their



public policies on the four Interreg topics listed above (more on this below!).

**Frequency of calls:** Once a year.

**Average total budget of projects:** €1-2 million.

**Co-financing rate:** 75% to 85%.

**Consortia requirements:** At least three countries represented, at least two EU Member States.

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

### Who can I contact?

[Interreg Europe Contact](#) points are based in all EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway.

### Good to know

#### Policy Learning Platform

The Policy Learning Platform is a service for project partners and for any organisations involved in regional policy around Europe to promote continuous policy learning and capitalise on good regional policy practices. The Platform consists of:

- An international team of experts specialised in the thematic policy fields addressed by the programmes' investment priorities, contracted to organise activities and provide information and support to the regions of Europe for improving the planning and implementation of their policies.

- An interactive web interface designed to facilitate networking, information sharing and knowledge management and exchange. Actors dealing with regional development policies in Europe can find information and analysis on the thematic policy fields addressed by the programme's investment priorities, thematic reports and publications, as well as a database of the relevant practices and results from interregional cooperation projects.

More [here](#).

**Those interested can join the Interreg Europe community to connect with potential project partners.**

Explore all existing Interreg programmes and projects through this [link](#). As for Interreg Europe, you can use the community to search for partners for your project idea, or to find ideas (have a look at the [project idea and partner search page](#)). The recently [approved projects](#) might also offer some inspiration.



## Some inspiration

More information here

### Enter to Transform - Transformational Entrepreneurship Hubs for Recognized Refugee Re-starters

**Countries** The Netherlands, Germany, France, Ireland.

**Lead** University of Twente.

**Consortium partner** Newest Art Organisation, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Institute for Work and Technology, Westphalian University Gelsenkirchen, GROUPE SOS Pulse, Machbarschaft Borsig11 e.V., The World Makers Foundation, Carlow Institute of Technology, Train of Hope Dortmund e.V., Institut für Kirche und Gesellschaft der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen, La Ruche Development, Forschungsinstitut für innovative Arbeitsgestaltung und Prävention (FIAP e.V.).

**Focus area** Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

**Timeline** 2020-2023.

**Budget** €2.14 million.

**EC contribution** €1.28 million.

The project offers a social innovation addressing RR re-starters to become ready for business creation. RRs with business experiences in their home country have a huge potential to restart but need specific mentoring to adapt to the NWE economy. The project develops a supportive environment of hubs, which function through mentoring as "door opener" for RR re-starters to enter existing entrepreneurial infrastructure. By door opening the project avoids parallel structures, but introduces RRs to how, through whom and where to get the tools they need to restart.

More information here

### Interregional cooperation for improved social enterprise business support

**Countries** Spain, Hungary, Romania, Ireland, Italy.

**Lead** Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness (ACCIO), Spain (Catalonia)

**Focus area** Enhancing social enterprises' competitiveness through improved business support policies.

**Project name** RaiSE.

**Timeline** 2017 - 2021.

**Budget** €1,720,552.

**EC Contribution** €1,462,469.

RaiSE brings together six pro-active regions and one advisory partner to address the common challenge of enhancing competitiveness of social enterprises. Every region has first developed an 'Action Plan' that should: 1) foster improvements in the policy instruments selected; 2) deliver new and enhanced services, such as better training or new funding policies; and 3) lead to better governance, engaging multiple stakeholders in policy development and implementation. In a second part of the project the Action Plans are implemented and monitored.



# European Neighbourhood Instrument

More information here



Grants

**Theme** Cooperation with neighbouring countries

**Budget** Specific to each of the 15 programmes

**Managed by** National Managing Authorities

**The European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation (ENI CBC) is one of the EU's tools to cooperate with its neighbouring countries in order to:**

- Promote economic and social development in regions on both sides of common borders.
- Address common challenges in environment, public health, safety and security.
- Promote better conditions for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capital.

### What has changed with the current MFF?

The ENI CBC is the successor of the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), which funded 1000 projects between 2014 and 2020.

### What does it support?

CBC partnerships look at identifying common issues and solutions and jointly implementing the actions for the benefit of regions on both sides of a border, and lead to concrete, positive change with regards to the issues.

The instrument covers 12 land borders, one sea crossing and three sea basins, stretching from Finland to Ukraine, from Italy to Northern Africa and the Middle East. Concretely, ENI CBC includes 15 programmes within which calls for proposals are published. The programmes are divided as follows:



1. Black Sea Basin.
2. Estonia-Russia\*.
3. Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine.
4. Italy-Tunisia.
5. Karelia.
6. Kolarctic.
7. Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus\*.
8. Latvia-Russia\*.
9. Lithuania-Russia\*.
10. Mediterranean Sea Basin.
11. Poland-Belarus-Ukraine\*.
12. Poland-Russia\*.
13. Romania-Republic of Moldova.
14. Romania-Ukraine.
15. South-East Finland-Russia\*.

Check out each programme's details [here](#).

### Who can participate?

Eligible organisations include:

- Local and Regional authorities.
- Federations/Unions/Chambers of Commerce.
- State Administrations.
- Development NGOs, International NGOs.
- Associations.
- SMEs.
- Universities.

### How does it work?

Each of the 15 programmes is designed around 4 of the 11 themes identified by the instrument:

- Business and SME development.
- Support to education, research, technological development and innovation.
- Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage.
- Promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty.
- Support for local and regional good governance.
- Environmental protection, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Improvement of regional accessibility, as well as development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems.
- Common challenges in the field of safety and security.
- Promotion of and cooperation on sustainable energy and energy security.
- Promotion of border management, border security and mobility.
- Other areas likely to have a substantial cross-border impact.

Within these thematic objectives detailed programming is the task of the programme partners themselves, at the local, regional and national level. These partners have to analyse relevant needs to come up with their specific objectives and priorities, based on the local context, and propose these to the European Commission. Within each programme, calls for proposals are then published.

**Frequency of the calls:** Varies per programme.

**Co-financing rate:** Up to 90%.

**Consortia requirements:** At least one partner from a Member State and one from an ENI Partner Country or Russia. Turkey, which participates in the Black Sea Basin programme with accession funds, must have at least one partner from each.

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

### Who can I contact?

- Your local managing authority - check out who they are for each programme by clicking [here](#).
- The [Technical Assistance](#).

### Good to know

You can access databases to find potential project partners [here](#).

An [Online learning platform](#) on Cross-Border Cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Instrument is available!

The programme has a dedicated project to provide technical assistance to all programmes called the '[Technical Support to the Implementation and Management](#)' (TESIM).

## Some inspiration

More information here & here

### Creating opportunities for youth on both sides of a border & helping refugees

**ENI programme** Romania-Ukraine.

**Countries** Romania, Ukraine.

**Focus area** Youth/Preventing early school drop-out/Cross-border high-schools cooperation.

**Project name** SMART4YOUTH.

**Timeline** 2020-2022.

**Consortium partners** ACDC Romania, Bukovynian Art Center for Revival and Promotion of the Romanian Traditional Culture Development, "Oltea Doamna" Technological High School, Higher Vocational Art School N0 5 Of Chernivtsi.

The project's main objective was to develop and implement specific joint programmes aimed at preventing early school leaving amongst young people at risk, between 14 and 20 years old. The activities include integrative assistance programmes, training, teachers and pupils' exchanges and the development of innovative extracurricular activities. The project seeks to boost collaboration with NGOs and create opportunities for non-formal education. With the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, a volunteer support service was set up in Romania by the SMART4YOUTH project to assist partners in their escape and resettlement.



# Some inspiration

## Making oil-making more profitable and sustainable across the Med

**ENI programme** Mediterranean Sea Basin.

**Countries** Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Greece, Cyprus, Spain, France.

**Focus area** Sustainable and profitable oil making / SME development / Artisan Employment.

**Project name** ARTOLIO.

**Timeline** 2020–2023.

**Budget** €2.9 million.

**EC contribution** €2.6 million.

Agricultural Research Organization, Beit Hakerem Clusters, National Agricultural Research Center, Palestinian Centre for Agriculture Research and Development, American Farm School Post-Secondary Educational and Training Association, Hellenic Agricultural Organization DEMETER/ Institute of Olive Tree, Department of Agriculture – Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Center for Advanced Studies in Olive Grove and Olive Oils, University of Corsica, Kellenfol Advertising S.L.

ARTOLIO seeks to establish, in each participating region, a Native Olive Regional Knowledge Center (NOReKC) which will provide up-to-date training on how an artisanal Mediterranean extra-virgin oil (EVOO) should be produced in order to remain competitive, and defines a networking management model for artisanal EVOO through a Pan-Mediterranean Platform comprising all NOReKC. The platform will assist producers across the Mediterranean region in marketing, sales, finance, policy and legislation, at national level and in entering new global markets.

More  
information  
here



\*The information contained on the EU's webpages referred to here which concerns cooperation with Russia and Belarus was included before 24 February 2022. The EU has specified that "following the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the European Commission has suspended the cooperation with Russia and Belarus in the European Neighbourhood Instrument cross-border cooperation programmes."



