



Guide on Financing opportunities for the Green Energy Transition of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Supporting the energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture
through EU funding opportunities under the 2021-2027 multiannual
financial framework, NextGenerationEU and beyond

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Directorate: General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Directorate: Directorate A – Maritime policy and Blue Economy
Unit: Directorate A.4 – Economic analysis, markets and impact assessment
E-mail: MARE-ENERGY-TRANSITION@ec.europa.eu

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

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List of Abbreviations

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CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CET	Clean Energy Transition
CF	Cohesion Fund
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
DG	Directorate-General
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ETS	Emissions Trading System
EU	European Union
FAMENET	Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GNI	Gross National Income
I3	Interregional Innovation Investments
IAA	Interreg Atlantic Area
IF	Innovation Fund
IBSPS	Interreg Black Sea Basin Programme
IBSR	Interreg Baltic Sea Region
INEA	Innovation and Networks Executive Agency
INSP	Interreg North Sea Programme
IPA	Adriatic-Ionian Programme
IT	Information Technologies
JTF	Just Transition Fund
JTP	Just Transition Platform
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LE	Large Enterprise
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MED	Mediterranean Sea Basin
MF	Modernisation Fund
MS	Member State
MSME	Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
NCP	National Contact Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSP	North Sea Programme
PDA	Project Development Assistance
PIF	Project Idea Form
RE	Renewable Energy
RFF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
RRP	Recovery and Resilience Plan
SME	Small to Medium-sized Enterprise
UN	United Nations
VC	Venture Capital
WHR	Waste Heat Recovery

Introduction

The fishing and aquaculture sectors, like many other economic activities within the European Union, are increasingly pressed to swiftly phase out their dependence on fossil fuels. This imperative is not only aligned with the overarching objectives of the European Green Deal, which aims at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 but is also crucial for enhancing the sectors' financial viability, sustainability, and resilience.

The [Communication](#) adopted in February 2023 by the European Commission on Energy Transition in EU Fisheries and aquaculture has identified a different set of actions to support the acceleration of the energy transition towards a climate-neutral sector by 2050. Improving business environment and raising awareness of financing opportunities were identified as one of the four main pillars to set course for the energy transition action plan. To promote simplified access to information on funding, and better identify which funds can be used to support the energy transition, the Commission prepared this guide, which was announced in the communication.

This document is a comprehensive guide that serves as a valuable resource for understanding the diverse funding options available to support the energy transition of EU fisheries and aquaculture. It caters to a wide range of stakeholders, including small and large-sized enterprises, public administrations, research institutions, and civil society organizations seeking EU funding for their energy transition projects.

The objective of this guide is to enhance the existing landscape of guidance for environmental funding. It complements established guidance tools from the European Commission such as the [EU Funding Programme for the Environment guide](#), the [Investors Dialogue on Energy](#), or the [Access to EU Finance tool](#), as well as an existing [guide on EU funding opportunities for aquaculture](#). What sets this guide apart is its tailored approach, specifically designed to assist stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to swiftly identify and assess the applicability of EU funding sources that align with their endeavours in supporting the energy transition.

The guide covers a spectrum of areas supporting the transition of fisheries and aquaculture, including innovations for vessels, improvements in energy-efficient gear and equipment, and energy management enhancements for aquaculture. It also covers industry-related infrastructure transformations that can help reduce carbon emissions, as well as training and capacity-building that can help ensure a fair and competitive transition.

This guide is a dynamic document that undergoes regular updates to include newly identified funds at various junctures. These updates align with the evolving landscape of funding opportunities within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors focusing on financing activities related to energy transition. The guide will be regularly updated on [the Energy transition partnership website](#). Additionally, feedback from stakeholders in these sectors is actively sought and incorporated, in an iterative process that ensures the guide remains current, relevant, and valuable in facilitating the sectors' pursuit of sustainable practices.

How to use this guide?

For quick reference, the handbook features a summary table highlighting the most relevant characteristics of each one of the EU funding programs for the reader's specific needs. The table can also be used as an index, and links to the funds' detailed fiches. Each program includes a profile with information about its context, scope, and overarching objectives, and outlines how each fund can be used for financing the green transition. The profiles specify which aspects of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors it covers, as well as the project stages that are eligible for the fund. The guide also presents the total budget of each fund, along with the funding rate (the potential amount that can be allocated to an individual project) and provides examples of previous projects funded for similar purposes.

In addition, the fiches outline the eligibility criteria and conditions for accessing the funding instruments dedicated to the energy transition in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, offering users a clear understanding of the requirements. Should users wish to move forward and submit a project to a call for proposals, the guide offers essential information on the awarding process and indicates where they can access further technical assistance.

In summary, this guide equips the fishing and aquaculture sectors with a comprehensive understanding of the available funding opportunities for their energy transition endeavours. It helps stakeholders to determine their potential eligibility for various EU funding sources and interregional programs.

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Summary table

Name of fund	Overall fund budget	Fund lifespan	Funding Manager	Use of the fund for energy transition projects
European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund ✨	€6.108 billion	2021-2027	European Commission, CINEA, and Member States	   
BlueInvest, BlueInvest Fund and Invest EU Blue Economy ✨	€300 million	2020-2026 and 2021-2027	European Investment Fund (EIF)	   
InvestEU Green Transition ✨	€500 million	2021-2027	European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	   
Recovery and Resilience Facility ✨	€723 billion	2021-2027	European Commission	   
European Regional Development Fund ✨	€226.05 billion	2021-2027	European Commission (DG REGIO), European Innovation Council, EISMEA	   
Interreg Baltic Sea Region ✨	€235.7 million	2021-2027	Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein	   
Interreg North Sea ✨	€158 million	2021-2027	Interreg North Sea Joint Secretariat	   

Funding stages	Type of instrument	Website
    	 	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
    	 	BlueInvest, BlueInvest Fund and InvestEU Blue Economy
    	 	InvestEU Green Transition
    	 	Recovery and Resilience Facility
    	 	European Regional Development Fund
    	 	Interreg Baltic Sea Region
    	 	Interreg North Sea

Legend

-  Fisheries
-  Aquaculture
-  Land/marine infrastructure
-  Training and Capacity-building
-  Proof of concept
-  Piloting
-  Demonstration
-  Scale-up
-  Roll out

Legend

-  Direct grants
-  Financial instruments
-  Green - Yes
-  Grey - No/not specified
-  Interactive
-  Return to summary page

Summary table

Name of fund	Overall fund budget	Fund lifespan	Funding Manager	Use of the fund for energy transition projects
Interreg Euro-MED 	€294 million	2021-2027	Provence Alpes Cote d'Azur Region	   
Interreg NEXT Mediterranean Sea Basin 	€253 million	2021-2027	Autonomous Region of Sardinia	   
Interreg Adriatic-Ionian Programme 	€160.810 million	2021-2027	Regione Emilia-Romagna, Bologna	   
Interreg Atlantic Area 	€116 million	2021-2027	Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte	   
Interreg Black Sea Basin Programme 	€94.4 million	2021-2027	Ministry for Development, Public Works and Administration of Romania	   
Innovation Fund 	€38 billion	2020-2030	European Commission, supported by CINEA and EIB	   
Horizon Europe 	€95.51 billion	2021-2027	European Commission (DG Research and Innovation)	   

Funding stages	Type of instrument	Website
    	 	Interreg Euro-MED
    	 	Interreg NEXT Mediterranean Sea Basin
    	 	Interreg Adriatic-Ionian Programme
    	 	Interreg Atlantic Area
    	 	Interreg Black Sea Basin Programme
    	 	Innovation Fund
    	 	Horizon Europe

Legend

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-  Return to summary page

Summary table

Name of fund	Overall fund budget	Fund lifespan	Funding Manager	Use of the fund for energy transition projects
Modernisation Fund <small>* ↗</small>	€48 billion	2021-2030	Member States, European Commission, EIB	   
LIFE Programme <small>* ↗</small>	€997 million	2021-2027	European Commission, CINEA	   
Just Transition Fund <small>* ↗</small>	€19.2 billion	2021-2027	European Commission, Member States	   
Connecting Europe Facility <small>* ↗</small>	€25.8 billion	2021-2027	European Commission, CINEA	   
European Social Fund+ <small>* ↗</small>	€99.3 billion	2021-2027	Member States, European Commission	   
Cohesion Fund <small>* ↗</small>	€48.03 billion	2021-2027	European Commission, Member States	   
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	€95.51 billion	2021-2030	Member States	   

Funding stages	Type of instrument	Website
    	 	Modernisation Fund
    	 	LIFE Programme
    	 	Just Transition Fund
    	 	Connecting Europe Facility
    	 	European Social Fund+
    	 	Cohesion Fund
    	 	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Legend

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-  Return to summary page

01 European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

Overview

The [European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund \(EMFAF\)](#) offers support for the improved sustainability of fisheries, aquaculture and maritime sectors. The funding period runs from 2021 to 2027. It supports the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the EU maritime policy and the EU agenda for international ocean governance.

Scope & Objectives

EMFAF support can be granted to projects that will help achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and conserve marine biological resources. It particularly supports small-scale coastal fisheries, young fishers and outermost regions, and promotes sustainable aquaculture. The fund aims to contribute to improved food security through the supply of seafood products, growth of a sustainable blue economy, and healthy, safe and sustainably managed seas and oceans.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The EMFAF supports innovation and investments in climate-resilient and low-carbon fishing practices and techniques that help to facilitate:

- The transition to sustainable and low carbon fishing
- The development of sustainable and competitive aquaculture
- Innovation in the sustainable blue economy



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: carbon footprint reductions such as alternative fuels, electric propulsion systems, hydrodynamic optimisation or the increase vessel tonnage to enable installation a more energy-efficient engine.

Energy efficiency increases: mature technologies improving energy efficiency such as the replacement or modernisation of more energy-efficient gear, or bridge systems for engine control.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: development and deployment of energy transition technologies for aquaculture.



Training and Capacity-building

Education projects and skills programmes, as well as energy audits and other initiatives for the dissemination of knowledge and technologies.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

What project stages can be funded?

The EMFAF aids the energy transition by funding both innovative technology development and the broader adoption of mature technologies, covering everything from initial proof-of-concept tests to final implementation investments.

Project stages



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[AQUAWIND](#) project aims to perform a demonstration test of a multi-use (MU) integrated and co-located solution. It consists of an innovative multi-use prototype combining offshore renewable energy and aquaculture in the Atlantic Basin led by the Government of the Canary Islands. The prototype platform generates electricity while producing food, helping mitigate the impacts of climate change in the Atlantic Sea Basin.

Total budget: €1 333 148

EU contribution: €1 066 518 (80% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (September 2022 – August 2025)

[4BIZ project](#) aims to develop cooperation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture (but also coastal and maritime tourism, and maritime transport) by putting together the business actors with the stakeholders from the Black Sea countries. To this end, it aims to identify and address local capacity-building requirements, increase digitalization and innovation capabilities, and improve the investment environment.

Total budget: €638 105

EU contribution: €510 484 (80% of the overall budget)

Duration: 24 months (June 2022 – May 2024)

[GREENing the BLUE](#) project worked on energy efficiency solutions to decrease the fuel use and emissions from shipping. The project aimed to promote the use of wind power to propel vessels, reducing fuel consumption and pollutant emissions.

Total budget: €1 246 390

EU contribution: €810 151 (65% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (Jan 2019 – Dec 2021)

[Aspiring Wingsails](#) project developed, tested and validated a wind propulsion system (eSAIL®) that reduces the fuel use and pollutant emission of fishing vessels through wind energy co-propulsion. The project received funding under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Total budget: € 995 598

EU contribution: €647 138 (65% of the overall budget)

Duration: 24 months (Nov 2019 – May 2022)

[MusselPro](#) project developed a state-of-the-art mussel processing system based on advanced imaging technology and artificial intelligence programmed to manage each batch of mussels individually. The final outcome of the project is a scaled-up and market-ready MUSSELPRO demo unit validated at industrial scale.

Total budget €1 528 781

EU contribution €993.707 (65% of the overall budget)

Duration: 42 months (November 2019 – April 2023)

For a longlist of EMFAF funded projects visit the [Cluster story](#) on fishing and aquaculture.

