



**Local & Regional
Europe**



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Guide on 2021-2027 EU funding

Platform for External Funded Activities

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INTRODUCTION

Accessing European Union (EU) funding opportunities can be complex and time consuming, particularly if the applicant is not familiar with the structures and the logics of EU projects management.

This introductory guide is targeting the members of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which is composed of European National Associations of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs). The guide comes as a joint effort from the CEMR secretariat staff members completing further the services provided through the newly created External Funded Activities Platform (EFA Platform) on the relevant calls for proposal, info sessions on various EU programmes, and capacity-building activities.

The selected EU programmes presented in this document will serve as a starting point for identifying funding opportunities and relevant information such as the thematic priorities, eligible applicants, types of funded activities. Moreover, it also includes the supporting services made available by the various managing authorities, such as partner search services, info sessions related to the selected programmes, and links to other existing general or sectorial guides.

Each programme comprises necessary information and links to access more in-depth information and material to help with various technical questions, and a comparison in terms of funding size between the previous and the current programming period is provided.

To support further and facilitate the accessibility to European funding, we tried to provide in a nutshell more information on how to navigate the “[EU funding and tender portal](#)” and concrete tips on how to submit a successful project proposal.

Indeed, the current programming period, governed by the [2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#), provides numerous funding opportunities for LRGs and their Associations at both national and EU level. In fact, for the current period 2021-2027, the EU budget of 1.211 trillion EUR was topped up by 806.9 billion EUR from Next Generation EU, a temporary instrument to boost the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as addressing other the EU priorities, such as climate change. Therefore, the NextGen EU¹ recovery fund increases significantly the seven-year EU budget, compared to the previous MFF, to a total of EUR 2.018 trillion.

It is important to remind that more than half of the MFF budget will support policies that include research and innovation, climate change and digital transition, and that one third will support cohesion policy.

Some general trends of the MFF can be grouped as below:

- Larger budget compared to previous MFFs, mostly due to NextGen EU.
- More synergy between the various programmes.

¹ For an overview of the MFF and NextGen EU, more information is available [at this link](#).

- More efficient and targeted use of EU funds.
- Strong focus on the topics of sustainability, environment & climate, and digitalization.

The EU funding instruments based on the MFF are divided into two groups:

1. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) jointly managed by the European Commission (EC), and Member States (Managing Authorities thereof)
2. The Action Programmes (AP) managed either directly by the EU and its agencies, or indirectly by international organisations, development agencies, and other bodies.

Each funding instrument is composed of various programmes and provides funding in various forms such as grants, loans, guarantees, etc. However, we are focusing this guide on the grants and the selected programmes managed directly by the EC and their agencies, and some of the territorial cooperation programmes of interest for CEMR. Thus, we have made the choice to not include in this guide all the European programmes nor all the shared and indirect managed programmes.²

Finally, we have decided to keep this guide as a living document to accommodate new updates on other European programmes and other information that might be of interest for CEMR members.

² *Direct management*: the EU funding is managed directly by the EC. *Shared management*: the EC and national authorities jointly manage the funding. *Indirect management*: the funding is managed by partner organizations or other authorities inside or outside the EU.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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OVERVIEW OF SELECTED EU PROGRAMMES

The EU provides funding for various types of projects covering all policy areas to LRGs and their associations, NGOs, companies, researchers, students and citizens in general as well as neighboring countries. However, it is not always easy to get oriented through the landscape of opportunities and the related programmes. For this overview, we have selected the most relevant ones with the help of the External Funded Activities platform, composed of the CEMR's associations.

Therefore, **it is not an exhaustive list and does not represent** all the existing European programmes.

Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)

This programme aims to protect and promote the Union's rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€1.55 billion (vs MFF 14-20: €650 million)
Thematic priorities	EU Values, Democracy & Human Rights, Education, Inclusion, Equality, History, Civil Rights...
Eligible activities	Training, capacity building and exchange of good practices, town twinning and networks of towns, raising people awareness about their rights and the benefits that EU policies will bring to their daily lives, and supporting the development of knowledge-based EU policies and legislation through surveys, studies and analyses.
Participating countries	EU27, EU27 OCTs, Associated Countries
Eligible applicants	Entities established under Union law or international organizations: civil society organisations (CSOs), European networks, public authorities, including equality and human rights bodies, local authorities, academia / research institutes, and think tanks.
Target groups	Civil Society, Schools, Universities, European Citizens, Children & Youth, Women, Minorities.

Online resources

Info sessions	More information and presentations to get a better picture of the content and requirements of the various call for proposals can be found here .
Newsletter	For the latest news on funding opportunities & funded projects under the CERV programme, sign up here to receive the funding newsletter on a regular basis.
Programme-related webpages	https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme_en https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv
Contact points	https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/cerv-contact-points-2021-2027-1_en

Creative Europe

The programme aims to optimise the potential of Europe's cultural and creative sectors by offering opportunities for operators to develop technologically and artistically, through innovative trans-border initiatives as well as to exchange, co-produce and distribute European works and make them accessible to a wide and diverse audience.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€2.53 billion (vs MFF 14-20: €1.46 billion)
Thematic priorities	Development & Cooperation, Research & Innovation, Consumer Protection, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Education, Business & Industry, Climate & Environment
Eligible activities	Actions promoting excellence in the field of culture; projects aimed at developing innovative audio-visual content; support to the news media sector, fostering pluralism, cross-border collaboration, and promotion of media literacy, etc.
Participating countries	EU27, candidate countries, associated countries
Eligible applicants	NGOs, Public authorities, Festivals, Civil Society Organizations, Networks, SMEs, Cinemas
Target groups	Arts and culture practitioners, NGOs, children/young adults, underrepresented groups, private companies, Civil Society, public authorities

Online resources

Info sessions	More information and presentation to get a better knowledge of the content and requirements of the various call for proposals can be found here .
Programme-related webpages	CulturEU Funding Guide Creative Europe on Funding & Tenders Portal https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ https://culture.ec.europa.eu/whats-new? https://ec.europa.eu/culture/
Contact point	https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/cerv-contact-points-2021-2027-1_en

Digital Europe

Digital Europe aims to trigger investments by the EU, Member States (MS) and industry in the key areas of artificial intelligence (AI), advanced computing and data handling, cybersecurity, and the advanced digital skills necessary to deploy them. The programme has the potential to connect businesses, public administrations and citizens to the latest technologies and resources. It will also help Europe to remain globally competitive and strategically autonomous, and to have a say in how new technologies reflect our needs and values. The work programme is published on a biannual basis, hence calls are foreseen every two years.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€7.59 billion (new EU programme)
Thematic priorities	Development & Cooperation, Research & Innovation, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Education, Business & Industry, Consumer Protection, Climate & Environment
Eligible activities	Acquisition of exa-scale machines related to high-performance computing; set-up of data spaces and testing and experimentation facilities for artificial intelligence; set-up of cybersecurity centres; master courses on use of advanced digital technologies; deployment of a network of European digital innovation hubs, offering public and private organisations support in their digital transformations, etc.
Participating countries	EU27
Eligible applicants	NGOs, Public Bodies, Private Companies, Research Institutes
Target groups	SMEs, NGOs, Schools, Universities, private companies, Scientists, Civil Society, public authorities

Online resources

Info sessions	More information and presentation to get a better knowledge of the content and requirements of the various call for proposals can be found here: https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/It/node/3356 .
Programme-related webpages	https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/europe-investing-digital-digital-europe-programme https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/communications-networks-content-and-technology_en
Contact point	https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/write-us