# Horizon Europe

More information here



Grants

**Theme** Innovation / Cross-border cooperation

**Budget** €95.5 billion

**Managed by** European Commission

**Horizon Europe is the successor of Horizon 2020 and is the biggest EU research and innovation programme ever. For 2021-2027, its budget has been increased from €80 billion to €95.5 billion. It aims to ensure that Europe produces world-class science, to remove barriers to innovation and to make it easier for the public and private sectors to innovate together.**

### What has changed with the current MFF?

Although, in many respects, Horizon Europe remains very similar to its predecessor, there are a few new elements to the programme:

- **The European Innovation Council** supports innovations with a disruptive nature and potential for scaling and generating breakthroughs that may be too risky for private investors.
- **Horizon Europe Missions** are sets of measures that aim to contribute to one of the following mission areas: adaptation to Climate Change; Cancer; Restore our oceans and waters; Climate neutral and smart cities; Soil Deal for Europe.
- **The Open Science Policy**, which means mandatory open access to publications and open science principles must be applied throughout the programme.



### What does it support?

Horizon Europe seeks to:

- Tackle climate change.
- Contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Boost the EU's competitiveness and growth.
- Facilitate collaboration and strengthen the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies.
- Support the creation and better diffusion of excellent knowledge and technologies.
- Create jobs, boost economic growth, promote industrial competitiveness and optimise investment impact.

Horizon Europe is composed of three main pillars as well as one specific programme (European Defence Fund) and the Euratom programme. The most relevant pillars for your organisations and your beneficiaries are the following:

- **Pillar II:** Global challenges & European industrial competitiveness (€53.5 billion): It covers the themes of 1) Health, Culture, creativity & Inclusive Society; 2) Civil Security for Society; 3) Digital, Industry & Space; 4) Climate, Energy & Mobility; 5) Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment.

- **Pillar III:** Innovative Europe (€3.6 billion): It includes the [European Innovation Council](#), the [European Innovation Ecosystems](#) and the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#).

### Who can participate?

EU Member States and a large number of Associated countries - find the list here. Make sure you look regularly as it can change!

### How does it work?

Funding opportunities are set out in [work programmes](#), which cover the large majority of support available.

The main work programme covers:

- Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and research infrastructures under Pillar I.
- All clusters under Pillar II.
- European innovation ecosystems under Pillar III.
- The part strengthening and widening participation in the European Research Area.

Other work programmes cover:

- European Research Council (ERC).
- Joint Research Centre (JRC).
- EIC.

**Frequency of the calls:** Ongoing.

**Co-financing rate:** 70% to 100%.

**Consortia requirements:** Most funding is allocated to collaborative research projects carried out by consortia of at least three organisations.

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

### Who can I contact?

The network of [National Contact Points](#) (NCPs) provides guidance, practical information and assistance on participating in Horizon 2020. There are also NCPs in many non-EU and non-associated countries ('third countries').

You can find all opportunities via the [Funding and Tenders portal](#).

### Good to know

**With Horizon Europe, the EC sought to simplify some rules**

- Simplified forms of funding (flat rates, unit costs, lump sums, prizes) including ongoing pilots on lump sum project funding.
- Simpler rules for personnel costs with rules based on daily rates.
- An integrated dissemination and exploitation ecosystem that provides more support and guidance to participants, with the aim to enhance the value creation of the research and innovation investment.

# Some inspiration

## POSITIVE

**Countries** Germany, Lithuania, Italy.

**Lead** Steinbeis Europa Zentrum (Germany).

**Focus area** Connecting social innovation and traditional ecosystems.

**Project name** POSITIVE (Participatory Open Social Innovation Through Interlinking Valuable Ecosystems).

**Timeline** 2023-2024.

**Budget** €499,982,81.

**EC contribution** €499,982,81.

**Consortium partners** Steinbeis Europa Zentrum (DE), Hub Innovazione Trentino (IT), Lithuanian Innovation Centre (LT), Gruenhof e.V. (DE), Trentino Social Tank (IT), Lithuanian Social Business Association (LT).

Social innovation actors take on an important role in finding solutions for societal challenges. However, many social enterprises lack entrepreneurial skills and digitisation of their products or services and there is still a lack of support for social entrepreneurs, which is due to the fact that many business support organisations have little understanding of the specific challenges and needs of social entrepreneurs. The social innovation and the technology innovation ecosystems are currently not well interconnected and are mostly considered separate ecosystems with different skillsets.

The POSITIVE project will counteract these factors by raising awareness about the benefits of social innovation and providing capacity-building for social innovation and social entrepreneurship to the tech innovation ecosystem, thus creating the basis for better support for social entrepreneurs and a more inclusive innovation ecosystem based on mutual understanding. The project will also provide new opportunities for social entrepreneurs to digitise their products and services and to acquire new business skills through the organisation of an Open Innovation Challenge in three countries (POSITIVE Impact Challenge), which constitutes knowledge transfer from the tech into the social innovation ecosystem, with the specific purpose of supporting regional SI actors to access alternative means of financing.

The POSITIVE project will also foster the interlinkage of the two ecosystems on a regional and European level through cross-fertilization, knowledge exchange and policy recommendations on how the POSITIVE Impact Challenge model can be replicated. Thus, the POSITIVE project can not only contribute to the strengthening of the social economy on different levels, but can also make the tech innovation ecosystem more resilient and equipped to tackle important societal challenges by including social innovation actors.

# Some inspiration

## European Partnership on Innovative SMEs

**Countries** Almost all countries of the European continent as well as international members such as Israel, Turkey, Korea, Canada, Singapore, South Africa, Argentina and Chile.

**Lead Association** D'Eureka (Belgium).

**Focus area** SMEs, access to international cooperation.

**Project name** InnovativeSMEs.

**Timeline** 2021-2027.

**Budget** €232,146,760,50.

**EC contribution** €69,644,027,12.

The Innovative SMEs project comprises two main instruments (Eurostars 3 and Innowide) as well as measures to connect to existing EU programs, initiatives and other European partnerships. As some of the biggest challenges for innovative SMEs accessing international cooperation and entering international markets, as well as developing the ability to receive funding, E\*3 through its coordination of national innovation programs will in addition support the further development of a European Research Area. The Eureka Secretariat will organise two joint transnational calls per year for E\*3 and one call per year for Innowide. National Innovation Agencies actively support the implementation of E\*3 via national funding and support measures as well as services to applicants and promotion of the program.

More  
information  
here

## Promoting & Supporting Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership

The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is a body of the EU and is part of the Horizon Europe programme. EIT is key to supporting various EU policies towards sustainable growth. One of the policies it seeks to enhance is gender equality. The objective is to empower women entrepreneurs and nurture women leaders by increasing the number of girls aged 12 to 18 interested in technology, innovation, digitalisation, entrepreneurship and leadership. In order to make this happen, the EIT is:

- Supporting a cooperation platform that implements women entrepreneurship and leadership activities.
- Linking to EIT Alumni and EIT Community activities, such as INNOVEIT.
- Disseminating success stories to encourage the empowerment of girls and women across Europe.
- Implementing the EIT Woman Award for women innovators.

More  
information  
here





# InvestEU

More information here

## Financial instruments

**Theme** Sustainable investment / innovation / job creation

**Budget** €372 billion

**Managed by** EIB Group and implementing partners

**The InvestEU Programme builds on the Investment Plan for Europe (or ‘Juncker Plan’) and brings together the European Fund for Strategic Investments and 13 other EU financial instruments. With over €372 billion in additional investment over the period of 2021-27, the programme aims to give an additional boost to sustainable investment, innovation and job creation in Europe.**

### What has changed with the current MFF?

It is a new programme!

### What does it support?

The InvestEU Programme includes three components, which are:

- 1. The InvestEU Fund:** Mobilising over €372 billion of public and private investment through an EU budget guarantee of €26.2 billion. This guarantee is meant to back the investment of ‘implementing partners’ such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group.
- 2. The InvestEU Advisory Hub:** Providing technical support and assistance to help with the preparation, development, structuring and implementation of investment projects, including capacity-building.
- 3. The InvestEU Portal:** Bringing together investors and project promoters on a single platform, providing an easily-accessible database of investment opportunities.

### Who can participate?

The InvestEU Fund is implemented via the selected financial partners or ‘implementing partners,’ the main one being EIB Group, which holds the responsibility of implementing 75% of the EU Guarantee. The implementing partners then provide direct and intermediated financing solutions for both private and public project promoters (‘final recipients’).

The eligible final recipients can be natural or legal persons established in an EU country or in a Third Eligible Country, including:

- Private entities.
- Public sector entities and public sector-type entities.
- Mixed entities, such as public-private partnership (PPPs) and private companies with a public purpose.
- Non-profit organisations.



**How does it work?**

For the InvestEU Fund: implementing partners in the countries will offer tailor-made financing solutions to project holders. The [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#) is there to support in identifying, preparing and developing investment projects. It is complemented by an online matchmaking tool which is the [InvestEU Portal](#).

**Who can I contact?**

**To benefit from the InvestEU Fund**, SMEs, social and micro enterprises should apply to their local commercial or public banks whose financial products are covered by the EU guarantee in their country or region. The local intermediary will inform them if a particular financing programme is covered by the InvestEU Fund. More info [here](#).

**For InvestEU advisory support**, check back here soon as the EU is developing a central point of entry.

You can access the InvestEU Portal [here](#) and add your project, search all projects and/or find the right partners.

**Good to know**

A major component of the InvestEU Programme is the EU's Recovery Plan for Europe in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The Recovery and Resilience Facility is the key instrument at the heart of Next Generation EU to help the EU emerge stronger and more resilient from the current crisis. Check it out [here](#).