Note that these examples are limited to projects managed directly by the European Commission. Projects under Member State management are underway as of 2023.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

Part of the EMFAF is directly managed and financed by the European Commission or delegated to the CINEA, while majority of the budget (87%) is managed by Member States to support their own EMFAF national programmes.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€6.108 billion



Budget managed by the EU:
€797 million
(13% of total)



Budget managed by Member States:
€5.311 billion
(87% of total)



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The highest amount of financial aid available (the [maximum aid intensity rate](#)) varies between 40% (e.g., when young fishermen buy their first used boat) and 100% (for activities such as supporting small-scale coastal fishing or improving global ocean management). The maximum grant amount can vary depending on the proposal call; for instance, the call on [Improving scientific knowledge to strengthen the science-basis of management decisions under the Common Fisheries Policy](#) specified a fixed fund rate covering 80% of project costs.

EMFAF support can be provided through grants and, increasingly, through financial instruments. The latter can contribute to the achievement of the following EMFAF objectives:

- promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture;
- fostering the implementation of the CFP;
- promoting a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas;
- fostering the development and implementation of the Union's Integrated Maritime Policy in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP.

In the 2014–2020 period, apart from in a few Member States, financial instruments were not widely used under the then European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Despite the limited deployment of EMFF financial instruments during 2014–2020, there is potential for greater use of those instruments under the new EMFAF.

These financial instruments will allow EMFAF managing authorities to develop tailored support packages addressing the needs of targeted groups and policy objectives, such as generational renewal (while avoiding overcapacity and overfishing), sustainable aquaculture, innovation and diversification, supporting the whole seafood value chain to face current and future challenges.

It also offers the possibility to explore synergies with other financial instruments under the other shared management funds ERDF, ESF+ or EAFRD. A broad range of EMFAF-supported financial instruments can be potentially implemented taking the form of loans, guarantees, equity or combination of support measures (incl. in combination with grants and other forms of support).

Further information on the establishment and use of financial instruments at national level under the EMFAF is available on the [FI-Compass website](#).



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Procurement contracts, loans, guarantees and compensation payments. Loans or guarantees are only for large companies for fisheries and aquaculture product processing.

Beneficiaries Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries include operators from the fishery and aquaculture sectors, research institutions, public authorities, NGOs, international organisations, and civil society organisations.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Activities under the four [EMFAF priorities](#) and their corresponding objectives are eligible. This includes projects:

- Fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources
- Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities and processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products
- Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities
- Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed

Applications for grants managed by Member States must further specify national priorities and objectives determining project eligibility. The [EMFAF regulation](#) sets out a list of ineligible operations (in Article 13) that cannot be supported, unless an exception applies.

Eligibility criteria

For grants managed by the EU, legal entities (both public or private bodies) established in an EU Member State, including overseas countries and territories or non-EU countries listed in the work programme, have access to the EMFAF provided that their participation is necessary for the achievement of the objectives of a given action.

Specifically, the fund includes criteria under the replacement or modernisation of a main or ancillary engine with reductions of CO₂ emissions, and the increase in the gross tonnage of a fishing vessel improving energy efficiency.

Eligibility criteria and specific cases (i.e., international organisations, EU bodies, natural persons, etc.) can be found listed in each [funding call](#) and vary from one call to another.

Award process support and technical assistance

Regular calls for project proposals are made throughout the fund's duration (2021 – 2027). Project promoters can apply through the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](#) during open calls for projects. Calls include tutorials for the application procedure, such as the [application tutorial for the last call](#). Calls for proposals include a call document outlining eligibility criteria, evaluation and award procedure, and guidance on the proposal submission process.

Useful links and additional information

- The [EMFAF regulation](#) provides more detailed information on the fund.

The European Commission provides an indicative schedule for upcoming calls in the [Annual work programme](#) for grants and procurement.

- [EMFAF national authorities](#) can be contacted for further information.
- [Maritime datahub](#) on supported projects is a useful tool for reviewing past projects that have received support.
- The EMFAF also provides [technical assistance](#) at the initiative of a Member State or the European Commission for its implementation, such as preparatory, monitoring, control, audit and evaluation activities, including corporate information technology systems. This support is subject to the ceiling of 1,5 % of the total fund volume.

Who to contact for further information

- An [IT Helpdesk](#) is available for individual questions.
- Non-IT related questions should be addressed to cinea-emfaf-calls@ec.europa.eu no later than three working days before the submission deadline.
- [Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network](#) (FAMENET) is a support unit introduced to assist stakeholders in the implementation of EMFAF. FAMENET provides technical assistance to Member States implementing community-led local development in fisheries and aquaculture areas and can be contacted at info@famenet.eu.

02 BlueInvest, BlueInvest Fund and Invest EU Blue Economy

Overview

[BlueInvest](#) is a technical assistance mechanism, platform and online community launched by the European Commission in 2019 to accelerate new ocean-based technologies and solutions unlocking innovation and investment opportunities in the sustainable blue economy. BlueInvest is funded by the [European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund](#) (EMFAF).

The BlueInvest Fund is an intermediated equity product launched under the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) Equity Product in 2020. It will enable the selected intermediaries to inject €300 million of equity investments (with private capital) into blue economy SMEs until 2026.¹

InvestEU Blue Economy is an intermediated equity product under the InvestEU thematic strategy 'Climate and Environmental Solutions', which supports clean technologies and environmental sustainability solutions. It is targeted towards supporting equity investments in blue economy companies by intermediaries such as Venture Capital (VC) funds, national development banks and impact investment funds.

The financing facility was launched in 2022 and is managed by the European Investment Fund (EIF). It is enabled through a top-up contribution by the EMFAF, matched by an InvestEU guarantee and EIF/EIB own funds, and is one of the delivery instruments of the BlueInvest initiative to address the funding gap for blue economy innovation, crowd-in private investment and foster the emergence of a responsive blue economy VC ecosystem.

Scope & Objectives

BlueInvest provides technical assistance services and investor matchmaking to innovative start-ups and SMEs in the blue economy. It also targets investors and collaborates with other players, including accelerators, large corporates and other stakeholders. It helps connect and support these groups by hosting events, offering assistance for companies to prepare for investments and raise funds, providing coaching and matchmaking services, enhancing investor skills, and offering market insights.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

BlueInvest provides its services to SMEs and start-ups including to companies with technologies and solutions contribution to the energy transition. The InvestEU Blue Economy funding facility is open to intermediaries for their investments into innovative blue economy SMEs and start-ups, including in companies and projects addressing the energy transition through the increase in energy efficiency of vessels and infrastructure and investments in ocean-enabled renewable energy.

[1] These were: [Sofinnova Partners](#); [Astanor Ventures](#); [Ocean 14](#) and [Sarsia](#).



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: Integration of renewable, zero carbon and low-carbon sources for propulsion systems.

Energy efficiency increases: for gear and equipment



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades ensuring a sustainable maritime transport ecosystem, including the transportation of freight and passengers by water and port services



Training and Capacity-building

For financial intermediaries and impact investors targeting investments in the blue economy

Project stages

Even though the fund initially points to early stages, all stages can actually qualify.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[13 Mari](#) project addresses shipping decarbonisation and reducing fuel costs – developed innovative drag reduction solutions for improved fuel efficiency and cleaner waters. The company received coaching through the EU BlueInvest Readiness Assistance Programme and was able to secure just under €500 000 in funding.

[Algaria SRL](#) project produces spirulina alga in a circular way – introduced a system whereby the thermal energy of the biogas generated by the plants are used to heat a greenhouse all year round. All inputs and outputs are recuperated, and no raw materials are used. The start-up improved its market and investment readiness and specifically worked on an entire business plan suitable to attract funding.

[Kanda](#) project develops digital training solutions in the maritime and energy sectors – provided easily accessible education and certified training in heavy industries and developing immersive digital learning applications for teamwork across various platforms.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The Invest EU Blue Economy intermediated equity fund mobilises up to € 500 million EU funds in the period 2021-2027 to be provided to intermediaries, such as VC funds, national public development banks and impact investment funds, for their investments into innovative blue economy companies. Together with the matching contributions of these intermediaries it will result in up to €1.5 billion of equity finance to be made available to blue economy SMEs and start-ups.

The intermediaries for the InvestEU Blue Economy financing facility are selected by the EIF on the basis of an open call. Investment decisions at the individual project level are then made by the asset managers of these intermediaries on the basis of their investment strategy. Information on the intermediaries selected and their investment strategies is available at the [European Commission Access to EU Finance website](#).

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:

€300 million (available through the following [Venture Capital Funds](#): [Sofinnova Partners](#); [Astanor Ventures](#); [Ocean 14](#) and [Sarsia](#)).



Fund Lifespan:

BlueInvest Fund:
2020 – 2026
InvestEU Blue Economy:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

Not specified



Direct grants:

No



Financial instruments:

Yes

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Early-stage businesses, SMEs and scale-ups via funds and financial intermediaries (for instance, venture capital funds).

SME

Eligible projects/investments

[Eligible investments](#) are those that support the blue economy by targeting innovative and sustainable investment projects in blue economy subsectors, including aquaculture and fisheries. These must primarily address the sector's specific market gaps in research and innovation; growth of European scale-ups and SMEs; and/or result in social impact. Eligible projects will be those offering innovative and sustainable solutions within the blue economy sectors, including aquaculture and fisheries.

Eligibility criteria

To apply for [Investment Readiness Assistance](#) or join the BlueInvest Community as a company/project, the following criteria must be met:

- A company/project is relevant to the Blue Economy
- It is registered in an EU Member State
- It is majority-owned by EU shareholders

Award process support and technical assistance

The application process for Investment Readiness Assistance for companies is two-fold. First, a company needs to [register](#) with the BlueInvest Community Platform. Once registration is confirmed, a company can apply for the Investment Readiness Programme. The application is made through a call for applications. A 3-month cycle is set to receive applications. All candidates receive an email notification of the selection results one month after the application deadline. In addition, all candidates receive a report with a brief analysis of their investment readiness. Applications are assessed on the basis of the following [criteria](#):

- Market potential
- Investment potential
- Sustainability and environmental impact
- Innovativeness of the product or solution

For investor, the application to the BlueInvest Fund is ongoing until 30 June 2027 through the call for expression of interest and is processed on a first come first served basis. The application process includes a filled-out online [application](#) form. Financial intermediaries' applications [will be assessed](#) on the basis of a policy fit assessment and a commercial assessment.

Useful links and additional information

- More information for investors is available on the [EIF website](#).
- All relevant entities can join the [BlueInvest Community](#).
- An overview of the BlueInvest-supported programmes with relevant calls for applications can be found on the [BlueInvest Maritime forum](#).

Who to contact for further information

All relevant inquiries should be sent to: lu_blueinvest@pwc.com.

03 InvestEU Green Transition

Overview

[InvestEU Green Transition](#) is a financial instrument providing loans in the form of [venture debt](#) for companies working on sustainable solutions in EU countries. Venture debt finance is typically used as a secondary source of finance after equity capital has already been raised.

Scope & Objectives

The instrument targets innovative companies in the following sectors:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Energy
- Water
- Transportation
- Information and Communication
- Professional, scientific and technical activities

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The [Energy Transition](#) is one of the focus areas of the instrument. Typically, the instrument funds areas of energy efficiency in industries such as renewable energy and advanced climate technologies (e.g., energy storage, low carbon and renewable fuels).



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: the fund targets low carbon and the use of renewable fuels in industries including the fishing industry.

Energy efficiency increases: the fund targets energy efficiency improvements in the industries, including the fishing industry.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: falls within the scope of the instrument targeting energy efficiency improvements in industry, including agriculture and aquaculture, and a shift to renewable energy.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

The instrument includes upgrades sustainable infrastructure improvements in various bioeconomy sectors.



Training and Capacity-building

Not specified but could potentially fall under the scope of professional, technical, and scientific activities.

Project stages

The instrument targets late-growth project stages.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[ALGAE UPCYCLING BIO-RESIN](#) project involves the construction and operation of a first commercial scale plant for the production of green macro algae and its transformation into bio-resins based on a proprietary technology.

Project cost: \$59.90 million

Loan amount: \$29.95 million (50% of the total amount)

[XOCEAN](#) project financed a fleet of Uncrewed Surface Vessels for collecting ocean data, mainly to the benefit of the offshore wind energy sector and marine science, to accelerate the development and deployment of innovative ocean monitoring solutions with Uncrewed Surface Vessels.