ERASMUS +

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It is the only funding programme in the MFF which has a section specifically dedicated to the sport sector. Education, training, youth and sport are key areas that support citizens in their personal and professional development. High quality, inclusive education and training, as well as informal and non-formal learning, ultimately equip young people and participants of all ages with the qualifications and skills needed for their meaningful participation in democratic society, intercultural understanding and successful transition in the labour market. The 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme encompasses six main sectors: School education, Higher education, Vocational education and training, adult education, Youth and Sport. The current programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions and the promotion of youth's participation in democratic life. Erasmus+ supports the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), implements the [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#) and develops the European dimension in sport. The work programme is published on an annual basis, hence new calls are foreseen every year.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€26.2 billion (vs MFF 14-20: €14.8 billion)
Thematic priorities	Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Education, Youth
Eligible activities	Activities outside formal education and training that encourage, foster and facilitate young people's participation in Europe's democratic life at local, regional, national and European level
Participating countries	EU27, candidate countries, ASEAN ³ , ACP ⁴
Eligible applicants	NGOs, Public Bodies, Private Companies, Natural Entities, Research Institutes
Target groups	SMEs, NGOs, Universities, Students, Migrants, Civil Society

Online resources

Info sessions	More information and presentations to get a better knowledge of the content and requirements of the various calls for proposals can be found here: https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events_en .
Open calls	Click here to visualize the open calls on the Funding & Tender Portal
Programme-related webpages	https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/
Contact point	https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/write-us

³ Acronym for Association of Southeast Asian Nations, who participate through Erasmus Mundus

⁴ Acronym for African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, who participate through Erasmus Mundus

EU4HEALTH

EU4Health is the fourth and largest of the EU health programmes that provides funding to national authorities, health organizations and other bodies through grants, and public procurement, contributing to a healthier Europe. EU4Health will make a significant contribution to the post Covid-19 recovery by strengthening the resilience of health systems so they can face epidemics and long-term challenges, and by promoting innovation in the health sector. EU4Health is implemented through annual work programs. The actions cover four action areas: Disease Prevention, Crisis Preparedness, Health Systems and Digital with a cross-cutting focus on cancer.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€5.1 billion (vs MFF 14-20 €452.4 million)
Thematic priorities	Health & Medicine, Research & Innovation, Education, Consumer Protection
Eligible activities	Reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases, outlining the definition of public health guidelines, the preparation and roll out of new policy approaches, pilot test of innovative practices, and other actions such as training and partnerships creation.
Participating countries	EU27, associated countries
Eligible applicants	NGOs, Public Authorities, Civil Society Organisations, Networks, SMEs
Target groups	Health systems of the EU MS, Authorities of the health systems, Research organisations, NGOs, Health organizations, Patients in the EU health system

Online resources

Info sessions	More information and presentations to get a better knowledge of the content and requirements of the various calls for proposals can be found here .
Open calls	Click here to visualize the open calls on the Funding & Tender Portal
Programme-related webpages	https://funds-navigator.eu/en/program/eu4health2027 https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/eu4health_en https://ec.europa.eu/health/funding/eu4health_en https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_956 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.107.01.0001.01.ENG
Contact point	https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/eu4health/national-focal-points_en

Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is the largest R&I programme in the world. Successor to Horizon 2020, it is foreseen to involve 130+ countries eligible for funding. It supports research and innovation throughout the entire value chain, from frontier research to the market uptake of innovation, including scale-up of breakthrough innovators. The programme will increase its impact by working closely with other EU programmes and policies, such as InvestEU, EU Cohesion Policy, Digital Europe and the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The management of the framework programme is shared among many subjects, from the European Commission's directorates general and its Agencies, to independent bodies, such as e.g. European Research Council, European Innovation Council, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and the Joint Research Centre. The funding opportunities can be identified in the programme published on biannual basis.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€95.5 billion (vs MFF 14-20: €77.03 billion)
Thematic priorities	Research & Innovation, Development & Cooperation, Agriculture & Rural Development, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Consumer & Public Health, Environment, Climate Action, Business & Industry, Education, Culture & Media
Eligible activities	Networking and coordination; research; innovation; pilot actions; innovation and market deployment: etc.
Participating countries	EU27, countries that have associated agreements (candidate countries, Israel, UK, ...)
Eligible applicants	NGOs, Private Companies, Research Institutes, Public Bodies, Natural Entities
Target groups	SMEs, Universities