**"The InvestEU fund has a dedicated area for social investments and skills. It is key to unlock these funding opportunities for social enterprises and show how to access them."**

- Suzanne Wisse-Huiskes, CEO of Euclid Network, serving as a non-permanent member of the InvestEU Investment Committee and focusing on the social investment and skills window.

**Some inspiration**

More  
information  
here

**Connecting the disconnected!**

**Country** Germany.

**Focus area** Health, Social infrastructure.

**Project name** Großjungig AI.

**Timeline** From July 2020.

**Total cost** €1,000,000.

Großjungig AI is a rental platform powered by artificial intelligence promoting cross-generational co-living through helping seniors living alone to connect to students and young professionals looking for co-living partners.

By promoting cross-generational co-living Großjungig AI is trying to solve two main social problems: loneliness among seniors and the lack of affordable housing in big cities.





# European Regional Development Fund

More information here



**Theme** Competitiveness / Connectivity / Inclusion / Sustainable development

**Budget** €200 billion

**Managed by** shared by European Commission and national and regional authorities in Member States

**The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) seeks to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU by correcting imbalances between its regions. It is a key element of the EU's Cohesion Policy. The ERDF budget for 2021-2027 is around €200 billion.**

### What has changed with the current MFF?

ERDF has not changed in its shape and specificities. However, for the period of 2021-2027, the focus has been put on enabling "investments in a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe."

### What does it support?

ERDF has set out the following priorities:

- Increased competitiveness, through innovation and support to small and medium-sized businesses, as well as digitalisation and digital connectivity.
- Green, low-carbon and resilience.
- Increased connectivity by enhancing mobility.
- Increased social inclusion, supporting effective and inclusive employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare, as well as enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism.
- Increased support to locally-led development and sustainable urban development.



### Who can participate?

The organisations that can apply for ERDF funding include:

- Public bodies.
- Some private sector organisations (especially small businesses).
- Universities, associations.
- NGOs and voluntary organisations.
- Foreign firms with a base in the region covered by the relevant operational programme can also apply, provided they meet European public procurement rules.

### How does it work?

The programme is managed in shared responsibility between the EC and national and regional authorities in Member States. The Member States' administrations choose which projects to finance and take responsibility for day-to-day management.

### Who can I contact?

You need to contact your national managing authority - to find out who it is click here.

### Good to know

In need of data? Reports? Or just some inspiration? Check out the EU Regional and Cohesion Policy Learning Database which groups studies, analyses and reports and encourages exchange of experience and good practice. Access and search the database here.



## Some inspiration

### Stimulating social innovation in Brussels

**Country** Belgium.

**Focus area** Social innovation and collaborative entrepreneurship.

**Project name** Coopcity.

**Timeline** 2015-2023.

**Total investment** €4,644,531.

**EU Investment** €2,091,940.

Coopcity aims to provide Brussels with a social, cooperative and collaborative entrepreneurship centre. It includes five support programmes and a coworking space for social innovation and social entrepreneurship. At the end of 2018, 65 companies had benefited from the support and assistance of Coopcity, 38 new companies were born, 20 jobs had been created, and awareness of the project had been raised amongst 2,437 people.

More information here

### Improving access to microcredit in France!

**Country** France.

**Focus area** Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

**Project name** The Adie.

**Timeline** 2014-2020.

**Total investment** €131,102.

**EU Investment** €39,330.

The Adie believes that anyone can become an entrepreneur, even without the right amount of capital or diplomas. In the most isolated region of France, Centre-Val de Loire, the Adie provides microcredit in the hope of supporting the most isolated and least qualified in becoming an entrepreneur. The project has helped social cohesion and the local economy in the region since 75% of the micro-entrepreneurs stayed within their neighbourhood.

More information here



# Citizens, Equality, Rights & Values



Grants  
Purchasing services  
Cash Prizes

**Theme** Rule of law / Equality / Inclusion / Ending violence

**Budget** €766,300,000

**Managed by** Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme

**The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV) aims to protect and promote European Union rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It contributes to sustaining and further developing open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law.**

### What has changed with the current MFF?

This new programme brings together the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme and the Europe for Citizens Programme.

### What does it support?

The programme has four main objectives which constitute its strands:

- Promoting equality and rights.

- Fighting violence (Daphne strand, managed by the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers).
- Citizens' engagement and participation (managed by the EACEA).
- Promoting European values (managed by the EACEA).

### Who can participate?

Eligible organisations include:

- SMEs.
- Large enterprises.
- Government & public authorities including cities.
- Civil society organisations.
- National Human Rights Institutions.

### How does it work?

Particularly interesting for this toolkit's audience are the citizens' engagement and

participation and promoting European values strands of funding. These encompass the town-twinning, networks of towns and remembrance actions, as well as the European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level and European think-tanks in the areas of Union Values.

The CERV programme offers grants, tenders and prizes on an ongoing basis. Find all the opportunities on the [Funding and Tenders portal](#). The work programme for 2022-2023 is still to be updated. You can find the most recent work programme at the bottom of [this page](#).

### Who can I contact?

You will need to get in touch with your national contact point for the CERV programme. Have a look [here](#) to find out yours!

More information here

## Some inspiration

### Enabling transnational cooperation and active citizenship

More information here

**Country** Austria.

**Focus area** Entrepreneurship, digitality, and transnational collaboration.

**Project name** WSA Europe.

**EU investment** €335,000.

This project seeks to enable engagement, gender equality, and the implementation of EU values via digital solutions and smart content applications. The International Center for New Media leverages a network of entrepreneurs, experts and institutional partners through events, awards and networking activities. One of the awards is the European Young Innovators award, which offers new opportunities for aspiring young Europeans and social entrepreneurs.



# Global Europe: the Neighbourhood, Development & International Cooperation Instrument

More information here



**Theme** Governance / Human and economic development / Global solutions

**Budget** €79.5 billion

**Managed by** European Commission

**International Partnerships are the EU's arm to promote good governance, human and economic development and tackle global issues including poverty, hunger and preserving natural resources. The programme does that with partner countries across the world. The Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument is the principal financial tool of the EU's international cooperation for the period of 2021-2027. The total budget is €79.5 billion.**

## What has changed with the current MFF??

Global Europe unifies grants, blending and guarantees, which will allow the EU to strategically promote public and private investment worldwide in support of sustainable development through the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+). Investments will be backed by an up to €53.4 billion External Action Guarantee, which will also cover the pre-accession countries.

## What does it support?

The types of programmes to implement European development assistance and international cooperation are either the:

- **Geographic Pillar:** Fosters dialogue and cooperation with third countries, with a budget of €60.39 billion. This pillar targets a



specific country or region, and will reflect regional and EU policies as well the implementation of the SDGs.

- **Thematic Pillar:** Will complement activities of the first pillar, and funds support to human rights and democracy, civil society, stability and peace, with an envelope of €6.36 billion.
- **Rapid-Response Pillar:** Allows the EU to rapidly and effectively intervene for conflict prevention and to respond to situations of crisis or instability; with an envelope of €3.18 billion it aims to increase resilience and early response.

## External Action Guarantee

To raise additional financial resources and leverage private investment in development actions to boost sustainable development, the External Action Guarantee (under Pillar 1) aims to:

- Support micro enterprises and SMEs.
- Promote decent job creation.
- Strengthen public and private infrastructure.
- Foster renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.
- Support the digital economy.
- Address the health and socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

The programme's priorities are the following:

- Green alliances and partnerships.
- Alliances for science, technology, innovation and digital.
- Alliances for sustainable growth and jobs.
- Partnerships for migration and mobility.
- Partnerships for human development, peace and governance.

### Who can participate?

Eligible organisations include any non-profit organisation or company active in the field of development.

There are multiple geographic areas covered by the programme:

- East Africa.
- Southern Africa and Indian Ocean.
- Central Africa.
- Sub-Saharan Africa, Caribbean and Pacific.
- Asia.
- Central Asia.
- Middle East/Gulf.
- Pacific.
- Latin America.
- Caribbean.
- Overseas Countries and Territories in the Atlantic, Antarctic, Arctic, Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific region.

### How does it work?

Each year, the EC publishes:

- Action programmes: with objectives, fields of intervention, expected results, management procedures, and total amounts of allocated funds. Access them [here](#).
- Work programmes for grants: specifying the legislation, objectives and schedule of calls for proposals, with indicative amounts of funding and expected results.

### The EC provides:

- **Grants:** Calls for proposals to development organisations for projects or for themselves when their operations align with the programme's objectives.
- **Tenders:** Calls for tenders for procurement contracts are also available.
- **Guarantees and blending:** Used to start up or cover part of the costs of a project, leveraging private investment in development actions.

### Who can I contact?

You can access all these opportunities through the [EU Funding and Tender Portal](#).





# Digital Europe (DIGITAL)

More information here



**Theme Digitalisation**

**Budget €7.5 billion**

**Managed by DG CONNECT**

**The Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) is a new EU funding programme focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations. DIGITAL aims to accelerate the economic recovery and shape the digital transformation of Europe's society and economy, bringing benefits to everyone, but in particular to small and medium-sized enterprises. The total budget of the programme for 2021-2027 is €7.5 billion.**

### What has changed with the current MFF?

DIGITAL is a new EU funding programme!

### What does it support?

Digital technology and infrastructure have a critical role in our private lives and business environments. We rely on them to communicate, work, advance science and answer current environmental problems. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted not only how much we rely on our technology to be available to us, but also how important it is for Europe not to be dependent on systems and solutions coming from other regions of the world. Paving the way for achieving this goal is the DIGITAL programme.