Project cost: \$104.45 million

Loan amount: \$21.99 million (21% of the total amount)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

InvestEU mobilises private and public investment against an EU budget guarantee provided by the implementing partners. The implementing partners for the Green Transition instrument are the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€500 million



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The minimum project value should be €15 million with co-investment up to a maximum of 50%.



Direct grants:
No



Financial instruments:
Yes – Loans

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

SMEs, small mid-caps, and large enterprises are target beneficiaries of the instrument. Individuals, public sector entities, and mixed entities (public-private partnerships) may also be eligible.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

The projects should fall within the green transition areas that the instrument supports: agriculture, forestry and fishing, manufacturing, energy, water, transportation, information and communication, professional, scientific and technical activities.

Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria are dependent on the implementing partner, in this case, on either the [European Investment Bank](#) or the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#). While the European Investment Bank supports investments in all EU countries, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development only targets investments in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia. Final recipients of funding must be established in at least one EU member state and operate in the eligible countries of the respective implementation partner.

Award process support and technical assistance

The application process is done through the implementing partners: either the [European Investment Bank](#) or the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#).

Useful links and additional information

The [InvestEU website](#) contains comprehensive information on InvestEU funding opportunities.

Who to contact for further information

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development can be contacted at InvestEUComm@ebrd.com

The European Investment Bank can be contacted via [the online portal](#) once a member account is created.

04 Recovery and Resilience Facility

Overview

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#) is the centrepiece of NextGeneration EU, the EU's recovery plan. It supports the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and aims at making Europe more resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions.

Scope & Objectives

The RRF focuses on the following six pillars:

- The EU's green transition;
- Its digital transformation
- A smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
- Social and territorial cohesion
- Health, and economic, social and institutional resilience;
- Policies for the next generation (i.e., children and youth).

Specifically, the RRF has the [objective](#) of providing EU Member States with financial support to achieve the milestones and targets of reforms and investments for their recovery and resilience plans.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The RRF covers investments in projects including the areas of sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate change adaptation, circular economy, and biodiversity under its [green transition](#) pillar. As of 2023, energy efficiency and renewable energy have become the second and third most popular areas of investment within the pillar, respectively.



Fisheries

While not directly addressing fishing vessels, the fund includes the development of sustainable green and blue infrastructure and transport, and has already been used to decarbonise vessels.



Aquaculture

Although not specified in the fund's regulation, an example of a past project which used the fund to modernise its practices shows the fund can be employed for energy efficiency in aquaculture.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

The fund's scope includes the development of sustainable infrastructure and transport, industrialisation and reindustrialisation, and examples are available where it has been used to modernise Port facilities.



Training and Capacity-building

To enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement territorial cooperation projects and initiatives in a cross-border, transnational, maritime and inter-regional context.

Project stages

All project stages are addressed by the fund.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[Support for Aquaculture](#) project modernised and improved the productivity of aquaculture in Greece through the adoption of practices reducing the environmental footprint of aquaculture businesses.

Sub-project budget: €34.4 million
Proposal budget for MSMEs: €500 000 to €5 million
Aid rates per project: 50%

[Boosting the sustainability of maritime transport in Catalonia and Balears](#) project aimed at decarbonising maritime transport from onshore power connection of ships by adopting measures to avoid moored ships using engines as a source of electricity, and connecting vessels to the port grid.

[Improving the sustainability of the Port of Maó](#) project was raised to give new impetus to Europe's largest natural port. This project is built around the green transition, energy efficiency, digital transition and competitiveness. It covers the management and planning of the non-port area, including efficient lighting, the improvement of the website and the completion of the construction of a Hospital.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The RRF is implemented by the European Commission's direct management, through loans and grants to support reforms and investments in EU Member States. The funds are distributed to the Member States based on the progress in the implementation of national recovery and resilience plans. The RRF is a performance-based fund, which means that the European Commission only pays out the amounts to each country when they have achieved an agreed milestones and the targets towards completing the reforms and investments included in their plans.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€723 billion



Fund Lifespan:
2021 - 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The [total amount](#) of grants given to each Member State is determined by an allocation key set out in the [regulation](#), and by the total estimated cost of the respective recovery and resilience plan. The total amount of loans given to each Member State is determined by the assessment of its loan request, and cannot exceed 6.8% of its 2019 GNI.



Direct grants:
Yes – €338 billion of funds is available in grants.



Financial instruments:
Yes – €385 billion of funds is available in loans.

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries of RRF are EU Member States.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Generally, aquaculture & fisheries projects falling within the scope of six pillars can be supported. However, [national recovery and resilience plans](#) of the Member States need to be consulted in order to ensure that the respective Member State has allocated the investments in the fisheries and aquaculture projects.

Eligibility criteria

All EU Member States are [eligible](#) for funding applications, provided that they have prepared national recovery and resilience plans outlining the reforms and investments with clear milestones and targets until the end of 2026. These plans must allocate at least 37% of their budget to green transition measures and 20% to digital measures.

Award process support and technical assistance

Member States submit financial requests to the Commission, which evaluates them according to RRF Regulation criteria. If the assessment is positive, the Commission proposes a Council decision within two months. Upon Council approval, the Commission can disburse 13% as pre-financing. The disbursement is based on achieved milestones and targets, reported within the European Semester framework.

Useful links and additional information

- Guidance to Member States – Recovery and Resilience Plans – [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) is an extensive source of information for Member States for the creation of national recovery and resilience plans.
- [Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard](#) gives an overview of progress in implementing the RRF.
- A [map of projects](#) is available displaying the distribution of project implementations across the program's various themes.

- The Commission also publishes the [RRF annual reports](#) showing the progress made in the Programme's implementation.

Who to contact for further information

The Recovery and Resilience Task Force can be contacted at EC-RECOVER@ec.europa.eu.

05 European Regional Development Fund

Overview

The [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) aims to enhance unity across economic, social, and geographic aspects within the European Union. It corrects imbalances between regions and enabling investments in a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe that is closer to its citizens.

Scope & Objectives

In the 2021 – 2027 phase, the fund enables investments making Europe and its regions:

- More competitive and smarter, through innovation and support to small and medium-sized businesses, as well as digitisation and digital connectivity
- Greener, low-carbon and resilient
- More connected by enhancing mobility
- More social, by supporting employment, education, skills, social inclusion, and equal access to healthcare, as well as by enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism
- Closer to citizens, supporting locally led development and sustainable urban development across the EU

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The green transition is one of the priority thematic areas of the ERDF. Particularly, the [I3 Instrument](#) supports innovative value chain investments, to boost the economy through green technology and to create sustainable industry and transport. In the blue economy area, this includes – but is not limited to – investments in bioeconomy, efficient and sustainable agriculture and forestry, innovation in maritime and inland water sustainable solutions.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: falls within broader objectives on the energy transition of industry

Energy-efficient gear and equipment: falls within broader objectives on energy efficiency of industry.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: falling within broader objectives on improving energy performance



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: falls under broader objectives on sustainable industry, energy efficiency and reducing GHG emissions



Training and Capacity-building

Mainly for research and innovation purposes

Project stages

Close to market activities such as demonstration, scale-up and roll out.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[Baltic MUssel Products for PET-foods - MUPPETS](#) project aims to establish regenerative mussel production in the Baltic basin, contributing to local economic growth while also providing a range of ecosystem services. The project invests in mussel farms and innovative submerged farming techniques to create high value pet food products.

Total budget: [€7.5 million](#)

EU contribution: [€5.14 million](#) (69% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (November 2022 – November 2025)

[Aqua Valley](#) project brought regions together to share knowledge to promote innovation, helping companies make technological breakthroughs, adopt better aquaculture methods and commercialise new products and solutions.

Total budget: €4 217 845

EU contribution: €1 474 361 (35% of the overall budget)

Duration: 54 months (March 2017 – September 2021)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

ERDF funding is primarily channelled through two key mechanisms: A portion of the funding is allocated via the [I3 \(Interregional Innovation Investments\) Instrument](#), which supports innovation projects across regions during their commercialization and scaling phases. The remaining funding is shared between the EU Commission and national/regional authorities, with Member States responsible for project selection. Oversight of the I3 instrument falls under the purview of the European Commission's DG REGIO and is managed by the European Innovation Council and SME executive agency (EISMEA).

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€226.05 billion



Budget managed by the EU:
€570 million
(1% of total)



Budget managed by Member States:
€225.48 billion
(99% of total)



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

Up to 70% of project costs can be covered by the EU (up to €10 million per project). For the I3 Instrument's strand 1 and strand 2 calls, the funding rate for financial support to third parties provided by beneficiaries is up to 100% of the eligible costs. For other eligible costs, the co-financing rate is up to 70%.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries of the ERDF include public bodies, some private sector organisations (such as SMEs and large companies in well-justified specific cases), universities, associations, NGOs, and voluntary organisations.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

[I3 calls](#) prioritise actions including digital transition, green transition, and smart manufacturing. Green transition support is aimed at projects attaining innovative sustainable solutions in value chains, green technology, industry, transport and mobility, food systems, agriculture, clean energy, and reducing pollution. Smart manufacturing focuses on innovative solutions for products, processes and services that foster a circular economy and the shift towards more environmentally sustainable production.

Eligibility criteria

The I3 Instrument targets various players, including businesses, government, research centres, and more. It has two [main strands](#) of applications:

- Strand 1 supports interregional innovation projects in specific areas, requiring a consortium of at least five entities from different regions and countries.
- Strand 2a helps create value chains in less developed regions, needing a consortium of at least three entities from different regions and countries, focusing on both more and less developed regions. Strand 2b supports capacity building for value chains in less developed regions.

Award process support and technical assistance

There are regular calls for project proposals throughout the fund's duration. Project promoters can apply through the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](#) during open calls for projects. Calls include a tutorial for the application procedure available on the website. An [application tutorial](#) for the last call is available to assist in this process. Each call for proposals includes a call document, outlining eligibility criteria, evaluation & award procedure, and guidance on the proposal submission process. [Online Manual](#) is a useful tool for applicants, containing relevant information on the EU Funding & Tenders application process. The evaluation process typically takes around 5 months. The proposals will follow this two-step [evaluation procedure](#).

Useful links and additional information

- The [work programme](#) for the I3 Instrument funding is published annually to provide an overview of funding calls.
- There are several additional information sources on European regional funding: The [Europe Direct](#) information relays, with hundreds of information points all over Europe. The [Enterprise Europe Network](#) provides expert advice to small businesses on how to access EU public funds and grants for research and development, innovation, investment, employment and training.
- In the case of the I3 Instrument that falls under cohesion policy, regions are categorised as 'less developed regions', 'transition regions' and 'more developed regions'. This categorisation can be found within [Article 108 of the Common Provisions Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1060](#).
- An [Information on Regional Policy performance](#) desk is available to help you understand what projects have been supported over the years.
- An [I3 Instrument FAQs](#) document is available to respond further questions on eligibility, expectations, application process, and financial support.

Who to contact for further information

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, the [IT Helpdesk](#) can be contacted. Non-IT related questions should be sent at the latest three working days before the submission deadline to the following email address: EISMEA-I3-INSTRUMENT@ec.europa.eu.

ERDF-funded INTERREG Programmes

Below is a selection of ERDF-funded Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG) Programmes with a maritime component and a regional/sea basin scope. This is not an exhaustive list, as there are other cross border and transnational INTERREG Programmes as well as Programmes involving EU enlargement and EU neighborhood policies, which could also cover maritime and energy transition topics. Visit the full list of Interreg Programmes in the interreg.eu portal to find out more about the available Programmes, calls and jobs.

06 Interreg Baltic Sea Region

Overview

The [Interreg Baltic Sea Region \(IBSR\) Programme 2021–2027](#) is part-financed by the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) and Norway. As part of the EU Cohesion Policy 2021–2027, it aims to achieve a higher degree of territorial integration within the EU and beyond its borders with neighbouring countries by supporting practical cross-regional cooperation.

Scope & Objective

The [IBSR](#) programme is structured along four priorities connecting organisations to build:

- Innovative societies with resilient economies and communities, and responsive public administrations
- Water-smart societies with a strong blue economy.
- Climate-neutral societies undergoing transformations towards an energy transition and a circular economy.
- Cooperation and macro-regional governance

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The IBSR promotes the decarbonization of energy systems in the region. This includes helping innovative business developments in sectors like aquaculture, blue biotechnology, shipping, fisheries, coastal and maritime tourism. It also aims to enhance energy efficiency in industrial production processes and buildings. The program additionally encourages the production of renewable energy from local resources, and the enhancement of energy efficiency, with particular a focus on fisheries, aquaculture, and the broader blue economy sector.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: supports the deployment of sustainable energy sources, including in maritime vessels.