Online resources

Info sessions	Specific info days are organized for this programme. Check them out here: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/events/horizon-europe-info-days_en
Open calls	Click here to visualize the open calls on the Funding & Tender Portal
Programme-related webpages	https://funds-navigator.eu/en/program/heu2027 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home https://cordis.europa.eu/ https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/organisation/dg-rtd-dg-research-innovation_en https://erc.europa.eu/ https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/node_en https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/partners-networking/access-research-infrastructure/european-research-infrastructures_en https://ec.europa.eu/research/eic/index.cfm
Contact point	https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp

InvestEU

The InvestEU Fund acts as a single EU investment support mechanism for internal action, replacing all existing financial instruments. Its overall objective is to support the Union's policy objectives. In particular, to promote recovery, green growth, employment and competitiveness. By mobilizing public and private investment within the EU that meets the additionality criterion, the InvestEU Programme seeks to make EU funding for investment in Europe, simpler, more efficient and more flexible.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€26.2 billion (new programme)
Thematic priorities	Research & Innovation, Development & Cooperation, Social Investment, Digitalisation, Business & Industry, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
Eligible activities	High EU added value activities such as sustainable infrastructure, research, innovation and digitization, small and medium-sized businesses, and social investment and skills.
Participating countries	EU27
Eligible applicants	Private companies
Target groups	SMEs, Private Investors, Recipients of microfinance, private companies, project promoters, public bodies, service providers

Online resources

Info sessions	The EIB group, main fund-giver of the programme, organizes multiple events to inform the public and firms of funding opportunities; they can be visualized here .
Newsletter	https://ec.europa.eu/investeuportal/desktop/en/find-out-more.html#investeu-newsletter
Programme-related webpages	https://funds-navigator.eu/en/program/investeu2027 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/659364/EPRS_BRI(2020)659364_EN.pdf

LIFE Programme

The EU LIFE Programme supports projects in the fields of environmental protection and climate policy. The focus here is on the implementation, adaptation and development of environmental and climate policies and European legislation in the relevant areas. The CLIMATE sub-programme specifically supports projects in the areas of farming, land use, peatland management, renewable energies and energy efficiency and also aims at facilitating the transition towards an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate neutral and resilient economy by funding coordination and support actions across Europe. The ENVIRONMENT sub-programme specifically supports protection and restoration of Europe's nature and halting and reversing biodiversity loss as well as facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment, either through direct interventions or by supporting the integrations of those objectives in other policies. Calls are foreseen every year.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€5.432 billion (vs MFF 14-20: €3.45 billion)
Thematic priorities	Nature and Biodiversity, Circular economy and quality of life, Climate change mitigation and adaptation and Clean energy transition.
Eligible activities	strategic integrated projects, technical assistance projects, standard action projects, pilot projects
Participating countries	EU27, candidate countries, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein
Eligible applicants	Member States, NGOs, Public Bodies, Private Companies, or any other legal entity created under Union law or any international organization (IO)
Target groups	SMEs, Environmental organisations/activists, Municipalities, public structures of the environmental sector

Online resources

Info sessions	there is a YouTube playlist of the Info Days at this link: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?app=desktop&list=PLKuLiQigqrClpLvXhql06nJSyWCZ1Su7P
Open calls	Click here to visualize the open calls on the Funding & Tender Portal
Programme-related webpages	https://funds-navigator.eu/en/program/life-env2027 https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/life/life-environment-sub-programme https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life/life-support-applicants_de https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/search https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/wp-call/2021-2024/wp_life-2021-2024_en.pdf
Contact point	cinea-life-enquiries@ec.europa.eu