DIGITAL will provide strategic funding in five key capacity areas:

- Supercomputing.
- Artificial intelligence.
- Cybersecurity.
- Advanced digital skills.
- Ensuring a wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society, including through European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs).

DIGITAL will not address these challenges in isolation, but rather complement the funding available through other EU programmes, such as the Horizon Europe programme for Research and Innovation, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Structural funds, to name a few.

### Who can participate?

Member States and Associated countries. For more information take a look at the work programme [here](#).

### How does it work?

DIGITAL will offer funding through grants and tenders, the majority of which are launched and managed by DG Connect.

For the first two years, DIGITAL will be implemented through four work programmes:

1. For all actions excluding those implemented by the other three work programmes as indicated below - [DIGITAL Europe Work Programme 2021-2022](#).
2. For the European Digital Innovation Hubs - [DIGITAL Europe - EDIH Work Programme 2021-2023](#).
3. For Cybersecurity actions - [DIGITAL Europe - Cybersecurity Work Programme 2021-2022](#).
4. For High Performance Computing actions – the work programme will be prepared by the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking [here](#) and [here](#).

### Grants

DG CONNECT gives organisations the opportunity to bid for grants through calls for proposals.

**Frequency of calls for proposals:** Ongoing.

**Requirements:** Consortium-based.

**To find suitable partners:** Click [here](#).

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

### Tenders

DG CONNECT invites organisations to tender for EU public contracts to deliver works, supply or service contracts.

**Frequency of calls for tender:** Ongoing.  
**Requirements:** Depending on the call, sole applicants or consortia are eligible.  
**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

By providing access to technical expertise and experimentation as well as the possibility to “test before investing”, EDIHs help companies improve business/production processes, products or services using digital technologies.

### Who can I contact?

Calls for proposals and for tenders will be published and managed centrally by DG CONNECT. Organisations interested in DIGITAL can respond to the calls for proposals and tenders that are launched via the [EC Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

### Good to know

SESOs can benefit from the EDIHs!

EDIHs will function as one-stop shops that help companies dynamically respond to digital challenges and become more competitive.

By providing access to technical expertise and experimentation as well as the possibility to “test before investing,” EDIHs help companies improve business/production processes, products, or services using digital technologies.

They also provide innovation services, such as financing advice, training and skills development, that are needed for a successful digital transformation. Environmental issues are also taken into account, in particular with regard to energy consumption and low carbon emissions.

Find the EDIH near you [here!](#)





# Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)



Theme Migration / Asylum

Budget €9.88 billion

Managed by European Commission and Member States

**The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) aims to further boost national capacities and improve procedures for migration management. It also aims at enhancing solidarity and responsibility sharing between EU Member States, in particular through emergency assistance and the relocation mechanism. The fund has a total budget of €9.9 billion for 2021-2027.**

## What has changed with the current MFF?

The EC significantly increased the budget of the renewed AMIF, from €3.137 billion for 2014-2020 to €9.9 billion for 2021-2027. Through the political agreement reached between the European Parliament and Council, the fund will specifically support solidarity and responsibility-sharing, in particular towards the most affected EU countries. Additionally, funds will be allocated to local and regional authorities that implement measures that support people's integration into their communities. Moreover, EU Member States can now obtain, amongst other funding, €10,000 for each person welcomed through resettlement, including family members, and €6,000 for every person they welcome for humanitarian admission.

More information here

## What does it support?

The AMIF Funding contributes to the achievement of four specific objectives:

- **Asylum:** Strengthening and developing the Common European Asylum System, as well as its external dimensions.
- **Legal migration and integration:** Supporting legal migration to EU Member States in line with economic and social needs, as well as contributing to the integration of non-EU nationals.
- **Return:** Enhancing fair and effective return strategies that contribute to combating irregular migration, with an emphasis on a sustainable, effective and dignifying return process.
- **Solidarity:** Making sure that EU Member States which are most affected by migration and asylum flows can count on solidarity from other EU Member States.

To find out which actions are funded under AMIF, click [here](#).



### Who can participate?

Eligible organisations include:

- State and Federal authorities.
- Local public bodies.
- Non-governmental organisations.
- Humanitarian organisations.
- Private and public law companies.
- Education and research organisations.

Eligible countries include:

- All EU countries except Denmark.
- Associated countries.

### How does it work?

The largest share of the budget (63.5%) is channelled through shared management by the EC and the Member States. The remaining share is directly managed under the [thematic facility](#) by the EC's DG Migration and Home Affairs, dedicated to allocating funds to emerging or unforeseen needs.

AMIF offers funding to organisations through calls for tender and grants.

### Grants

General and specific calls for proposals are published by the EC and National Authorities. Every year an Annual Work Programme is published which outlines the priorities and objectives for that year. The Annual Work Programme of the EC can be found [here](#).

### Tenders

AMIF also includes actions implemented via calls for tender, or through work, supply or service contracts.

**Frequency of the calls:** On-going.

**Requirement:** Depending on the call, sole applicants or consortia are eligible.

**Where to find the calls:** Click [here](#).

### Good to know

Based on the operational lessons learnt in the past few years, the "Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background" identifies areas where people with a migration background are considered to face the most pressing and acute challenges.

You can access the toolkit [here](#).



# Early-stage finance opportunities for social enterprises

**Supporting your beneficiaries in accessing early-stage EU funding opportunities probably forms an integral part of your activities as a SESO. In this chapter, we guide you through different incubators, accelerators, prices and funding programmes at EU level that social entrepreneurs in your networks can access to bring their mission and vision to life, grow and learn new skills, as well as to expand their own networks.**

## What are incubators and accelerators?

Incubators and accelerators are places for your beneficiaries to get out there, bring their idea to life, launch it and give it the boost it needs to succeed in the market. Sometimes this comes in the form of financial opportunities, but they mainly do so through non-financial support.

### Incubators

- An incubator is a place where your beneficiaries can receive support, with a variety of activities, ranging from defining their solution or idea to the very first steps of boosting it. Incubator support oftentimes includes mentorship, funding opportunities, business modelling, skilling pathways, and training and advice on calls for proposals.

An incubator is thus an ideal place for your beneficiaries to start developing their business ideas and plans.

### Accelerators

- An accelerator helps existing businesses and social enterprises that need a further push into the market. Therefore, an accelerator is more focused on the growth and scaling of a social enterprise and its market penetration. In contrast to an incubator, an accelerator helps social enterprises which already have a business model and activities in place.

**To support your beneficiaries in navigating through the different early-stage finance opportunities, the following section spotlights the most relevant incubators, accelerators and EU funding opportunities.**

Please keep in mind that the following list does not intend to be exhaustive, but is intended to give an introductory and broad overview of the possibilities at the EU level.

### European Innovation Council

The [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC) seeks to identify, develop, and scale up breakthrough technologies and game-changing innovations of SMEs, start ups, spin-offs and researchers. But the EIC's support goes far beyond financial benefits, and includes non-financial support to all awarded projects under the EIC programmes, which consists of coaching, mentoring and partner opportunities, and much more. To find out more about the Business Acceleration Services of the EIC, click [here](#).

To learn more about all upcoming funding opportunities and their applications, and to get in touch with the National Contact Points, take a look at the [EIC AI Platform](#).



# Some inspiration

## EIC Transition

**Themes** Innovation, mature and novel technology, business case development.

**Grants** Up to €2.5 million.

**Non-financial support** Tailor-made business acceleration services.

**Target audience** Single applicants (SMEs, spin-offs, start ups, research organisations, universities) or small consortia (max 5 partners) may apply.

**Call for applications** To find out more about the application process, see [here](#).

The EIC Transition programme funds the maturation and validation of novel technology in the lab and in the relevant application environments, along with the development of a business case and model towards commercialization. Projects that are part of the EIC Transition address both the development of technology and the market/business aspect. Applicants will therefore be able to prove their intended applicability of their technology and develop a business model to prepare the technology for the market. The EIC Transition programme offers two types of funding:

1. EIC Transition Open: funding awarded through open calls without predefined thematic priorities.
2. Strategic EIC Transition Challenges: funding awarded through open calls with a thematic focus, e.g. energy efficiency.

To find out more about upcoming opportunities, click [here](#).

More  
information  
here

## EIC Accelerator

**Themes** Develop and scale up breakthrough innovations.

**Grants** Up to €2.5 million.

**Investment** Up to €15 million.

**Non-financial support** Coaching, mentoring, access to investors and corporates and many other opportunities as part of the EIC community.

**Target audience** SMEs, startups, spin-off companies.

**Call for applications** On a rolling basis through the [EIC Platform](#).

The EIC Accelerator program supports SMEs, in particular startups and spin-off companies, to develop and scale up game-changing innovations. Hence, the EIC Accelerator program is a key way in which the EU supports social entrepreneurs and enables them to attract the full investment amounts needed for scale up in a shorter time frame. Learn more about application requirements [here](#).