Energy efficiency increases for gear and equipment: supports the introduction of environmental standards and eco-efficient solutions on vessels to reduce emissions, including the automation of processes on ships.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: includes support for innovations in aquaculture integrating circularity, energy efficiency and climate change mitigation measures.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: supports the introduction of environmental standards and eco-efficient solutions to reduce emissions, including in ports.

Energy-neutral/positive facilities: includes support for systems for producing, storing and using renewable energy, and in particular, renewable electricity from locally available resources.



Training and Capacity-building

Enhances institutional capacity of public authorities and relevant stakeholders

Project stages

The IBSR Programme does not restrict the application to specific project stages, however projects awarded most commonly address piloting and implementation.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[TETRAS](#) project is combining aquaculture with industrial and energy production processes and deploying resource and energy efficient methods for food production by Recirculating Aquaculture Systems.

Total budget: € 2.96 million
EU contribution: €2.36 million (80% of the overall budget)
Duration: 24 months (January 2023 – December 2025)

[BEST ACE](#) project uses biomethane efficiently in long-haul transport and maritime industry. The project identifies conditions to elaborate a business roadmap for biomethane in the Baltic area for the use of maritime vessels, covering hydrogen conversion and natural gas grids.

Total budget: €0.34 million
EU contribution: €0.28 million (82% of the overall budget)
Duration: 24 months (October 2022 – September 2024)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein acts as the managing authority for the IBSR for the funding period 2021–2027. All payments are made by the European Commission to the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein, which is responsible for management and implementation of the programme. A monitoring committee is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness and quality of the programme as well as for selecting the awarded projects.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€235.7 million
(incl. €232.4 million
from ERDF funds)



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

EU partners receive up to 80% of the requested amount, Norwegian partners receive up to 50% of the requested funds.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Public authorities, service providers and sectoral agencies, education and research institutions, enterprises and business support organisations, non-governmental organisations and interest groups.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Thematically, projects that fall within the four priority objectives are eligible for funding. Three main types of projects that can be funded by the Programme:

- Core projects have a duration up to 36 months, unlimited budget (proportionate to activities), and a focus on piloting and introducing practical and durable solutions to challenges.
- Small projects have a duration of up to 24 months, with a maximum of €500 000, and focus on building trust among project partners and developing networks.
- Project platforms have a duration of up to 36 months. They are budgeted with specific amounts depending on the call, and focus on transferring results from thematic fields to target groups.
- An overview of the project types and their requirements is provided in page 10 of the [Programme manual](#).

Eligibility criteria

Eligible [countries](#) for the Programme are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and [specific regions](#) of Germany and Norway.

Core, small and platform project types require a minimum of three partner organisations from three Programme countries (on average, projects have 10 partners). Strategy and governance projects require at least two partner organisations from two different countries.

The application is open to public and private legal entities.

Award process support and technical assistance

The application is made through the [open calls](#) for project proposals that open regularly throughout the programme duration. The application process consists of five stages:

- Project Idea Form (PIF) Submission to the managing authority. The PIF is submitted via email to idea@interreg-baltic.eu. All applicants are encouraged to request an online consultation with the representatives of the project call and the finance team of the managing authority to receive individual tailored feedback.
- Access to the [BAMOS+](#) platform must be requested once the registration number of the PIF becomes available. BAMOS+ is a platform where lead partners of the project can develop and submit their full application. Access is requested by the sending the [Appointing document](#) to account@bamos.eu.
- Developing full application (preparing the work plan, responsibilities for partners and budgets) on BAMOS+.
- Application submission via BAMOS+.
- Providing additional information, such as uploading partner declarations, contact information and bank information as requested by the platform.

Useful links and additional information

- An overview of the IBSR can be found in the [Programme factsheet](#).
- The [Gateway or Applicants](#) site offers guidance, tutorials and examples to assist applications.
- An [overview of calls for applications](#) is available providing information on past and future project calls.
- [Policy Area Coordinators](#) and National Coordinators can be contacted for further information and guidance.
- A [funding checklist](#) is a tool made available to check your project's fit.
- The [Interreg Baltic Sea Region Matchmaking platform](#) is a tool to help find partners for a project idea.
- A search tool to find examples of funded projects is available in the [PIBSR Projects Library](#).

Who to contact for further information

The managing authority can be contacted at info@interreg-baltic.eu, via phone (+49 381 45484 0) or fax (+49 381 45484 5282) or by filling out a [contact form](#).

Overview

The [Interreg North Sea Programme](#) (INSP) fosters collaborations promoting a green and sustainable future by facilitating cooperation among actors in the North Sea Region and supporting the formation and maintenance of strong partnerships. The current programme spans from 2021 to 2027 with funding aimed at delivering the EU Green Deal along with other key European policies.

Scope & Objectives

The INSP priority areas include:

- Building smart and robust economies, focussing is on helping SMEs and the public sector.
- Fast-tracking the Green Transition, supporting projects aimed at speeding up green transitions within energy, resource efficiency, and urban mobility.
- Fostering climate resilience, a clean environment, and rich biodiversity by bolstering the region against climate impacts, while safeguarding nature and the environment.
- Improving cooperation governance by enhancing cooperation and multi-level governance mechanisms, with a special focus on land-sea interactions.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The INSP puts a special emphasis on the potential for transnational cooperation in bolstering blue growth, while balancing interests and needs such as offshore energy production, marine conservation, fishing and aquaculture, shipping, tourism, and others. It facilitates technological transfer from research to blue economy businesses and stimulates commercial take-up of research results, focussing especially on supporting SMEs promoting energy-efficient practices to reduce their carbon footprint.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: upscaling sustainable and locally produced batteries and vehicles and alternative/new fuels.

Energy efficiency increases: it encourages energy efficiency through practices including the application of new technologies and processes.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: supports pilot initiatives for energy resource savings through innovative industrial design and manufacturing processes and contributes to the energy-efficiency of supply chains, including initiatives such as harnessing 'waste heat' and promoting closed-loop energy supply networks.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: supports low-energy intensive infrastructure, including support for energy-efficiency renovations in ports.

Energy-neutral/positive facilities: promotes the implementation of energy storage and production and supports opportunities for companies to reduce the need for using electricity from the grid, and also to supply energy to the grid at peak times.



Training and Capacity-building

Addresses the smart specialisation and industrial energy transition by increasing the competencies of organisations, particularly of SMEs, to develop new skills in green technology sectors. For instance, supporting waterway crews educational curricula.

Project stages

The INPS covers actions spanning from piloting and demonstration of innovative technologies, to providing assistance for their technical scale-up all the way to their implementation and roll-out to mainstream use and practice.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[WASP](#) project funded Wind Assisted Ship Propulsion with €5.4 million for the promotion, development and adoption of wind propulsion technologies and helped to identify business case for viability for hybrid wind propulsion systems.

Total budget: €5 393 222

EU contribution: €2 613 458 (48% of the overall budget)

Duration: 4 years (2019 – 2023)

[REDII Ports](#) project supported the development of renewable energy and intelligent implementation in Ports. It aimed at exploiting technically feasible and economically affordable generation, storage and consumption of cleaner energy and fuels, including hydro power, wind, tide, and solar energy production, as well as biodiesel, hydrogen and ammonia/methanol fuels.

Total budget: €6.8 million

Duration: 3 years (2022 – 2025)

[DUAL Ports](#) project aimed at decarbonising small to medium-sized ports in the region through major pilot schemes including building the business case for systems using alternative energy sources, improving energy efficiency equipment, and the sharing of resources, technologies and plans for carbon management in ports.

Total budget: €8.69 million

EU contribution: €4.35 million (50% of the overall budget)

Duration: 6 years (2015 – 2021)

RIGHT project had the purpose of bridging the gap between the skills of the workforce and the need from the industry to innovate and raise competitiveness, focussing on emerging and fast changing skills needed for the energy transition of blue economy sectors. Its budget was €3.4 million, where 50% was funded through the interregional programme.

Total budget: €3 366 047

EU & Norway contribution: €1 683 023 (50% of the overall budget)

Duration: 42 months (November 2018 – May 2022)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The **budget** set aside for project co-financing is €158 million. This includes funding by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Norwegian funds. Allocations for the first and second calls have already allocated €94 million to a total 38 approved projects. A remaining €59 million is available for allocation in call 3 and subsequent calls. Funding is disbursed by the Danish Business Authority, which acts as Managing Authority. The Joint Secretariat (part of the Department for Regional Development in Vyborg, Denmark) assists the Managing Authority in the programme implementation.



Total budget:
€158 million



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The co-funding rate for the fund stands at 60%. For Norwegian applicants, co-funding rate is set at 50%. The funds available to projects depend on the **project category** and on the purpose and scope the idea:

- Small-scale projects involve between 3 and 7 partners and have a duration of up to 18 months, and access to a budget of €500 000.
- Regular projects involve 8 to 15 partners, have a duration of 3 to 5 years, and may access a budget between 2 and €6 million.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The INSP implements two project categories: Small-scale and regular projects. During the 2021–2027 period, funding will be allocated to a maximum of 40 small-scale projects. Partnerships must bring in complementary competences, and cross-sectoral teams. For instance, partnerships composed of public agencies, universities, and companies are encouraged.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

All projects, irrespective of their category, must adhere to the following conditions:

- Collaboration with partners from at least three North Sea Region countries is mandatory.
- Each project must have the objective of achieving measurable results within the project's duration.

Eligibility criteria

Eligible projects must submit application stating which one of the four specific objectives in the fund's **priorities** it covers. Projects must involve partners from at least three North Sea Region countries (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway), and depending on whether the project is a regular or small-scale size, it must involve the **right amount of partners**. Find out more about the general rules on eligibility on the **Programme's factsheet**.

Award process support and technical assistance

See what **open calls** are planned and their deadlines on the **INSP website**, where you can also find **guidance materials** to support your application.

- For small-scale projects, you may apply in a single step following an **application guide** that will help you to submit your application.
- For regular-sized projects, there is a two-step application procedure, which is most often approved based on a previous **expression of interest**. Follow the steps in the **application guide** available on the website.

Useful links and additional information

- The **Interreg North Sea Thematic Framework** provides an overview of the Programme, summarising and the prioritising the specific objectives.
- Visit the full text publication of the **Interreg North Sea Programme** for further detail.

Who to contact for further information

Contacts are available for the **joint secretariat**, as well as for the **national contact points** for further enquiries.

Overview

[Interreg Euro Mediterranean \(Euro-MED\) 2021-2027](#) is a cooperation programme contributing to the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient societies across the Mediterranean basin, making the region greener, smarter and improving its governance.

The transnational cooperation strand should aim to strengthen cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Union's priorities, in full respect of subsidiarity.

Scope & Objectives

The primary aim of the programme is to facilitate the shift towards a climate-neutral and sustainable society, combating the effects of global changes on Mediterranean resources while ensuring sustainable growth and the welfare of citizens. The programme promotes cooperation projects, with specific objectives including:

- The development and enhancement of research and innovation capacities, and the uptake of advanced technologies.
- The transition towards a circular and resource-efficient economy.
- The promotion of climate adaptation, and disaster risk prevention taking into consideration ecosystem based approaches.
- The protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure including in urban areas and reducing all forms of pollution.
- Actions supporting better cooperation governance.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

Euro-MED-funded projects promote initiatives to reduce GHG emissions in the mobility sector's energy transition, while also encouraging the adoption of intelligent, sustainable innovations within the blue economy. This encompasses sectors such as fisheries and aquaculture. The program specifically supports cooperation projects and measures that focus on enhancing energy efficiency, driving innovation and technology transfer into the blue economy, and fostering sustainability improvements that interconnect water, energy, and food systems.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: The fund assists the development and technological transfer of clean energy innovations, including specifically in the fisheries sector.

Energy efficiency increases: The fund fosters innovation and technology transfer including more efficient industrial processes across the blue economy.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: The fund fosters innovation and technology transfer including more efficient industrial processes across the blue economy.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: The fund aims to reduce energy and carbon intensity of ports and introduce blue infrastructure solutions, including for energy efficiency improvements and energy renovation.