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

The Connecting Europe Facility is a common, centrally managed programme funding targeted transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructures. CEF subprogrammes are CEF Transport, Energy and Digital. Established in 2013 as part of the Europe 2020 strategy, it helps finance the development of trans-European networks, improve cohesion in the internal market and the EU's competitiveness in the global market. It seeks to bring high European added value and stimulate further investments. CEF financing takes the form of grants, procurement, financial instruments and support actions helping to prepare quality projects. Most of the CEF budget is implemented by the European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency ([CINEA](#)) on the basis of open and competitive calls for proposal.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€33.71 billion (vs MFF 14-20: €21.94 billion)
Thematic priorities	Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, Clustering, Development Cooperation, Economic Cooperation, Capacity Building, Cooperation Networks, Institutional Cooperation, Digitisation, ICT, Telecommunication, Research & Innovation, Technology Transfer & Exchange, Competitiveness, SME, Justice, Safety & Security
Eligible activities	Research, development & innovation; Developing creative & technical skills, Digitalization & new business models
Participating countries	EU27, Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)
Eligible applicants	Institutions located in one of the EU27, Iceland, Norway or the UK
Target groups	Public Sector, Non-Profit Organisations, Academic institutions, and research centers.

Online resources

Info sessions	More information and presentations to get a better knowledge of the content and requirements of the various calls for proposals can be found here . Further events organized by CINEA can be found here .
Open calls	Click here to visualize the open calls on the Funding & Tender Portal
Programme-related webpages	https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/connecting-europe-facility/about-connecting-europe-facility_en https://pro.europeana.eu/ https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/about-us/key-documents/work-programme_en
Contact point	inea-communication@ec.europa.eu https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/contact-0_en EuropeanaResearchGrants@Europeana.eu

European Urban Initiative (EUI)

The EU Urban initiative (EUI) is a part of the Cohesion Policy (ERDF) to support urban areas with innovative actions, capacity and knowledge building, as well as policy development and communication on sustainable urban development. The EU Urban initiative largely carries over & clusters together the Urban Agenda for the EU Urban Innovative Actions & Urban Development Network. It also aims at maximizing synergies and complementarity with URBACT IV programme. This initiative will provide support **for cities of all sizes** in 3 different ways:

- Support of capacity building (20% of budget)
- Support of innovative actions (60% of budget)
- Support of knowledge, policy development & communications (20% of budget)

In the new programming period, it is foreseen that at least 8% of ERDF national allocations are earmarked for projects and priorities selected directly by cities themselves. Those cities will be priorities in the EUI activities. In addition to innovative action and capacity building; the knowledge component includes a new Knowledge Platform and a Network of national **Urban Contact Points** operating in national language(s). The European Urban Initiative aims at supporting cities with this new Cohesion Policy frame, encouraging them to be bold on innovation and to spread the benefits of tested solutions across Europe while supporting capacity building and evidence-based policy making, and knowledge sharing, on sustainable urban development. CEMR is a member of EUI Steering Group, providing strategic advice for EUI work programme.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€500 million
Thematic priorities	Innovative actions; Capacity-building for cities, as enshrined by the New Leipzig Charter
Eligible activities	Design of sustainable urban development policies, strategies and practices in an integrated and participative way; design and implementation of these policies and action plans on a local, regional and national level. Peer-learning, transfer and capitalization, urban development network
Participating countries	EU27
Eligible applicants	<p>1) EUI innovative action: urban authorities of more than 50 000 inhabitants, or a grouping of urban authorities with a total population of at least 50 000 inhabitants or associations of local and regional governments thereof with very limited specifics, to check here</p> <p>2) EUI capacity building: Cities and managing authorities implementing sustainable urban development strategies, UIA and EUI- Innovative Actions, URBACT IV and the Urban Agenda for the EU as well as cities which are not yet active or participating in the aforementioned initiatives.</p>
Target groups	local communities, social partners, business, NGOs, experts, institutions, organisations, individuals etc.