More  
information  
here

## European Social Innovation Competition (EUSIC)

**Theme** The Competition focuses every year on a different societal issue.

**Prizes** €50,000 (three winners will be awarded).

**Non-financial support** Coaching, training and networking activities.

**Target audience** Early-stage social innovators and entrepreneurs.

**Call for applications** Once a year, to stay up to date click [here](#).

Launched in memory of social innovation pioneer Diogo Vasconcelos, EUSIC is an annual competition run by the EC, with support from the EIC across all EU Member States and Horizon Europe-associated countries. Each year prizes are awarded to the best socially-innovative projects designed to change the world for the better and address the competition's theme. In 2022, there were two categories applicants could apply to:

1. The Challenge Prize, which is looking for projects with a particular focus on breakthrough, market-creating and deep-tech innovations.
2. The European Social Innovation Impact Prize 2022, which aims at recognising the efforts made by the semi-finalists of EUSIC 2021.

Besides financial support, the 30 shortlisted social innovators have the possibility to benefit from non-financial support, provided through coaching, training and networking activities.

More  
information  
here

## EU Prize for Women Innovators

**Themes** Celebrating innovative women entrepreneurs.

**Prizes** There are two prize categories:

The Women Innovators category, awarding three prizes of €100,000;  
The Rising Innovators (under the age of 35) category, awarding three prizes of €50,000.

**Target audience** Women entrepreneurs.

**Call for applications** Once a year - to stay up to date click [here](#).

The goal of the EU Prize for Women Innovators is to create role models for women and girls everywhere and raise awareness of the need for women entrepreneurs. Therefore, this prize is a great podium for women who have founded an innovative social enterprise or company and want to show their achievements to further launch their projects.

All women who are established in one of the EU Member States or a Horizon Europe Associated Country with an innovative enterprise registered at least two years before the application can apply.

More  
information  
here

## EIC Pathfinder

**Themes** Research, development, emerging breakthrough technology.

**Grants** Up to €3 million or €4 million.

**Non-financial support** Tailor-made business acceleration services.

**Target audience:** Researchers, start-ups, high-tech SMEs, industrial stakeholders.

**Call for applications** The EIC Pathfinder programme consists of a combination of both open and challenge-driven funding. See the [EIC Pathfinder](#) for updates.

This programme opens up funding opportunities in the field of science and/or technology based on breakthrough high-risk/high-reward research. Bold ideas which potentially offer radically new technologies are backed through the EIC Pathfinder program with €350 million available. To find an extensive description of the EIC Pathfinder, see the [following document](#).

More  
information  
here

## LIFE

The **LIFE Programme** is the EU's funding programme for tackling climate change and protecting the environment. The LIFE programme supports green innovations and cleantech solutions across Europe through action grants, awards and operating grants. To find out more about the LIFE Programme see the [following link](#).

### LIFE Programme: Close-to-Market-Projects

**Theme** Access to markets, climate change mitigation and adaptation, circular economy and quality of life.

**Co-financing** Between 60% and 95%, depending on the project call.

**Non-financial support** Coaching, business development, networking.

**Target audience** SMEs and start ups close to market.

**Call for applications** On a rolling basis - to stay up to date click [here](#).

The close-to-market opportunity under the LIFE programme, which aims to support SMEs and start ups to bring their innovative solutions to the market through co-financing and non-financial support such as business development and coaching, is particularly interesting to social entrepreneurs who want to bring their product to the market.

For more information, click [here](#).

More  
information  
here

## Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE)

To support young and aspiring social entrepreneurs in gaining new knowledge and skills on how to run their social enterprise, [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) offers new and aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs in different countries. We have discussed EYE in depth in the chapter on [The European Single Market Programme](#).

### Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE)

**Theme** Mutual learning.

**Funding** All expenses for exchange are covered.

**Length of stay** 1 to 6 months.

**Target audience** New and experienced social entrepreneurs.

**Call for applications** On a rolling basis - to stay up to date click [here](#).

To support young and aspiring social entrepreneurs in gaining new knowledge and skills on how to run their social enterprise, [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) offers new and aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs in different countries. On the other hand, experienced social entrepreneurs can benefit from a new fresh perspective offered by young social entrepreneurs and receive the opportunity to cooperate with foreign partners and/or learn about new markets.

The programme is run by a network of local contact points, present in the different participating countries. Find out more [here](#).

More  
information  
here

There are also other EU programmes that can be beneficial to the (early-stage) social entrepreneurs in your networks - see details in previous chapters:

- [European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#).
- [Erasmus+](#).
- [InvestEU](#).
- [DIGITAL](#).
- [Single Market Programme](#).

## Some inspiration

### Winner 2022: EU Prize for Women Innovators Rising Innovator category

Ailbhe and Isabel Keane, two sisters from Ireland, are the founders of Izzy Wheels. Their company has created fashionable wheel covers for wheelchairs. Through the wheelchair covers, Izzy has been able to express her personality together with many others who have bought the wheelchair covers. Besides gaining a platform through the EU, Izzy wheels has been able to work together with for example Marvel and Disney.

More  
information  
here

### Winner 2021 Challenge: Skills for tomorrow - Shaping a green and digital future

To adapt and thrive in a world that is continuously changing by digital and environmental challenges, last year, EUSIC incentivised social innovators to come up with innovative ideas in the "2021 challenge: Skills for tomorrow - Shaping a green and digital future". One of the winners of 2021 is Snowball Effect, a social enterprise supporting aspiring social entrepreneurs in their initiation, by building upon existing solutions to scale them up. So far, Snowball Effect has reached over 1000 people with their vision of scaling existing solutions and trained over 145 aspiring social entrepreneurs.

More  
information  
here

### Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

In 2019, Artjola Puja from Albania joined the EYE programme to launch her business in the digital health industry. She successfully developed a portable medical device, which enables patients to routinely monitor their blood coagulation function and share this medical data with hospitals and clinics for a quick medical evaluation. With the help of the EYE program, Artjola Puja was able to go from a business plan to building a high-fidelity prototype. She stayed 6 months with her host in Munich to work in a professional environment on her idea. This helped her gain valuable experience in the European market regulations for medical devices.

More  
information  
here

# Some EU projects' jargon

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**Co-financing/co-funding:** The EC rarely funds 100% of a project. Rather, it co-funds a portion of the project, which varies according to the calls.

**Deliverable:** Concrete output of a project: it can be a report, an event, a website, a publication, etc.

**DoA or DoW:** Description of the Action/Work – the central document of each project, the description of all activities and who does what.

**Final report:** Final overall report on an action. Includes both narrative report and financial claim (financial statement).

**FPA:** Framework Partnership Agreement – longer implementation strategy (usually between four and six years).

**Grant:** Direct financial contributions in support of projects or organisations which further the interests of the EU or contribute to the implementation of an EU programme or policy. (You receive a grant after having responded to a call for proposals).

**Interim report:** Project report to be delivered half-way through the project (can be narrative only, or with a financial report).

**Maximum EU Grant:** This is what the EC has agreed to give you for the project (if fully accomplished/full performance or equivalent).

**Milestone:** Key step within the project – sometimes appears in the DoW (used to evaluate the progress of a project).

**NUTS Classification:** NUTS, or Nomenclature of Territorial Units For Statistics. It is a hierarchical system for dividing up the territories of the EU (and the UK) for the purpose of collecting, developing and harmonising European regional statistics as well as to run socio-economic analyses of the regions. Current nomenclature: NUTS 1: major socio-economic regions / NUTS 2: basic regions for the application of regional policies / NUTS 3: small regions for specific diagnoses.

**Operational Programme:** Exists for Erasmus+ and Cohesion Funds. Sets the overall rules, guidelines and orientations of all the streams of funding within a given programme.

**Person Months (Person Days, Person Hours):** Unit used by the EC to report on staff time spent on a project.

**Programmation (seven years):** EU funding streams are implemented through a Multiannual Financial Framework of seven years (currently 2021-2027).

**Project officer (PO):** Your designated EC civil servant in charge of overseeing your project's implementation and reporting.

**Progress report:** Narrative report that sums up progress of activities implemented within a project.

**SGA:** Specific Grant Agreement: description of the action, or project (usually between 18 and 36 months).

**Tender:** Public contracts to buy goods and services – studies, technical assistance and training; consultancy, conference and publicity services; books and IT equipment, etc. (You are awarded a tender after having responded to a call for tender).

**The Action:** Synonym for 'the project'.

**WorkStream (WS) / Work Package (WP)/ Intellectual Output (IO):** DoAs (DoWs) are divided into WS/WP/IO, which are chunks of the project comprising sets of activities.

**Work Package leader:** Project partner that coordinates the work of others on the WP/WS/IP.





# Part II

Getting Non-EU Public Funding



# EEA & Norway Grants



Grants  
Purchasing services

**Theme** Innovation / Inclusion / Fundamental Rights / Regional cooperation

**Budget** €1.5 billion (data for 2014-2021)

**Managed by** European Economic Association & Norway Grants

**The European Economic Association (EEA) and Norway Grants are financial mechanisms funded by Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway. The objectives of these grants are to: 1) contribute to reducing inequalities across Europe; and 2) sustain and strengthen the bilateral relations between the three donor countries and fifteen beneficiary countries, all located in Europe.**

EEA & Norway grants do not compete with EU funds but seek to complement them and enhance their common policy objectives of regional cohesion, sustainable development and economic and social equality.

<sup>1</sup> The EEA Agreement brings Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and the EU together in a single market – often referred to as the Internal Market.

### What does it support?

The EEA & Norway grants fund a wide range of topics through programmes and dedicated funds:

- Innovation, research, education and competitiveness.
- Social inclusion, youth employment and poverty reduction.
- Environment, energy, climate change & low carbon economy.
- Culture, civil society, good governance and fundamental rights & freedoms.
- Justice & home affairs.
- Regional cooperation.