Training and Capacity-building

Promotes capacity-building and training of organisations and stakeholders for the smart specialization and uptake of green skills and solutions.

Project stages

The Euro-MED covers a range of initiatives including study projects developing new instruments, test projects experimenting and validating solutions to be transferred, and projects aimed at scaling up and rolling out demonstrated technology.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[TOURISMED](#)'s first project mobilised €7 million aimed to identify additional sustainable fish tourism revenue streams for fishermen. The project involved 6 beneficiaries (Italy, France, Greece, Albania, Cyprus, Spain) and provided explanations on fisheries activities for citizens/tourists through a Sea walk.

[Project TOURISMED+](#) piloted interregional cooperation focussed on training public bodies to implement fish tourism, by addressing legal issues during implementation of fish tourism activities such as security, pollution, and accidents on board.

[BLUEfasma](#) project joined 14 partners from 9 countries to improve innovation capacities of SMEs, maritime clusters and networks in Mediterranean islands and coastal areas to support blue circular economy growth in fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Total budget: €2.8 million
EU contribution: €2.4 million (87% of the overall budget)
Duration: 32 months

[PSAMIDES](#) project focused on transforming pilot initiatives in higher scale projects, capitalising on experiences, linking innovative clusters among the port management structures, public authorities, and other stakeholders in the value chain by establishing a more efficient and sustainable ports ecosystem.

Total budget: €2.9 million
EU contribution: €2.4 million (85% of the overall budget)
Duration: 32 months (November 2019 - June 2022)

More examples of previously supported [projects are available on the projects site of the Euro-MED programme.](#)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The main funding source of the Programme are ERDF and Interreg funds. Funding is managed and distributed by the Managing Authority represented by the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, Marseille, France

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:

€294 million

EU contribution: €235 million (80% of total)

Member States' contribution: €59 billion (20% of total)



Fund Lifespan:

2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The maximum co-financing rate is 80%, at least 20% should be secured by the project partnership.



Direct grants:

Yes



Financial instruments:

No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Beneficiaries include public and private research institutions, public authorities, enterprises, SMEs, business support organisations and business networks, civil society organisations (incl. environmental NGOs), interest groups, sectoral agencies, infrastructure providers, and international organisations.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects promoting the transition towards a low-carbon and smart blue economy in the Mediterranean, as well as projects aimed at enhancing regional and transnational cooperation governance.

Eligibility criteria

Regions within the following countries in the Mediterranean basin are eligible: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Republic of North Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Slovenia, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain (see eligible regions listed on the [Euro-MED website](#)).

Submissions require partnerships representing a minimum number of organizations from a minimum number of different eligible countries (specified in each call). For instance, the call of October 2022 required that eligible organisations must be based in at least 5 different countries of the Interreg Euro-MED area, of which 2 needed to be EU countries.

Award process support and technical assistance

The application for funding is done through annual calls for proposals, running from 2022 to 2027. Each call will have a specific focus:

- The 2022 calls were focused on thematic and governance projects.
- The 2024 calls will focus on thematic projects, including strategic territorial projects.
- The 2026 calls will be targeted at thematic test and transfer projects.
- The 2027 call will regard thematic projects focusing on transfer projects.

The 2024 call for proposals is scheduled to be launched in the first semester of 2024. See the [Eu-ro-MED programme calendar](#) for the timeline of proposals.

Prior to each call launch, an information session is held by the programme authorities. Specificities of each call are outlined in the Terms of Reference. All applications are submitted through the [Jems portal](#). The [latest call](#) for thematic projects provides an example of the call specificities.

Useful links and additional information

- The [Programme Document](#) contains all the relevant information, including contacts of national authorities and the programme authorities.
- A [Programme Manual](#) is available to help projects in their design and the application submission process.
- Project partners could be found through multiple thematic forums.
- The list of events can be consulted for further information.

Who to contact for further information

Inquiries can be directed to the Joint Secretariat via email programme@interreg-euro-med.eu or a [contact form](#), or to the [national points of contact](#).

09 Interreg NEXT Mediterranean Sea Basin

Overview

[Interreg NEXT Mediterranean Sea Basin](#) (NEXT MED) 2021–2027 is a cooperation programme aimed at boosting Euro–Mediterranean cooperation under the framework of the European Union’s Cohesion Policy. It contributes to smart, sustainable, and fair development across the Mediterranean basin by supporting balanced, long-lasting, far-reaching cooperation and multilevel governance.

Scope & Objectives

The programme’s mission is to promote cooperation projects that address joint socio-economic, environmental and governance challenges at Mediterranean level. Its objectives include:

- The uptake of advanced technologies
- Competitiveness of SMEs and job creation
- Energy efficiency
- Sustainable water management
- Climate change adaptation
- Transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
- Education and training

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

Projects financed by NEXT MED promote initiatives attaining GHG emissions reductions and fairness in the energy transition of the blue economy, including the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The programme specifically supports projects and measures relating to increased energy efficiency, the transition to renewable energy sources and smart energy management.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: includes testing, development and implementation of maritime technologies improving energy efficiency and reducing GHG emissions. For example, through the update and application of renewable sources of energy.

Energy efficiency increases: it also includes testing and rolling-out of innovations improving energy efficiency across the value chain of the fisheries sector.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: with a focus on the circularity of the blue economy, the fund includes testing, developing and implementing energy efficiency improvements in aquaculture.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: the fund targets energy efficiency upgrades for existing infrastructure



Training and Capacity-building

Promotes education and training to develop the green and blue skills needed to adapt to the changing job profiles of the green transition.

Project stages

The NEXT MED supports initiatives from the initial stages of testing and development of technologies and processes and services, to later stages of technological uptake and commercialization of research outcomes.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[FISH MED NET](#) project joined 7 partners from 5 countries to develop capacities to encourage a sustainable blue economy and successful development of the fishing sector, focussing on benefitting young small-scale fishers, as well as managers from local public authorities, and coastal communities.

Total budget: €2.2 million

EU contribution: €2 million (89% of the overall budget)

Duration: 48 months (September 2019 – August 2023)

[BEEP](#) project involved building information modelling improving energy efficiency in the public sector buildings. The project provided public administrations with a powerful method for the energy rehabilitation of public buildings.

Total budget: €1.9 million

EU contribution: €1.7 million (89% of the overall budget)

Duration: 40 months (September 2019 – December 2022)

More examples of previously supported projects are available on the [projects site of the NEXT MED website](#).

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The main funding source of the Programme are ERDF funds. Funding is managed and distributed by the Managing Authority represented by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:

€253 million – €96.9 million is available for climate action activities, including energy transition (42% of the Programme budget)



Fund Lifespan:

2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The maximum co-financing rate is 89%, at least 11% should be secured by the project partnership.



Direct grants:

Yes



Financial instruments:

No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries include public and private research institutions, public authorities, enterprises, business support organisations and business networks, civil society organisations (incl. environmental NGOs), professional associations, training providers, and social enterprises, and communities.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects promoting the transition towards a low-carbon blue economy, as well those focussing on the fairness of the transition in the Mediterranean, and projects aimed at enhancing regional cooperation governance and enhanced inclusivity.

Eligibility criteria

Regions within the following countries in the Mediterranean basin are eligible: Algeria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libia, Malta, Spain, Palestine, Portugal, and Tunisia (see eligible regions listed in the [Programme document](#)).

Submissions require partnerships representing a minimum number of organizations from a minimum number of different eligible countries (specified in each call), including at least one Mediterranean Partner Country. For instance, the call of November 2023 required a minimum of 3 organisations from 3 Mediterranean countries.

Award process support and technical assistance

The application for funding is done through annual calls for proposals, running from 2023 to 2026. Each year's call will have a specific focus:

- The 2023 Standard Projects call will be open to all specific objectives
- The 2024 call will focus on Green Transitions (with the energy transition as a sub-topic)
- The 2025 call will regard capitalisation-focused targeted to projects exploiting synergies and maximizing impact of previous results.
- The 2026 Consolidation call will be targeted Interreg NEXT MED projects (closed or on-going).

Each call for proposals outlines specific requirements including eligibility, evaluation criteria, and award procedures. The [first call for proposals](#) is scheduled to be launched by mid-November 2023. See an [overview of the Programme](#) for more information on the objectives and the timeline of proposals.

Useful links and additional information

- The [Programme Document](#) contains all the relevant information, including contacts of national authorities.
- Financial opportunities and calls for applications are available at the [information centre](#) site of the Programme's website.

Who to contact for further information

Inquiries can be directed to next.med@regione.sardegna.it or to the [national points of contact](#).

10 Interreg Adriatic-Ionian Programme

Overview

The [IPA ADRION Programme](#) is a European transnational programme operating in the Adriatic-Ionian region. The Programme is partly funded by the Interreg funds and supports projects in both EU and non-EU Partner states, as well as one third country.

Scope & Objectives

The IPA ADRION invests in regional innovation systems, environmental resilience, sustainable transport, capacity building, and cultural and natural heritage protection, across four priority areas:

- Smart specialisation
- Green policies and climate resilience
- Carbon-neutral smart mobility
- Improved governance of the region

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The IPA ADRION specifically addresses the energy transition under its [Thematic Cluster on Blue Growth and related Smart Growth](#), which includes energy, aquaculture, bio-economy, biotechnologies, shipbuilding and nautical sector development. It funds projects that enhance research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies, that develop skills for smart specialisation helping the industrial transition, and that support a carbon-neutral and better connected region.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: the fund covers the uptake of innovations supporting the transition of the blue economy. Pilot actions testing energy sustainability and harmonised regulatory standards have already been applied for maritime/river transport vessels using the fund.

Energy efficiency increases: while no specificity is provided for fishing equipment, improvements increasing energy efficiency are in scope of the broader objectives.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: the uptake of innovations supporting the transition of the blue economy are in scope and include energy efficiency in aquaculture.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: supporting environmental performance and energy efficiency for low carbon port systems and related infrastructures.



Training and Capacity-building

Supporting knowledge sharing through energy-related university masters, and promoting capacity building actions.

Project stages

IPA ADRION funding is open to all project stages.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[BOOSTing](#) project aimed at unlocking knowledge and technology transfer, through transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation of key innovation actors of traditional (primarily fisheries and ship-building) and emerging (primarily Blue technologies-including aquaculture-green shipbuilding, robotics and new materials) Blue Growth sectors.

Total budget: €1 489 421

EU contribution: €1 138 099 (76% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (January 2018 - December 2020)

[SUPER LNG](#) - Sustainability PERFORMANCE of LNG-based maritime mobility - project was coordinated by the National Center for Scientific Research "DEMOKRITOS", Greece. It supported the implementation of technical systems for the distribution and supply of LNG in port areas.

Total budget: €895 million

EU contribution: €760.8 million (85% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (January 2018 - December 2020)

[SUPAIR](#) - Sustainable Ports in the Adriatic-Ionian Region - project was coordinated by Area Science Park, Italy. It supported port authorities in the implementation of low-carbon and multimodal mobility solutions establishing a network low-carbon ports committed to exchange on good practices.

Total budget: €1 448 707

EU contribution: €1 231 401 (85% of the overall budget)

Duration: 30 months (January 2018 - June 2020)

Further examples of projects supported by the Programme are available on the ['ADRION projects site of the website.](#)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The main funding source of the Programme are Interreg funds, managed and distributed by the Managing Authority represented by the Regione Emilia-Romagna, Bologna, Italy.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€160.810 million



Budget managed by the EU:
€136.700 million (85% of total) – up to 54% of funds allocated to green policy projects.



Budget managed by Member States:
€24.110 million (15% of total)



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The maximum co-financing rate is of 85% of the total project cost.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Public authorities (local, regional and national bodies), research institutions, NGOs, and private companies may benefit from the IPA ADRION Programme.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects must strengthen the ties between research and the labour market, and must fall within at least one of the thematic priorities of the programme (smart specialisation, green policies and climate resilience, carbon-neutral smart mobility, and improved governance of the region). In addition, transnational partnerships helping new countries to access EU are welcomed, which can be done by involving four countries from the Western Balkans area (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and a Third State (San Marino).

Eligibility criteria

The IPA ADRION supports organisations operating in regions within located in or in the proximity to the Adriatic Ionian region. Organisations in regions of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, and Slovenia may apply. See the cooperation regions involved in the [‘How to apply’ section of the website](#).