Online resources

Open calls	Click here to visualize the open calls
Programme-related webpages	https://www.urban-initiative.eu/
Contact point	info@uia-initiative.eu

ESPON

The ESPON 2030 Programme aims at promoting and fostering a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy actors at all levels. The main objective of the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme is to deliver evidence, data and advice to policies. In particular, ESPON provides support to the reinforcement of the effectiveness of EU cohesion policy and other sectoral policies and programmes under European Structural Investment (ESI) funds as well as national and regional territorial development policies, through the production, dissemination and promotion of territorial evidence covering the entire territory of the 27 EU Member States, the 4 Partner States (EFTA Countries) of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€48 million (vs MFF 14-20 €41.3 million)
Thematic priorities	Regional Development & Regional Planning, Circular Economy, Sustainability, Natural Resources, Research & Innovation, Technology Transfer & Exchange
Eligible activities	research and studies, knowledge gathering and transfer
Participating countries	EU27 + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

Online resources

Info sessions	ESPON does workshops and other info sessions regarding its own calls, can be checked here .
Open calls & PINs⁵	Click here to visualize the open calls; click here to visualize PINs.
Contact point	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure Department for Spatial Planning and Development (DATER), Division for European Affairs 4, Place de l'Europe, L-2946 Luxembourg. Tel: +352 247-86934 mailto:thiemo.eser@mat.etat.lu , http://www.dat.public.lu http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Contact/Menu_ESPONContactPoints/

⁵ Acronym for Pre-Information Notice, a pre-announcement for a call.

URBACT

URBACT is a European Territorial Cooperation programme (ETC) aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. It is an instrument of the Cohesion Policy, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by Member and Partner States. It facilitates the sharing of knowledge and good practices between cities and other levels of governments. The main aim is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.

For the first time, the programme has been **opened to pre-accession countries**, financed by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. In addition to previously existing "Action Planning Network" and "Transfer Networks", a new type of network is created for the period 2021-2027 to strengthen the cooperation and synergies between URBACT and the European Innovative Action: "Innovative Transfer Mechanism Networks".

Networks consist of between five and twelve partner cities. Cities benefit from financial support for staff working on the network, for travel and accommodation to participate in Network meetings and for implementing pilot projects at local level. They are also guided by one URBACT Validated Expert, advising cities on topics, methods, meeting facilitation and local plans.

Facts & figures

Available funds under MFF 2021-2027 (EU)	€103 million (vs MFF 14-20: €96 million)
Thematic priorities	best practices, experiences and case studies on urban trends, coming from the networks, cities and strategic partnerships
Eligible activities	collection and analysis of practices; capacity-building and designation of tools; action planning, transfer and thematic networks;
Participating countries	EU27, Norway, Switzerland, candidate countries, other countries (at own costs)
Eligible applicants	cities, municipalities, towns, local agencies defined as public or semi-public organisations set up by a city partially or fully owned by the city authority, responsible for the design and implementation of specific policies, infra-municipal tiers of government such as city districts and boroughs in cases where they are represented by a politico-administrative institution having competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT network concerned in which they are willing to get involved, metropolitan authorities and organized agglomerations
Target groups	cities, municipalities, towns and the URBACT network overall

Online resources

Info sessions	URBACT organizes multiple events to publicize its funding opportunities. They can be usually visualized here: https://urbact.eu/events
Programme-related webpages	https://urbact.eu/ https://urbact.eu/get-involved https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/2022-09/urbact_iv_operational_programme.pdf
Contact point	https://urbact.eu/find-us-your-country

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE EU “FUNDING AND TENDER PORTAL”

The [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) of the European Commission is the central shop window for EU funding and procurement actions for all European bodies. 34 EU Programmes can currently be accessed on the Funding & Tenders Portal, going from Horizon Europe, to LIFE, to Creative Europe or EU4Health Programme. It is focusing on two main areas: calls for proposals and tenders.