### Who can participate?

To receive funds directly from the EEA & Norway grants, as “project promoter”, your organisation has to be based in one of the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech

Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

If your organisation is based in Norway, Liechtenstein or Iceland you cannot receive project grants directly, but you can become a “donor project partner” if you cooperate in a project with one of the beneficiary countries. A dedicated guide for entities based in the three donor countries is available [here](#).

Additionally, we note that:

- The [Fund for Youth Employment](#) accepts projects with partners from Ireland, Italy and Spain.
- The fund for [Regional Cooperation](#) accepts projects from Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

### How does it work?

The EEA & Norway Grants do not fund the same topics in all their beneficiary countries; they adapt them according to the local needs and priorities defined in coordination with each state. Therefore a series of programmes addressing specific issues and predefined objectives are available for each Beneficiary State. Your project idea needs to fit in those in

order to be eligible for funding.

According to your country, organisation and project the eligibility criteria will vary. In general, it is encouraged to establish partnerships with organisations in the three donor countries and include them in the design of projects.

The funds are co-managed by the EEA & Norway Grants Financial Mechanism Office based in Brussels and Fund Operators on the ground within each beneficiary country.

### IMPORTANT

Unlike the usual programmes funded by the EEA & Norway grants within each beneficiary country, the Fund for Youth Employment and the Fund for Regional Cooperation have a primarily transnational focus. The partnerships built involved partners in multiple countries.

- The Fund for Youth Employment seeks to reduce youth unemployment through transnational projects.
- The Fund for Regional Cooperation supports projects tackling common challenges through regional cross-border/transnational collaborations.

**Who can I contact?**

Details on the specific support for each country are available [here](#), where you can also access open calls for proposals and upcoming events. Additionally, each country manages a national website for the EEA & Norway Grants.

Funding calls are regularly published online [here](#) - the EEA & Norway Grants do not accept spontaneous applications.

How to find a donor partner: Donor Programme Partners are there to help find partners in the donor countries. The list of Donor Programme Partners is available [here](#). Please note that for the Active Citizens Fund, relevant to some of you, the [Norwegian Helsinki Committee](#) and the [Icelandic Human Rights Centre](#) can also assist you.

More about partnership opportunities [here](#).

**What's next?**

All the programmes under the EEA & Norway Grants 2014–2021 will run until 30 April, 2024. The EEA & Norway grants have not yet published their upcoming funding programme that should start in 2022.

**The EEA & Norway grants regularly publish invitations to bid to become a national Fund Operator within their beneficiary countries**

**Good to know**

- EEA & Norway Grants are extremely competitive funding streams - success rates are low!
- You can apply to become a Fund Operator: the EEA & Norway grants regularly publish invitations to bid to become a national Fund Operator within their beneficiary countries. You will then be responsible for programme design, implementation and compliance with country-specific areas through project support and monitoring. You will also need to ensure that the programme builds capacity and sustainability of the organisations supported on the ground and promote multilateral collaborations.
- In some programmes, projects can include partners from third countries. However, their participation cannot be financed through the EEA and Norway Grants.

# Some inspiration

**International Project: WOMEN4IT**

**Beneficiary partner countries** Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Spain.  
**Expert partners** The European Centre for Women and Technology (Norway) and DIGITALEUROPE (Belgium).  
**Focus** Digital competences of young women at risk of labour exclusion/women employability.  
**Timeline** Sept 2018 - August 2021.  
**EEA contribution** €2,714,304 grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway - Fund for Youth Employment.

The project's main objective is to increase women's employability and decrease their risk of social and labour exclusion. It does this through awareness-raising campaigns on digital skills, employment opportunities in ICT and the gender gap. The project also wants to foster partnerships with employers and develop training and guidance on "digital jobs" destined for women. A large part of the project is dedicated to dissemination and exchange of good practices between a variety of stakeholders.

The project is developing an online employability profiling tool and a learning platform for job seekers - with the objective of assessing 1,000 young girls and women. The objective is to benefit 700 young women directly through non-formal education opportunities. It also wishes to introduce innovative solutions to 350 employers, and reach 10 000 young people through awareness activities.



**Local Project: Pata-Cluj**

**Country** Romania.  
**Focus** Social inclusion of Roma people in Pata-Cluj region.  
**Timeline** 2015-2017.  
**Initial total budget** €4,095,865.  
**EEA contribution** €3,457,555.

The project used social innovation for the desegregation and social inclusion of families living in the Pata Rât area in Romania. The project tested methodologies that would later serve as a basis for public policy interventions on social inclusion. The project sought to improve the housing situation of 35 families, who were moved out from the marginalised communities into social apartments in integrated areas of the city. Additionally, 41 young people from Pata Rât were enrolled in professional qualification courses within the 'YouthBuild programme,' thereby enabling them to access additional opportunities in the labour market. The situation of 169 families was improved in terms of school participation, access to child protection services and social benefits.





# Part III

Philanthropic & Corporate  
Fundraising

# Accessing philanthropic & corporate fundraising: A step-by-step guide

**Philanthropy, mecenazgo, m<sup>a</sup>zenatentum, shonindo, m<sup>e</sup>c<sup>e</sup>nat... generosity can take many shapes and forms, each country having its own cultural practices and legal frameworks. While if public sector grants are often perceived as the main source of financial support for social enterprise support organisations, philanthropic and corporate funding is also a significant leverage.**

**Among the world's 200 largest corporations:**



**Report giving internationally**



**Have a foundation**

## Who's out there?

Foundations and corporates are organisations with their own financial resources; they define themselves how and where to deploy them. They are independently governed and can use their private resources for the public good.

## Foundations

There is no Europe-wide agreed definition of what a foundation is. Various countries will have their own understanding of the word. The main types of foundations are:

- Trustee-based foundations: institutional set-up.
- Family foundations: set up by wealthy individual(s).
- Corporate foundations: philanthropic arms of corporations with income depending on the profit of the companies.
- Community foundations/Charitable trusts: set up as a charity whose income is given for charitable causes.



## Corporates

Many companies have philanthropic and social impact purposes, regardless of their size: multinational corporations, large companies or SMEs can be your ally in your projects.

They can support you through:

- Their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes.
- A philanthropic arm ('corporate foundation').
- A hybrid set-up: Headquarters and national/local branches (directly).

## Good to know

Any company is a potential donor - even if they do not do philanthropy yet! When considering a corporate foundation, do not forget that the same company might also provide support via their CSR programmes.

Bear in mind that multinationals have various entities: the relevant level for your project could therefore be the international entity, the branch/franchise/headquarters in the country where you are based or another specific entity that explicitly works and dedicates funds to your project's subject matter. Therefore, make sure you do thorough research and identify all the organisations that may support your activities. Monitor their activities and interact with them in various settings!

## What can I get?

### You need funds...

First, be clear about the amounts you need and what you need them for (is it for a project, or is it for the organisational expenses?) Avoid reaching blindly for "the biggest amount possible," but rather identify your financial objective - short, medium, long-term - in proportion with your project/mission.

### ...but maybe you need other things too!

Are you/your team members/beneficiaries in need of specific skills or additional human resources? Do you need furniture? A room and catering for a meeting? Sponsorship for a large event? It may seem small compared to your financial needs, but it is also a good way to approach potential funders, build a trust-based relationship and then ask for more.



**The patronage of a foundation or company can take different forms. While it is often financial, it can also rely on the donor's other resources.**

## Financial



**Grants can be allocated to your organisation for different purposes:**

- Restricted funding will support a specific pre-agreed project or purpose.
- Unrestricted funding will allow you to finance your organisational expenses and contribute towards your broader mission.
- Unrestricted funding is getting rarer as donors like to co-create projects and increasingly expect in-depth reporting on money spent.

## Skills-based



**The donor provides the receiving organisation with pro-bono support in the shape of human resources and/or expertise. This can take many forms:**

- Employee volunteering hours.
- Dedicated expert staff on a specific project (e.g. project management, accounting).
- Specific training for your organisation's employees, volunteers or beneficiaries (e.g. reshaping a revenue-generation strategy, designing a volunteer retention plan).

## In kind



**The donor gives or makes available their goods and/or facilities to the beneficiary, such as:**

- Products and equipment (e.g. office supplies, furniture).
- Technology (e.g. access to a pricey software).
- A conference room and catering for an event.
- Working space and facilities.

## How does it work?

Each funding entity has its own ways.

Most of them have an organisational committee (or equivalent) which sets their long term objectives and support criteria. Some have annual or bi-annual committees, with deadlines to submit applications. Others have recurrent or random open calls fitting their areas of support. Some function on a spontaneous application basis while a few rely on their own network to identify needs on the ground and strategically select their future beneficiaries themselves.

Therefore, on your road to fundraise for your organisation you may:

- **Respond to open calls that are regular** and core to the organisation's purpose and support activities. In that specific case you should establish a list of your prospects fitting this category and keep a calendar with their annual or bi-annual deadlines.
- **Respond to open calls that are published punctually** (or to respond to emergencies). In that case, map your prospects fitting this category, subscribe to their newsletter and follow them on social media. Be sure to keep up to date with their latest calls.
- **Write spontaneous applications.** Many entities are open to being proposed activities on an ad hoc basis. To do so, keep a standardised document to present your organisation and the project ready to be sent to your prospects. Sometimes, it is worth considering sending it to different individuals/departments within the same organisation.