To submit a project proposal, it is necessary to seek a transnational partnership involving countries within the cooperation area. Typically, a transnational partnership comprises both EU member

countries and non-EU member countries to maximize cooperation benefits. All participating organisations must be legal entities.

Award process support and technical assistance

Applications are submitted via open calls for project proposals, which are published annually on the [IPA ADRION website](#). Calls specify eligibility criteria in their application manual, outlining application deadlines and selection timelines. The application is submitted via the [Jems portal](#), and information on the latest call for proposals can be found in the [1st call section of the website](#).

Once a call is launched, prospective applicants can book a consultation with the Joint Secretariat by sending an email to info@interregadrion.eu. Before attending a consultation, applicants should fill in a [project idea template](#). Calls for proposals are supplemented by [National Info Days](#), where useful information is provided locally.

Useful links and additional information

The [IPA ADRION Programme website](#) offers information on:

- [National Contact Points](#), which can be reached to receive information in the national language and find out more about tools and institutions available at the national level.
- A [‘How to apply’](#) step-by-step guide provides a useful checklist for prospective applicants.
- The [Interreg IPA ADRION Partner search](#) platform, a tool to find project partners.
- [ADRION Thematic Clusters](#) can be consulted for further project examples and project ideas.
- FAQs are responded on the general [Programme information website](#).

Who to contact for further information

The Joint Secretariat can be contacted for further information at info@interregadrion.eu.

11 Interreg Atlantic Area

Overview

The [Interreg Atlantic Area](#) (IAA) Programme 2021–2027 is a support programme for Atlantic Ocean regions and countries that is funded by the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF). The Programme is part of the EU Cohesion Policy 2021–2027 and aims to solve common challenges across border through the implementation of joint actions.

Scope & Objectives

The IAA supports blue innovation and competitiveness, safeguards the blue and green environment, promotes sustainable tourism and culture, and advocates for a better governance for cooperation in the Atlantic region. Its priority areas include:

- Blue innovation and competitiveness, through enhancing R&I capacity and technological uptake.
- Blue and green environment, promoting energy efficiency and reducing GHG emissions.
- Blue sustainable tourism and culture.
- Better governance for cooperation.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The Programme specifically supports actions aiming to improve energy management, the development of sustainable ocean energy solutions, and the increase in energy efficiency.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels and energy efficiency increases: while the energy transition of vessels is not explicitly mentioned, the IAA programme does fund the decarbonisation of the blue economy through energy efficiency research and technological uptake.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: energy efficiency and circularity are within scope of the IAA, and cover research and technological uptake within the blue economy sector, including aquaculture, with many examples of past projects available.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: improving capacities and cooperation, including digitalisation to help technology and innovation transfer to ports and other infrastructure.



Training and Capacity-building

Developing training solutions for the enhancement of marine renewable energy and energy efficiency in industrial estates, businesses, and public facilities.

Project stages

The IAA Programme does not restrict the application to specific project stages.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[PORTOS](#) project helped ports in their transition towards energy self-sufficiency by assessing, developing and promoting the integrated use of renewable energy resources in Atlantic Area ports and increasing their energy efficiency, establishing a roadmap to a more competitive and sustainable sector.

Total budget: €2 625 180

EU contribution: €1 968 885 (82% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (April 2019 – March 2022)

[COCKLES](#) was a co-operation project aimed at restoring cockle shellfisheries and its ecosystem-services in the Atlantic Area, providing environmental, societal, cultural, as well as economic benefits to coastal communities in the five Atlantic Area countries.

Total budget: €3 615 577

EU Contribution: €2 711 683

Duration: 36 months (October 2017– September 2020)

[INTEGRATE](#) project offered eco-innovative solutions to foster aquaculture sustainability in the Atlantic Area using circular economy principles to make activities more sustainable and competitive. The project fostered a quintuple helix cooperation to promote the industrial transition, addressing resource use in Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA).

Total budget: €2 012 372

EU Contribution: €1 509 279

Duration: 36 months (June 2017– May 2020)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The [IAA Programme](#) is fully funded by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The allocated funds are entirely managed by the Managing Authority and the monitoring committee. The Managing Authority for the Programme is Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte, located in Porto, Portugal.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€116 million



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The co-financing rate is 75%. The total project budget should be between €1 and 3.5 million.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Business support organisations, social enterprises, third sector organisations, public authorities, education and training organisations, environmental protection agencies, local communities, civil society clusters, universities, enterprises, upper education bodies, and research and innovation institutions can benefit from the fund.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects must cover at least one of the four priorities of the IAA (innovation, green transition, sustainable culture, and good governance). A key factor in ensuring high-quality projects is the mobilization of key players, involving a wide range of relevant stakeholders and achieving balanced regional participation with a good geographical spread across the Atlantic Area.

Eligibility criteria

Project partners must be located within the eligible regions of the Atlantic Area in the EU countries of France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain (see specific regions in the [IAA programme manual](#)). In well-justified cases where the benefits for the cooperation area regions are evident, organizations located outside the EU or EFTA cooperation area may also participate in Program project partnerships.

Lead Partner organisations can be public bodies, universities, education and research organisations, private institutions (not-for-profit) and international organisations acting under national law. Lead Partner organisations can be either public bodies, universities, education and research organisations, private institutions (not-for-profit) or international organisations acting under national law, and must be located in a Programme eligible area. All project partners must actively contribute, with relevant expertise, from at least three countries in the cooperation area to reflect project objectives effectively.

Further eligibility criteria are specified in each [call for applications](#).

Award process support and technical assistance

The application for funding is done through calls for projects that open on a regular basis. Applications must be submitted via the [SIGI Platform](#). Guidance on how to submit the application form are included in each call. Guidance for the latest call can be found in the [first call for proposals](#), which includes examples of the templates that must be completed upon submission. The selection process takes around 6–8 months after submission.

Useful links and additional information

- [National authorities](#) for the Monitoring Committees can be contacted for further enquires.
- In case of technical issues during the application submission, itsupport@atlanticarea.eu can be contacted via email.
- Project ideas can be shared on the [IAA projects website](#) to find potential partners. Interested partners can reach out to through the dedicated project idea section. This can also be used to find project ideas from other owners to join in their project.

Who to contact for further information

All outstanding questions can be sent to the Joint Secretariat at js@atlanticarea.eu

12 Interreg Black Sea Basin Programme

Overview

The [Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme](#) (NEXT BSPS) aims to deepen cross-border cooperation within the Black Sea Basin, building upon the successes of previous regional programmes, and strengthening links in the fields of research and innovation, and environmental protection.

Scope & Objectives

The Programme prioritises the promotion of innovative and smart economic transformations and supports the transition to a greener, low-carbon Europe by advancing the energy transition, green and blue investments, circular economy, and climate actions in the Black Sea Basin region by:

- Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
- Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention and resilience.
- Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The fund finances projects that can enhance research capacities for the development and implementation of low-carbon research and innovation technologies, as well as for uptake and implementation of such technologies. It specifically focusses on the modernisation of maritime sectors, including fisheries and aquaculture, also helping projects that support the fairness of the transition to a clean energy economy.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: while not specifically addressed in the specific targets, modernised shipbuilding for fisheries and aquaculture vessels are in scope of the programme.

Energy efficiency increases: supporting the implementation of innovations through joint IT solutions for small-scale fisheries, including digitalisation and technical capacity improvement.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: use of innovative technologies for sustainable fisheries and eco-friendly aquaculture, and support to their implementation; for instance, through the creation of supporting online hubs for sharing knowledge and best practices.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: the link to the energy transition is not provided for infrastructure related to the blue economy, but research and deployment of green infrastructure are in scope

Energy-neutral/positive facilities



Training and Capacity-building

Developing and enhancing R&I capacities as well as the adaptation of the workforce to changes in market conditions related to the blue economy's energy transition.

Project stage

The IBSPS programme applies to all project stages, spanning from the concept proofing and piloting of innovative technologies and approaches, to the demonstration of the feasibility of practices, and the scale up and roll out of successful models, such as sharing best practices across the Black Sea Basin region.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

Although current examples from successful projects for the NEXT BSPS, or past examples of its predecessor programmes, do not represent the energy transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, a [list of 2014 – 2020 projects](#) covering other areas is available and can be used as guidance on understand successful project strategies and approaches.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The main funding source of the Programme are ERDF funds. Funding is managed and distributed by the Managing Authority, which is represented by Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration Directorate MA for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes of Romania.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€94.4 million



Budget managed by the EU:
€85 million (90% of total)



Budget managed by Member States:
€9.4 million (90% of total)



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The maximum co-financing rate is 90%. For small-scale projects, the indicative project funding should lie between €250 000 and €500 000. For regular projects, the indicative project funding should be within the range of €500 001-1.5 million.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of the NEXT BSPS generally include public authorities, higher education and research institutions, development agencies, NGOs and citizens associations, business support organizations (including chambers of commerce, networks and clusters), and general public. But, additionally, for small-scale projects, the fund is specifically targeted also to regional/local scale actors, including public authorities, NGOs, local organizations and youth groups, higher education and research institutions, schools/education and training centres, and business support organisations.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects are eligible for funding when they fall within the two Programme priorities (research and innovation for a blue and smart regions, and a transition to a low-carbon Europe).

Eligibility criteria

The NEXT BSPS is available to regions located in the Black Sea Basin for Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia. The list of eligible regions within these countries is provided in [page 5 of the Programme document](#).

Award process support and technical assistance

Application for funding is done through open calls for proposals published on the [NEXT BSPS website](#). The Programme plans for two calls for proposals, one in 2023 and the other in 2024. Calls for proposals contain specific information on the application process, including specific eligibility criteria and an expected timeline for the evaluation.

Guidance on the [latest call](#) is available, and applications are submitted through the [Jems application](#) online platform.

Useful links and additional information

- The [Programme document](#) is a comprehensive source of information on the programme.
- [FAQs](#) for calls for proposals are available on the accessed on the website.
- Partners for projects can be found in the [Black Sea Basin Community](#).
- Examples of other success stories are available on the [stories site of the NEXT BSPS website](#)

Who to contact for further information

The Managing Authority of the Programme can be contacted at blacksea-cbc@mdlpa.ro, and the Joint Secretariat can be contacted at office@bsb.adrse.ro.

Further information on the contact points is available on the [NEXT BSPS contacts site](#).

13 Innovation Fund

Overview

The [Innovation Fund](#) (IF) is a key instrument in EU climate policy, and focuses highly on big flagship innovative technologies. It provides funding to programs demonstrating innovative low-carbon technologies and initiatives, and with a particular emphasis on the energy and industrial sectors. The fund facilitates the decarbonization of European industry and aid its transition towards climate neutrality while enhancing competitiveness. In 2023, the IF underwent revisions to strengthen its impact, enhancing its overall size, and expanded its scope to include maritime sectors.

Scope & Objectives

The fund invests in next-generation technologies to support the EU's energy transition. It supports market take-off for low-carbon technologies and fosters competitiveness by empowering EU companies with a first-mover advantage. The primary goals of the IF are:

- Facilitating investments by businesses in clean energy and industry
- Stimulating economic growth
- Creating sustainable jobs
- Strengthening Europe's technological leadership globally in the context of clean technologies

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The fund supports innovative technologies and flagship projects that can:

- Lead to significant emissions reductions
- Provide innovations significantly improving carbon intensity
- Incentivise further investments into low-carbon solutions.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: The fund specifically supports decarbonisation initiatives including innovative electrification and use of low-carbon fuels.



Aquaculture



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: Includes improvements on energy efficiency in processing.



Training and Capacity-building

Project stages

The IF primarily focuses on supporting innovative projects in their pre-commercial and commercial stages, all the way from piloting up to their scale-up, particularly focussing on areas related to low-carbon technologies and climate action.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

Statistics on [successful proposals](#) for 2020, as well as a list of successful [project stories](#) for Innovation Fund projects are available. Some examples include:

[Sugar Oil as sustainable marine fuels](#) project examines the potential use of crude sugar oil (CSO™) as a fuel for internal combustion engines, particularly those powering maritime vessels. It aims at confirming the technology's technical and economic feasibility, aiming at supporting substantial outcomes of GHG reductions.

[SustainSea](#) project will implement bound4blue's cutting-edge rigid wind sail system in the maritime transportation sector. This innovative system harnesses wind energy to curtail fuel consumption and GHG emissions within the industry.