With calls for proposals to which we are referring in this guide, the EC selects, on a competitive basis, organisations or natural persons to implement projects co-financed by EU because these projects contribute to EU policy aims. The Funding & Tenders Portal includes a new layout and graphic design, it has been equipped with an improved keyword search function with new features and search options that reflects its multi-programme coverage. You can access calls and topics in your area of interest through the Portal allowing you to search in the text of the call and topic titles, call and topic identifiers, topic description and keywords and tags. You can also filter using the quick search per topics related to specific EU priorities

In the following [link](#), you can find information about the call for proposal launched by different programmes, the closed and the forthcoming calls. With the creation of this portal, all the project proposals and supporting document should be submitted online. Indeed, as from 2021, all EC services shall be using this portal. It will replace individual systems and tools that were used by the various EC services in the past. The portal offers several services such as:

- Searching for funding opportunities
- Check your eligibility
- Search for partners
- Submit project proposals
- Manage and reporting
- Funded projects and statistics

Under the call for proposals that you may be interested in, you can find the following information:

- The call and its description
- Type of action
- Deadline
- Eligibility criteria
- Submission link (the link is open for submission when the call is launched until the deadline for submission)
- FAQ

Thanks to the portal, you can subscribe to receive updates on new calls under the [Funding Opportunities RSS feed](#). Thus, you will get notifications when calls are published or any other related information. Before considering the submission of a project proposal (Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities and Associated Partners) must be [registered in the Participant Register](#) and (by the time the grant is signed) be [validated by the Central Validation Service](#) (Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities).

The EC has put in place under [Helpdesks & Support Services](#) for IT related issues (IT helpdesk), responding to questions about EU (Europe Direct) and help with the validation process of legal entities (research enquiry services). In the portal, you can access to the following documents where you can find more information about the submission process, the requirements, steps to follow and FAQs regarding submission and the evaluation of the project proposals.

Selected funding & tenders portal material:

- [User Guide of the Submission System](#): you can find in this guide more information about the submission process, the requirements, steps to follow;
- [FAQ on Proposal submission and evaluation](#): FAQs regarding submission, issues faced, and the evaluation of the project proposals;
- <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event210527.htm>: the Funding & tenders Portal for beginners, explains how to make full use of the portal and its features.
- <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Online+Manual>: this online guide, provides information step by step from applying for funding, to evaluation, grant signature and grant management including reporting.

HOW TO SUBMIT A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT PROPOSAL?

With a view to embarking on a European project, you first need to read in-depth the programme and all the documents related to the call you are about to apply. Some general information are needed to be extracted from the call for proposals mainly concerning the **expectations**, the **eligibility criteria**, the **deadline** and the **available budget**. Such preliminary information are crucial and help with the decision over if and how your project concept matches such criteria.

Please analyze the key information:

- *Eligibility criteria*: check eligible countries, eligible legal entities, min. and max budget, eligible activities, eligible expenditure, etc. Thus, you know which type of partners can join you and from which countries;
- *Co-financing rules*: check the rate of requested co-funding. This is important, so that you can identify the need from you own budget;
- *Deadline for submission*: check by when the project should be submitted, so that you submit few days in advance as everyone submit the day of the deadline and you might face issues with the online submission system;
- *Administrative requirements*: check what you need to submit as administrative and legal document and in which stage such documents are to be provided. Keep in mind that some documents take a long time to get such as co-financing agreements;
- *Application forms*: Check the application forms that are needed to be submitted and the length including the chapters to be filled in. In general, we have part A (general info) and B (narrative) accompanied with a detailed budget if requested in the call.

Adapting the project concept to the call priorities is a prerequisite of a successful project, as the evaluation will look closely into the sustainability of the project. The EU programmes are likely to finance a **sustainable** and **impact-oriented** project rather a project ending once the funding stops.