## Good to know

The best practice in reaching out to potential donors is often to mix a qualitative and quantitative approach by:

- Soliciting a high number of prospects via a standardised mailing campaign.
- Participating in events and workshops to meet potential supporters.
- Identifying key people in your network that could be your direct interlocutors or your 'go-betweens.'

## 5 questions to ask yourself

1. What are the strategic priorities of the donor? Can I get any intel on current organisational dynamics?
2. What types of initiatives have my prospect donor(s) already supported and how?
3. How and by whom are projects/ organisations similar to mine otherwise supported?
4. Where and how could we fit our project and organisational goals within their mission and vision?
5. Is there an opportunity to fundraise collaboratively (with other organisations) so as to reach critical mass and increase our chances to get support?





# Example 1

## A hybrid set-up within a business: IKEA Social Entrepreneurship

More information here

**IKEA Social Entrepreneurship fills a gap between IKEA philanthropic activities and IKEA business. It is a hybrid organisation that sits within IKEA (business) with the aim to maximise social impact by accelerating the social entrepreneurship movement both inside and outside the IKEA value chain. This means looking into how products and services from social entrepreneurs can be included in the IKEA offer and co-creating development programmes that accelerate the movement of social entrepreneurship in general.**

IKEA Social Entrepreneurship uses a variety of tools to support social entrepreneurs to scale their impact, including co-worker knowledge sharing, supporting capacity-building (e.g. through accelerator programs), access to markets and offering financial tools and support.

IKEA Social Entrepreneurship partners with social enterprise intermediaries such as Acumen, Ashoka, NESST and Yunus Social Business to design and implement impactful projects and programmes involving social enterprises across the world.

**Strategic focus:** Inclusion, equality and livelihood.

**Sectors supported:** All sectors.

**Target groups:** Social enterprise intermediaries, social entrepreneurs and social businesses.

**Areas of support:** Operational support; Business management skills; Social entrepreneurship competences; Product design and sales; Strategic Development.

**What is implemented:**

- **Acceleration:** Accelerator programmes for social entrepreneurs.
- **Access to markets:** Design and production of items and services.
- **Expertise and capacity-building:** Strategic and operational support to social enterprises by IKEA employees.
- **Financial support:** Grants, loans and equity investments.

**Headquarters:** Netherlands.

**Current countries of operation:**

USA, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Sweden, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Romania, Jordan, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya.

More information on IKEA Social Entrepreneurship [here](#), on the Handbook for SE [here](#), and on the annual review 2021 [here](#).



### How do partnerships with SESOs come about?

IKEA Social Entrepreneurship identifies needs and opportunities within specific ecosystems and proactively reaches out and selects preferred partners to develop a business relationship or potential support projects and programmes with. In most cases, therefore, they do not accept unsolicited proposals. There are opportunities for entrepreneurs to apply to accelerator programmes developed with IKEA Social Entrepreneurship partners; the latest calls and other opportunities are published on their [website](#), social media and through their partners.

### Their top 3 tips for you:

1. Be clear about the social challenges you address, how you are improving the life of your target groups and the value you can create for the corporate partner.
2. Ensure that the purpose, goals and scope of the partnership are clear from the beginning – a good tip is to formulate a common theory of change for the partnership.
3. Avoid becoming too reliant on a partnership with a large corporation - make sure to have other collaborations and/or clients.

### Good to know

IKEA is a very large multinational. As a social enterprise support organisation, you can also look into:

**The IKEA Foundation:** An independent charitable foundation that oversees IKEA's global philanthropy. The Foundation resides in the Netherlands and their funds come from the Stichting INGKA Foundation.

**Strategic focus:** Inequality and poverty.  
Themes of action: Climate action, renewable energy.

**Employment & Entrepreneurship:** Agricultural livelihoods, emergency response.

**Instruments:** Grant-making and partnerships.

**Your local IKEA sustainability manager:** All IKEA stores are encouraged to develop a local sustainability and circular economy plan. Reaching out to a local IKEA could therefore offer an interesting pathway to local collaborations for your beneficiaries and, if successful, potential scaling opportunities to include more IKEA stores and markets.

### Types of support

- Financial.
- Skills-based.
- Training.
- Human resources.
- Access to markets.



## Some inspiration

### Circular by 2030:

In 2018, IKEA announced its plans to manufacture and market all of its products according to circular principles by 2030. IKEA will only use renewable or recycled materials across its entire product portfolio by that time.

### The Dela Accelerator Programme with Ashoka

Ashoka and IKEA Social Entrepreneurship co-created the 'Dela' accelerator, which focuses on scaling established social enterprises that work with systems change in the areas of livelihoods, equality and inclusion. The focus is on sharing knowledge, perspectives and networks to support social entrepreneurs that work with and for underprivileged populations.

The programme matches IKEA co-workers with social entrepreneurs to support them with their business challenges, while allowing IKEA co-workers to learn from the social entrepreneurs.



## Example 2

# The global CSR department of a multinational: SAP CSR

More information here

**SAP runs one of the longest-standing global corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, encompassing a strong social entrepreneurship and non-profit support strategy globally. Their core focus is to power equitable access to economic opportunity, education and employment, and a green economy, in many cases through strong and impactful strategic partnerships with SESOs and intermediaries. Their focus is on three strategic program pillars: accelerating social business, building future skills, and collaborating for sustainability.**

SAP partners with social enterprise intermediaries such as the Social Enterprise World Forum, Acumen, Social Traders Australia, Social Enterprise UK, Yunus Social Business, Agora Partnerships, Euclid Network, Movingworlds and many more to design and implement impactful projects and programmes involving social enterprises across the world.

**Strategic focus:** Equitable access to economic opportunity and inclusive education and employment.

**Sectors supported:** All sectors, specifically those enhancing digital inclusion and industry transformation.

**Target groups:** Social enterprise intermediaries and social entrepreneurs.

**Areas of support:** Youth entrepreneurship; business management skills; capacity-building; scaling; digital skills; social entrepreneurship competences; strategic development; partnerships and networking.

**Budget:** €24 million.

**Headquarters:** Germany.

### What is implemented:

- **Intrapreneurship & youth entrepreneurship programmes:** To inspire new ventures initiated by SAP employees and support young entrepreneurs with their ideation and business models.
- **Access to markets:** 5 & 5 by '25 initiative, see "inspiration box."
- **Expertise and capacity-building:** Strategic and operational support to social enterprises by SAP employees; access to market and scaling programmes: connecting social enterprises with markets and technologies, including through social procurement (BuySocial).
- **Financial support:** Grants.

**Current countries of operation:** Global.

### More information:

More information on SAP CSR [here](#), SAP Leading with Purpose [here](#), 5 & 5 by '25 [here](#) and press release [here](#).



### How do partnerships with SESOs come about?

Most partnerships with SAP are initiated through connections and networking efforts on the side of SAP and of the SE intermediaries themselves. SAP favours long-lasting partnerships encompassing financial and non-financial support. As a flexible organisation, they are able to test and pilot initiatives that, when successful, can be deployed at wider levels.

### Their top 3 tips for you:

1. Understand what we are doing in the social enterprise space and why there is an added-value for SAP to be involved in that sector.
2. Check that you are aligned with our vision, goals and values and clearly demonstrate that shared vision.
3. Have big dreams but propose something tangible and doable in the first instance. This could lead to bigger projects!

### Types of support:

- Financial.
- Skills-based.
- Training.
- Human resources.
- Access to markets.
- Networking.
- Restricted and unrestricted funding.



## Some inspiration

### 5&5 by 2025 Social Procurement Initiative

5&5 by 2025 Social Procurement Initiative: SAP launched in 2020 the global 5 & 5 by '25 Initiative, a corporate initiative targeting five percent of SAP's addressable spend with social enterprises and diverse businesses by 2025 (US\$60 million annually).

In setting this target, SAP aims to inspire organisations around the world to buy more goods and services from purposeful suppliers, making a positive collective impact. With global procurement spending estimated by the World Bank in 2019 to be at least US\$ 14 trillion, by directing even just a fraction of this to social enterprises and diverse businesses organisations have the power to tackle some of the world's most pressing social and environmental problems.

Together with customers, (social enterprise intermediary) partners, diverse suppliers and social enterprises, SAP has set out to expand social procurement where infrastructure exists and intends to support and establish the infrastructure and build capacity where it does not yet exist.

5 & 5 by '25 is part of SAP One Billion Lives, a programme for which the ambition is to positively impact one billion lives by integrating social enterprises into the global economy through procurement practices.

More information here

## Example 3

# A corporate foundation: Thomson Reuters Foundation

More  
information  
here

**The Thomson Reuters Foundation is the corporate foundation of Thomson Reuters, the global news and information services company. It works to advance media freedom, foster more inclusive economies and promote human rights. The Thomson Reuters Foundation combines the power of journalism and the law to drive systemic change through news, media development, free legal assistance, training and convening initiatives.**

TrustLaw is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro-bono legal service. It connects high-impact NGOs and social enterprises working to create social and environmental change with leading law firms and corporate legal teams to provide them with free legal assistance.

TrustLaw is the biggest pro-bono network in the world. Since 2009, they have helped more than 5,000 organisations ranging from small local charities, to social enterprises, to large non-profit organisations, saving the sector over \$205 million in legal fees.

TrustLaw has a network of Referral Partners, comprising funders, umbrella organisations and thought leaders, such as the Impact Hub, UnLtd and Ashoka. Through these partnerships, TrustLaw supports their grantees, fellows, members and award winners with free legal assistance.