[E-PROOF](#) project integrates battery power into a seagoing passenger ferry's propulsion system, showcasing the viability of electric maritime transport in challenging high-latitude environments.

[First Bio-LNG to Marine Shipping](#) project is a collaborative effort to propel the maritime industry toward sustainable energy solutions. A waste processing company contributes biogas converted into premium Bio-LNG using iLNG tech.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The IF is financed by the reinvestment of revenues from the [Emissions Trading System](#) (ETS), and operates under direct supervision the European Commission, supported by CINEA and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Size and management of the fund

The Fund is financed by revenues from the auctioning of allowances under the EU Emissions Trading System which is estimated to be €38 billion (based on a 75 €/tCO₂ carbon price, between 2020 and 2030).



Total budget:
estimated €38 billion, depending on carbon price



Fund Lifespan:
2020 - 2030

Funds available for individual projects

The fund supports up to 60% of eligible costs for projects through regular grants, and finances up to 100% of costs for projects participating in competitive bidding procedures. Funding is calculated based on methods specified in each call for proposals, typically covering both capital and operational costs over the first ten years of operation. Payments are disbursed flexibly, considering project milestones achieved during their lifecycle. To cover their remaining costs of their projects, applicants can combine the Innovation Fund grant with other public subsidies.



Direct grants:

Yes



Financial instruments:

Yes – Through competitive bidding.

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target Beneficiaries

The IF is addressed to public and private entities developing and implementing innovative technologies aiming to provide significant reductions in GHG emissions. Beneficiaries can apply individually or as part of a consortia, provided that all parts meet the eligibility criteria.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

The IF serves to share the risk with project promoters and prioritize first-of-a-kind innovative projects. Projects must be sufficiently mature in terms of planning, business models, and financial and legal structures. The IF also supports cross-cutting projects offering innovative low-carbon solutions leading to emission reductions in multiple sectors, for example through industrial symbiosis. The fund divides its calls for proposals between calls for [small scale](#) projects, with total capital costs below €7.5 million, and [large scale](#) projects with a capital expenditure above €7.5 million.

Eligibility criteria

The range of projects financed is varied, and covers projects in all EU member States, as well as Norway, Lichtenstein and Iceland.

- Their effectiveness of greenhouse gas emissions avoidance
- Their degree of innovation
- The maturity of the project
- Its replicability
- Its cost efficiency

Projects applying for competitive bidding are checked based on minimum qualification criteria and then ranked according to the auctioned price. The detailed scoring and ranking methodology, as well as possible additional criteria for geographical and sectoral balance, are set in each call for proposals. Award process support and technical assistance

Award process support and technical assistance

There are regular calls for project proposals throughout the fund's duration. Project promoters can apply through the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](#) during open calls for projects. Calls include a tutorial for the application procedure available on the website. The [application tutorial](#) for the last call is available.

When a project applies to the IF, its eligibility and admissibility is first assessed by CINEA, after which external evaluators scrutinise eligible and admissible projects. Applications lead to one of three possible outcomes:

- Successful applications receive a grant
- Applicants not succeeding in obtaining a grant can be proposed by external evaluators to be supported by [Project Development Assistance](#) (PDA) to for assistance to improve future applications, and
- Unsuccessful applications not proposed for the PDA may be submitted for future calls.

Useful links and additional information

- The [Funding and Tenders](#) opportunities website offers information on tenders that are forthcoming, currently open for submission, and already closed.
- The European Commission and CINEA organise regular [events and webinars](#) on the IF presenting lessons learned or relevant policy developments
- Several countries offer [national contact points](#) to provide further information on the IF and its interactions with other national funding instruments and EU programmes.
- [Project Development Assistance](#) is available to improve the maturity of your project through high-quality technical and financial advisory support. It is particularly useful to companies that have applied, but not succeeded in obtaining an IF grant. Consult also the [EIB dedicated website](#) on the PDA.
- A Guide of [Best practices from previous Calls for Proposals](#) is available to help with your application.

Who to contact for further information

Questions can be directed to the [Innovation Fund Helpdesk](#).

14 Horizon Europe

Overview

[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges.

Scope & Objectives

The [programme](#) priorities include:

- Science enhancing EU's global scientific competitiveness
- Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness addressing climate, energy, food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and the environment
- Making Europe a leader in market-creating innovation
- Widening participation by supporting Member States to promote national research and innovation

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The energy transition is addressed under the pillar of 'Global challenges'. Specifically, the area of '[Climate, energy, and mobility](#)' address climate change issues through use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. The marine environment is addressed under mission 3 'Healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters' which has the goal of decarbonising the blue economy.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: falls within the areas of invention for research & innovation activities

Energy efficiency increases: in gear and equipment also falls under the areas of invention for research & innovation.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: falls under the areas of invention for research & innovation.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: Development of safe technologies and procedures for bunkering at ports and offshore and systems for reducing emissions at climate-resilient ports

Energy-neutral/positive facilities



Training and Capacity-building

Capacity building in the research & innovation field and activities

Project stages

Horizon Europe supports all stages of research and innovation, from early idea generation to market implementation and deployment.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[bound4blue](#) project – Sailing towards renewable energy for maritime transport – proposes a highly innovative aeronautics-based sail using wind as a renewable energy source for propulsion to reduce more than 30 % of the fuel used in maritime transport.

Total budget: €3 424 003,29

EU contribution: € 2 396 802 (70% of the overall budget)

Duration: 24 months (March 2022 – February 2024)

[ZHENIT](#) project – Zero waste Heat vessel towards relevant ENergy savings also thanks to IT technologies – promotes waste heat recovery (WHR), and develops and validates WHR solutions and digital tools at different temperature levels for several on-board services like cooling, power and desalination, valorising heat in diverse vessel processes.

Total budget: €4 384 488,75

EU contribution: €4 384 488,25 (99.9% of the overall budget)

Duration: 24 months (July 2022 – June 2024)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The programme is managed by the European Commission, its Executive Agencies and a range of legal entities established as Union bodies (e.g., European Research Council, European Innovation Council, European Institute of Innovation & Technology, and Joint Research Centre). The programme is implemented through a range of partnerships with industry.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€95.51 billion



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

For individual projects, the fund covers between 30% and 100% of project costs. For research and innovation, this may go up to 100%. Early-stage innovation projects can be funded with up to 70% of project costs, and coordination and support can be funded with up to 100%. European partnership co-funding is between 30% and 70%.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Yes

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries include universities and research institutes, public administrations, industry and SMEs, NGOs, end-users (e.g., citizens' associations, professional associations), etc.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

[The principal source of funding](#) for aquaculture and fisheries falls under the pillar 'Global Challenges' which includes food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and the environment. Primarily, funds are focus on research and innovation projects aimed at transforming the efficiency of production methods and promoting the use of innovations, improving the sustainability and circularity of the food system, enhancing climate mitigation and resilience and environmental performance.

Eligibility criteria

Any type of organisation can apply for [Horizon Europe](#) funding as long as they have the operational and financial capacity to carry out the tasks proposed. For most calls for proposals, applicants must team up with at least 3 partner organisations from 3 different EU or associated countries. At least one of the 3 partners must be from an EU country. In addition to these 3 partners, organisations from other countries might be able to join in a consortium. Some calls for proposals require a multi-actor approach: this means proposed projects must involve a diverse set of stakeholders, in particular end-users and users of the project's results.

Award process support and technical assistance

There are regular calls for project proposals throughout the fund's duration. Project promoters can apply through the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](#) during open calls for projects. Calls include a tutorial for the application procedure available on the website. A general application [tutorial](#) for Horizon Europe proposals is available to introduce the process. Each call for proposals includes a call document, outlining eligibility criteria, evaluation and award procedure, and guidance on the proposal submission process. This [online manual](#) is a useful tool for applicants, and contains relevant information on the EU Funding and Tenders application process.

Useful links and additional information

- A [list of upcoming and past events](#) related to Horizon Europe provides an overview of the fund activities.
- [News](#) on Horizon Europe open calls and webinars is regularly updated to provide relevant information.
- The [Horizon Europe – How to apply page](#) is a useful tool to receive more information on the application steps and procedures.
- These tools can be used to find project partners: [National contact points \(NCPs\)](#), [Horizon Europe NCP Portal](#), and [Enterprise Europe Network](#).
- [The Regulation](#) governing Horizon Europe provides further details on the fund.

Who to contact for further information

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, the [IT Helpdesk](#) can be contacted.

Questions on EU funding for research and innovation should be sent to the [Research Enquiry Service](#). If you are already registered in the Funding & tenders portal, you may contact the Central Validation Service through the [Participant Registry](#), by using the 'Messages' function in your Participant Identification Code account.

15 Modernisation Fund

Overview

The [Modernisation Fund](#) (MF) is a dedicated funding programme to support 10 lower-income EU Member States in their transition to climate neutrality by helping to modernise their energy systems and improve energy efficiency. It is recognised in the [European Green Deal Investment Plan](#) as one of the key funding instruments contributing to the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#).

Scope & Objectives

The MF will help beneficiary Member States in their energy transitions by financing their adoption of greener and cleaner energy sources in strategic sectors and by promoting the exchange of best practices. It supports investments in:

- Generation and use of energy from renewable sources
- Energy efficiency
- Energy storage
- Modernisation of energy networks, including district heating, pipelines and grids
- Just transition in carbon-dependent regions: redeployment, re-skilling and upskilling of workers, education, job-seeking initiatives and start-ups

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The MF is entirely dedicated to projects supporting the energy transition and contributing to meet national climate and energy targets, as well as to modernising energy networks through investment support, increasing energy security, financing renewable energy sources, and supporting interconnections.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: Although no specific detail is provided on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, the focus is on the generation and use of energy from renewable energy sources, as well as the increase of energy efficiency across the economy.

Energy efficiency increases: Although not specific for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, the fund's scope includes energy efficiency improvements in other related sectors, and aims at improving energy efficiency across the economy.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: Although not specific for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, the fund's scope includes energy efficiency improvements in other related sectors, such as buildings, agriculture, and waste.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure



Training and Capacity-building

Helps to re-skill and up-skill workers, as well as education, job seeking initiatives and start-ups to support the just transition in carbon-dependent regions.

Project stages

The primary focus of the MF is to drive energy modernization in Member States by implementing proven technologies, including scaling up and rolling out initiatives.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

A list of confirmed and recommended proposals by country can be accessed in the [investments section of the MF website](#). No specific examples are available showcasing the use of the fund for the fishing and aquaculture sectors.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

Member States select the investments and submit them to the Investment Committee, the EIB and the European Commission. The EIB decides whether an investment is a priority or non-priority and the European Commission and Investment Committee allocate funds to these investments. The EIB also manages the assets of the fund and provides the resources to the Member States.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget: estimated €48 billion, depending on the carbon price.



EU contribution: €20 billion (42% of total)



Member States' contribution: €28 billion (58% of total)



Fund Lifespan: 2021 – 2030

Funds available for individual projects

Priority investments can receive up to 100% funds allocated, while on-priority investments can be covered by up to 70% (see eligible projects/investments for detail on the type of investments)



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Yes

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The MF targeted beneficiaries are the ten lower-income EU Member States: Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

The MF can provide support to aquaculture and fisheries projects related to:

- [Priority investments](#) touch on least one of the following areas: renewable energy, energy efficiency (including in transport, buildings, agriculture, and waste), energy storage, energy networks and/or just transition in carbon-dependent regions (including support for the redeployment, reskilling and upskilling of workers, for education, for job-seeking initiatives and start-ups, and in dialogue with social partners).
- [Non-priority investments](#) are those that do not belong to any of the above, but meet the objectives of the MF and demonstrate a decrease in GHG emissions.

Eligibility criteria

To obtain financing, the beneficiary Member State must:

- Demonstrate that the investment complies with the MF requirements set in the [ETS Directive](#) and the [Implementing Regulation](#), and have sufficient funds available on its MF account
- Provide evidence that the investment proposal is in line with State aid rules
- Confirm that the investment complies with any other applicable requirements of Union and national law
- Confirm that there is no double funding of the same costs with another Union or national instrument

Award process support and technical assistance

Project proponents submit their applications directly to the Member States, who then select the investments they wish to submit for MF support (direct applications by project proponents cannot be sent to the EIB, the Investment Committee or the European Commission). Then, Member States submit the proposed investments to the EIB, the Investment Committee and the European Commission. The EIB confirms priority status and the European Commission decides on disbursements for priority and recommended non-priority projects. The EIB transfers funds to Member States within 30 days following the disbursement decision.