- *Tailor the project concept*: a project must contribute to the EU policies and strategies whenever the level of implementation. Therefore, it is important that the project concept is meeting such an essential criterion;
- *Ensure the coherence with the call*: Practically show how the project will contribute to EU policies, the EU added value, the innovation side of the project and how your organisation will make use of the projects results and ensure its sustainability
- *Impact oriented*: The EC is not funding a project or solution already available but rather projects that are results and impact oriented.

The proposal must show that project partners have been **involved** in the development of the project, have an interest, are committed and have the capacity to deliver meaningful project results.

- *Delivery spirit and results oriented partners*: Even if project actors are the best actors in the world for the sector addressed and even if they produce all the outputs planned, if they are not involved since the very beginning and do not have capacities, there is a great risk to not achieve great results;
- *Experienced and committed partners*: partners should show an experience related to the project activities, make sure that the project concept is in line with the mission and vision of

the partners. Moreover, partners should have an added value in ensuring sustainability and good dissemination.

- *Engage with the partners as with your internal team members:* it is very important that the exchange and the engagement during the project preparation apply both to the members of the team and to the members of the partnership. The application must show that partners are committed to the idea and have the human and technical capacity to keep the project going.

FIVE TOP TIPS!

- Always keep in mind the project objectives and the requirements from the call for proposals
- Avoid complicated sentences in order to make the narrative attractive for the evaluators. Do not use too much technical words or jargons.
- Set up the project proposal drafting team: someone with expertise in the topic/content, someone with expertise on project management, partnership building, negotiation, etc. to orient the drafting phase, someone responsible of the budgeting and all administrative tasks;
- The devil is in the detail! Be specific and provide facts and figures; indicate WHY, by WHOM, WHERE, WHEN, and HOW.
- Select the right partners, with capacity, experience and interest on the project idea and develop the proposal in an inclusive way.

To help further with the development of project proposals, we invite you to consult “Handbook for a successful project” published under the PLAFORMA programme: <https://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PLATFORMA-v2-EN-1.pdf>

OTHER RELEVANT GUIDES/PLATFORMS

1. **Euro Access – Macro Region** – Link [here](#) → this link contains the description of every programme for the 2021-2027 financial framework, EU Macro Regions, Thematic focus, funding area, eligible applicants and applicant details.
2. **Energy Cities** – Link [here](#) → the EU has a number of funding sources available for energy transition in cities. They have their own focus, operational guidelines and requirements. This is a brief rundown of each of those programmes to help cities access the help they need in building a decarbonised, decentralised and democratised future.
3. **Eurocities** – Link [here](#) → this document provides an overview of the funding programmes relevant for cities. it will be updated and completed once all the regulations establishing the funding programmes have been finalised and more information about future calls becomes available
4. **CulturEU Funding Guide** – Link [here](#) → In this guide you can find an overview of all EU Programmes which are relevant for the cultural and creative stakeholders, including key information on who can apply and how, as well as the kinds of activities supported.
5. **Guide on EU Funding for Tourism** – Link [here](#) → This guide focuses on practical issues related to the most important EU funding programmes for the tourism sector. It will help you find appropriate funding and it contains also links to relevant EU Programme websites with the latest developments (such as annual work programmes and calls for proposals) and further details per programme.
6. **EU-Learning: Funding Opportunities 2021-2027 A practical guide** - Link [here](#) → The handbook about EU Funding Opportunities 2021-2027 provides an overview of the main funding instruments offered by the European Union. Each instrument is portrayed and introduced within 2-3 pages. General information is shared such as: the funding instrument structure, the thematic priorities, or eligible applicants.
7. **CESIE ⁶ Funding Opportunities 2021-2027** - Link [here](#) → CESIE aims to inform its partners and beneficiaries about the new funding and cooperation opportunities offered by the European Commission for the period 2021-2027. You will find an overview of the programmes of education, youth, sport, research, justice, culture and citizenship.

⁶ Acronym for European Centre of Studies and Initiatives