**Sectors supported:** TrustLaw supports all sectors and topics, as long as the social enterprise fits the service's criteria:

- The social enterprise has been registered for at least one year.
- It has a clear social impact and re-invests the majority of their profits into their social mission, or plans to do so.
- The organisation can demonstrate sufficient impact and financial sustainability.

**Target groups:** Social enterprise intermediaries and social entrepreneurs.

**Areas of support:** Through TrustLaw, they provide:

- Free legal assistance on corporate matters or legal research.
- Training and events.
- Legal training.
- Capacity-building and training.
- Legal support to policy or advocacy activities.

**Budget:** The Thomson Reuters Foundation does not provide financial support.

**Headquarters:** USA and UK, with regional teams in Spain, Argentina, Kenya, India and Thailand.

**What is implemented:**

- **Pro bono facilitation:** Matching law firms and social entrepreneurs looking for specific skills or legal advice through their global pro-bono service, TrustLaw.
- **Training for legal professionals:** Guiding legal experts on how to support social entrepreneurs through TrustLaw.
- **Training, capacity building & networking events:** Legal and impact investing training and legal health check workshops for civil society.
- **Research:** Legal research to drive policy change or on [social enterprise in general](#).

**Countries:** TrustLaw has a global reach and is active in 175+ countries.

**More information:** on the Thomson Reuters Foundation can be found [here](#), and on TrustLaw [here](#).

**How do partnerships with SESOs come about?**

Eligible NGOs and social enterprises can apply to become a member of TrustLaw through the [TrustLaw website](#).

If SESOs fit the criteria, they may receive pro-bono legal advice through the TrustLaw service. They may also refer other partners and social enterprises in need of legal advice.

**Their top 3 tips for you:**

1. Identifying the legal priorities for your organisation can be difficult. Drawing on TrustLaw's 10 years of experience supporting NGOs and social enterprises, we have created a Legal Health Check tool to help you spot issues on which legal advice might be needed.
2. TrustLaw has facilitated the publication of 50+ reports and guides helping social impact organisations navigate regulatory frameworks and advocate for change in the law. You can find some [here](#).
3. You do not need to be a lawyer or have extensive legal knowledge to work with TrustLaw. Once you become a member, our team will help you scope your legal needs and draft the projects you post to our legal network, thus making it as simple as possible to receive the right legal assistance.



# Part IV

Tips & Tricks:  
A Roadmap to Fundraising

## Identify your needs & take stock

### **Define your fundraising strategy based on the mission and needs of your organisation**

If raising public funds (including EU funds) and/or philanthropic/corporate funds fits into your fundraising strategy, make sure that the projects you commit to are relevant to your organisational interests, cause, membership or beneficiaries in the first place. The projects should always be fitting with your strategic priorities for a given period. Do not favour potential financial resources over your mission! A good way to start is with a SWOT and a risk analysis of your own organisation.

### **PLAN AHEAD!!!**

Most of the time you will find that submitting your funding application took much more time than expected. Indeed, writing project proposals and collecting all necessary documents is time-consuming. Besides, the follow-up is often overlooked and also requires a lot of time and energy. Bear in mind that proposal writing often takes place a year before the project is implemented. This time, and therefore cost, has to be somehow embedded into your fundraising strategy. In other words: fundraising costs you!

**Bear in mind that proposal writing often takes place a year before the project is implemented.**

### **Be clear on your available human resources**

EU projects in particular can be highly time-consuming and require staff dedicated to the project for management, drafting and reviewing reports and articles, dissemination, financial management and so on. Make sure to discuss available resources and other funding possibilities thoroughly within your organisation, with potential partners, and where possible, with funders before committing to an EU-funded opportunity.

### **Make sure your own resources are sufficient to guarantee the pre-financing of the projects**

Part or all of the money is sometimes only provided at the end of the project. EU funds, for instance, are not always paid out regularly or as expected. When writing your application, pay particular attention to eligible and non-eligible costs.

## Embed fundraising in all of your work

### **Define your main selling points & shout about them!**

Identify your main strengths by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who do I reach? How many partners do I have? Who can I bring in?
- What impact do I have?
- What am I good at? What skills do we have?

Make it all very clear and visible - why not have it on your website and social media, for example?

### **Maintain a propositions log**

Fundraising is part of business development and it needs to be done in a strategic and continuous manner. Do not wait for specific opportunities to be published (calls for proposals/expressions of interest) to start working on ideas within your organisation or with a group of partners. Make it a habit to maintain a potential projects log or propositions log.

### **Keep the conversation going**

If you are eager to develop something with a group of organisations then do it, meet regularly and shape your ideas together. The right funding opportunity will come and you will have saved a lot of time! Create communities of practice and working groups, and meet regularly.

### **Gradually build up your network**

Build strong relationships with other support organisations, international networks in your sector and organisations across Europe/the world that are relevant to your work. By collaborating on occasional activities (e.g. events, volunteering, field visits) on a regular basis and not only on specific projects, you will develop trusting relationships and a good understanding of each other. This helps to raise your visibility. Use your networking skills to build relations across a wide range of organisations, including academia and research centres, as well as local and regional authorities, EU policy-makers, businesses, etc.

As your activities develop, your credibility and capability to shape and lead projects grows, putting you in an even better position to lead a consortium or partner with others, and thus advances your cause.

### **KEEP YOUR RADAR ON!!!**

Identify a list of relevant organisations to follow. Sign up for their newsletters, set Google Alerts, follow them on social media and attend their events and workshops. This way you are sure to keep an eye out for relevant calls for proposals, activities and consultations. Regularly update each other on project ideas. Often reaching critical mass by joining together various actors will ensure you better outcomes than going for it alone!

## Save your valuable time!

### **Dare to take the initiative**

Dare to take a leading role in the design and implementation of a project – do not underestimate the knowledge and skills you can bring. Being close to a particular social or environmental issue, you have good knowledge about the needs and gaps in your area of work. However, do make sure that you are partnering with the right (number of) partners, that you have the geographic representation requested and that all partners are eligible legal entities.

### **Check your and your partners' eligibility**

Good to know: each EU call for proposals will lay out its eligibility criteria. They can vary significantly from one call to another. For instance, some calls will require each partner organisation to have been established for at least three years; some will only apply this rule to the lead coordinator.

More generally, carefully read the eligibility criteria of a call for proposals as your proposal could be rejected solely for ineligibility reasons. This applies to the type of organisations that can apply, the type of signature that is needed on a document or else the mail posting stamp's time.

### **Summarise your current financial situation, including all your sources of income**

Some funders (the EC especially) will want to see proof of financial capacity, other private funders may want to be exclusive, others will ask for other donors and some may look at their “co-financing partners” to know with which other organisation they may be associated with through your project.

## Think your application through

### **Do not over-promise!**

Applying for funding for a project is exhilarating and one can have a tendency to over-promise in terms of activities, outputs, results or impact indicators. Even if this might impress your evaluators and may give you a win, it might turn out to be unattainable in practice. Remember: if you promise the moon, you will be asked for it! Not delivering on your expected results can put a strain on your relationships with your funder and partners during the timeframe of the project and could jeopardise your credibility for future applications. Evaluators will always favour realistic, researched, well-defined and well-explained work-plans.

### **Define your European added value**

Chances are that if you are applying for an EU grant, your evaluators will have to understand its European added value. Ask yourself the following question: why should this project be implemented transnationally and with EU money? In other words: why is the impact likely to be higher if the project is implemented thanks to an international collaboration as opposed to each organisation asking for funding at national level? Explicitly including that an exchange or transfer of good practice is at the centre of your project is an example.

### **Not delivering on your expected results can put a strain on your relationships with your funder and partners during the timeframe of the project.**

### **Clearly identify your expected impact**

Identifying the impact you want to have with your project or initiative - as small-scale as it may be - is crucial and should happen at ideation phase. Define your expected impact (the one you know your project will have) and your desired impact (the broader change that the project could contribute to). Illustrate your expected impact with some clear and concrete KPIs. Do not forget to say how you will measure your performance - include an evaluation strategy or impact assessment methodology.

### **Keep it tight & short but tell a story!**

Keep it tight, concise and consistent. Think numbers, bullet points, tables, visuals. Tell the reader/the evaluator a coherent, well-evidenced story.

## Reflect & carry on!

### **Work on feedback!**

It is very tempting to resubmit a ready-made project proposal especially if it got a good score but was rejected for lack of funding. But first ask yourself the following questions:

1. Should I resubmit the proposal towards the same call? Is there one that is more aligned? Look around as there might be another funding stream that fits your purpose!

2. Have I taken into account the feedback I received on my first application? Evaluators will have indicated the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal, so reshape your proposal according to this. Do not forget to have a look at the evaluation criteria and scoring system again - you might see that you overlooked an area.
3. Is there any way I can make this proposal stronger? Even if you like it, take a critical look at the proposal, ask colleagues who were not involved in its development to read it and comment.

Sometimes, answering those questions might create more work than intended, such as replacing a partner or rethinking an impact evaluation methodology, but it is worth it.

### **Manage expectations**

Be mindful that the success rates of applying to some funding streams are very low; you will need to manage expectations. If you feel you have been losing time on an unsuccessful application, bear in mind that your work is not useless! It is always a good exercise to step back, reflect on your work and ambitions and put it down on paper. And, chances are you will reuse parts of your application sooner rather than later.

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