The [Assessment Guidance Document](#) provides all the necessary information on investment submission practicalities, assessment criteria and assessment processes.

Useful links and additional information

- The MF allows co-financing from private and public entities, as well as the use of resources such as national funds and/or European instruments (e.g., InvestEU, Connecting Europe Facility, European Structural Investment funds and Just Transition Fund).
- [FAQ](#) can be consulted for further information.
- [Annual Reports](#) by beneficiary Member States are available on the website.

Who to contact for further information

The MF Secretariat can be contacted at modernisation-fund@eib.org or via the [Contact form](#).

16 LIFE Programme

Overview

Within the LIFE Programme, the [LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme](#) (LIFE CET) facilitates the transition towards an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding coordination and support actions across Europe. It supports the delivery of EU policies in the field of sustainable energy, in particular, the European Green Deal, the Energy Union through the 2030 energy and climate targets, and the European Union's 2050 long-term decarbonisation strategy.

Scope & Objectives

The LIFE CET facilitates the transition towards an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding coordination and support actions across Europe. Projects under the sub-programme focus on:

- Capacity building and diffusion of knowledge, skills, innovative techniques,
- Solutions for reaching objectives on the transition to renewable energy and to increased energy efficiency.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The fund removes market barriers hampering the socio-economic transition to sustainable energy. While the sub-programme's primary aim is not specifically targeted at funding the energy transition of the blue economy, fisheries and aquaculture projects may be in scope if cross-cutting objectives related to both clean energy align with the specific objectives and criteria of the sub-programme, which include helping to accelerate roll-out of innovations, attracting private finance for the energy transition, and the enhancement of the related professional skills.



Fisheries

Energy transition of vessels: Although not directly specified in the programme, these are in scope, and examples of projects addressing the energy efficiency of vessels are found in past successful applications.



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management: Although not specified in the programme, examples of projects addressing the energy efficiency of vessels are found in past successful applications.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: There is a Specific call addressing the [energy performance of buildings](#)



Training and Capacity-building

Specific calls address capacity building (e.g. up- and re-skilling for the decarbonisation of [buildings and businesses](#), or for [energy systems integration](#)).

Project stages

LIFE CET does not restrict the application to specific project stages, and is relevant to projects spanning from proof of concept down to the scale-up and roll-out of demonstrated innovations.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[LIFE+ EfficientShip](#) project demonstrated the efficiency of an innovative technology for reducing GHG emissions of thermal engines with power by adapting Organic Rankine Cycle technology, converting heat into work, and applying it to mobile thermal engines in fishing vessels.

Total budget: 1 245 666 €

EU contribution: 622 833 € (50% of total budget)

Duration: 48 months (June 2014 - June 2018)

[LIFE-AQUASEE](#) project demonstrated the use of innovative, low-emission technologies in the aquaculture sector, energy and oxygen self-sufficiency, and to reduce their overall environmental impact through effluent treatment and carbon dioxide (CO₂) fixation.

Total budget: €1 840 953

EU contribution: 919 744€ (50% of total budget)

Duration: 36 months (June 2014 - June 2017)

[LIFE22-CET-AENEAM](#) project aims to accelerate the transition of the agri-food EU industry towards a sustainable growth model by increasing the up taking of the recommended measures from Energy Audits, encouraging companies to undergo energy audits and the subsequent implementation of the recommendations from these audits, promoting digital solutions.

Total budget: €1 579 903

EU contribution: €1 500 000 (95% of the overall budget)

Duration: 36 months (January 2024 - December 2026)

Further examples can be found in the [LIFE Project database](#) or the [LIFE Public Dashboard](#).

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The LIFE programme is directly managed by the European Commission, with the majority of grants distributed by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA).

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€997 million



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

Projects are supported with a 95% co-funding rate.



Direct grants:
Yes – At least 60%
of the budget is
allocated via grants.



Financial instruments:
Yes – Through prizes
and procurement

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries of the LIFE programme include private enterprises; NGOs and civil society organisations; and public authorities.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects are co-financed under the LIFE CET in the following five areas of intervention:

- Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition
- Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market
- Attracting private finance for sustainable energy
- Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects
- Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition

Eligibility criteria

The following entities are eligible to submit a proposal under the LIFE Programme:

- Public or private legal entities registered in the EU or an overseas country or territory linked to it
- Legal entities established in third country associated to the LIFE programme
- Legal entities created under Union law or any international organisation.

Most funding topics require a minimum of 3 (eligible) entities from 3 different eligible countries, however, the average number of partners is higher. Find additional information on eligibility criteria in the [Programme overview](#).

Award process support and technical assistance

Regular calls for project proposals are published annually throughout the fund's duration. The application is made through the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](#) during open calls for projects. The relevant calls for the sub-programme are marked as 'LIFE-[year]-CET [Clean Energy Transition]'. Frequently, CINEA organises special information sessions on calls, presenting relevant guidance. The [plenary presentations](#) for the latest calls are available to be revisited on YouTube.

[This session on 'How to submit an excellent proposal?'](#) provides relevant information on the application process and the structure of the proposal, outlines eligibility and award criteria, and offers advice and guidance on proposal submission. The selection process takes up to 9 months.

Useful links and additional information

- [LIFE Info Days](#) act as an extensive source of information on the proposal calls.
- Visiting the list of [common LIFE KPIs](#) applicable to different calls can be useful to anticipate in your project proposal.
- [National Contact Points](#) are another source of support for prospective applicants.
- The [FAQs page](#) for the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme offers updated answers to general questions.
- For questions related to a call for tenders, there is always a specific timeslot to ask questions and requesting for clarifications, which must be done exclusively within the call for tenders on [eTendering](#).

Who to contact for further information

CINEA can be contacted at CINEA-LIFE-CET@ec.europa.eu for further advice and guidance.

17 Just Transition Fund

Overview

The [Just Transition Fund](#) (JTF) aims to ensure fairness in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy by providing support alleviating the socio-economic impact of the transition in the most affected territories in their efforts to restructure, diversify, and build new capacities while maintaining social cohesion.

Scope & Objectives

The JTF provides tailored support backing SMEs in the creation of new firms, innovation in environmental rehabilitation and transforming and scaling up industries' clean energy, with a strong focus on workers' capabilities and employment protection.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The JTF helps projects that help ensure fairness in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy.



Fisheries

Although not specific to fisheries, the fund covers productive investments in SMEs, including microenterprises and start-ups, leading to economic diversification, including their modernisation and reconversion.



Aquaculture

Although not specific to fisheries, the fund covers productive investments in SMEs, including microenterprises and start-ups, leading to economic diversification, including their modernisation and reconversion.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: the JTF funds systems and infrastructures for affordable clean energy, including energy storage technologies, and in greenhouse gas emission reduction.



Training and Capacity-building

The fund includes up- and reskilling workers, job-search assistance.

Project stages

The JTF supports project involved in addressing the negative repercussions of the energy transition, which could include stages like piloting, demonstrating, scaling up, and rolling out strategies or measures to alleviate the impact of the transition on employment and local economies.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The JTF is implemented by the Member States together with the European Commission. Member States are in charge of preparing Territorial Just Transition Plans outlining national or regional responsibilities for the fund's administration. The JTF is equipped with €19.2 billion, and is expected to mobilise up to €25.4 billion in investments with national co-financing and voluntary transfers from other funds.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€19.2 billion



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

There are no universal minimum and maximum funding rates. Funding decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and depending on Member State management.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Yes

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The JTF backs enterprises undertaking productive investments in territories with industries that are heavily dependent on fossil fuels (notably coal, lignite, peat, oil shale, heavy oil and diesel) or GHG-intensive industrial activities (such as steel, chemicals, cement or others), and in which industries must undergo significant transformations and where jobs are liable to be lost.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

The JTF supports projects that are directly linked to the up- and reskilling workers, creation of new firms, investments in SMEs, R&I, environmental rehabilitation, clean energy, job-search assistance, and the transformation of existing carbon-intensive installations. Detail can be found in Article 8 of the [JTF regulation](#).

Eligibility criteria

Eligible territories for the JTF are those most negatively affected based on economic and social impacts resulting from the energy transition according to the [Territorial Just Transition Plans](#), and are included in the [JTF Territories map](#), which is regularly updated.

Award process support and technical assistance

Designated national or regional authorities are responsible for selecting the projects to be funded. Specific questions on application procedures must be addressed directly to the [Managing Authorities](#).

Useful links and additional information

- The [Just Transition Platform](#) (JTP) centralises information on Europe's energy transition and provides support and technical assistance.
- A [list of existing studies and databases](#) in the context of the JTF are available to stakeholders across the EU.
- The JTP provides [groundwork support](#) to eligible JTF regions in their implementation of their [Territorial Just Transition Plans](#)
- A [data story](#) is available collecting the initial allocations of the JTF.

Who to contact for further information

A helpdesk for the JTP available at secretariat@justtransitionplatform.eu. To stay up to date with the latest news relating to the JTP you may follow the [JTP website](#). Upcoming [JTP events](#) are also available, as well as specific [JTP working groups](#).

18 Connecting Europe Facility

Overview

The [Connecting Europe Facility](#) (CEF) is a key EU funding instrument promoting growth, job creation and competitiveness through the development and improvement of European infrastructure. The CEF supports high-performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks, bridging the missing links in Europe's essential energy, transportation, and digital infrastructure.

Scope & Objectives

The CEF is divided into three programme sectors: Transport, Energy, and Telecommunications. Its focus on the Transport sector includes infrastructure developments and improvement in ports, which can benefit the fisheries and aquaculture sectors indirectly.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

Energy transition projects can include the development and wider use of renewables, including its facilitation across borders through interaction between public administrations, businesses and citizens. The CEF for Transport specifically provides support for investments on new infrastructure or rehabilitating and upgrading existing infrastructure serving transport services, including ports.



Fisheries



Aquaculture



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure



Training and Capacity-building

Energy-neutral/positive facilities: the CEF for Transport is specifically dedicated to funding new infrastructure projects or the restoration and enhancement of existing transport-related infrastructure, which includes port facilities

Project stages

Support is specifically focussed on infrastructure developments and improvements, and on study projects with piloting activities.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

The [Implementing New Environmental Solutions in the Port of Genoa](#) project improved the Italian port with the support from €2.5 million grant from the CEF Transport programme to install shore-side electricity infrastructure. Four plugs for ship-to-shore connectivity were installed, increasing electricity supply of moored vessels and avoiding the need to use diesel generators.

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The European Commission oversees the CEF Transport by setting the overall strategy, objectives, and guidelines for the fund. The Commission is responsible for implementing the fund and ensuring its alignment with EU policies and priorities. The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) handles many of the operational and administrative aspects of the fund. Member States play a role in identifying and proposing Projects of Common Interest within their territories that align with the CEF Transport's objectives. Member States contribute co-financing to CEF Transport projects and are responsible for implementing and monitoring projects within their jurisdictions.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€25.8 billion
for the CEF
Transport budget



Fund Lifespan:
2021 - 2027

Funds available for individual projects

Projects enhancing the energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions by improving connectivity, electrification and the integration with clean energy grids, as well as the deployment of alternative fuels are in scope.

The CEF offers opportunities for two distinct project categories:

- Projects involving feasibility or pilot studies, which entail preliminary investigations and pilot activities geared towards preparing for larger-scale implementation projects. For these initial stages, projects can receive a subsidy of up to 50% of the project costs.
- Implementation projects involve the actual execution of initiatives, and they qualify for a subsidy of up to 30% of the project costs. In cases of cross-border projects, a more substantial subsidy of up to a maximum of 50% is available to facilitate their successful implementation.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Yes

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Public authorities at various levels including national, regional and local administrations are the primary beneficiaries of the programme. While the fund does not apply directly to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors directly, entities managing and operating transportation infrastructure, such as ports, industrial, logistics and service companies, can benefit from the fund.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

CEF Transport funding is primarily intended for projects that contribute to the development of the trans-European transport network ([TEN-T](#)). Projects enhancing energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions by improving connectivity, electrification and the integration with clean energy grids, as well as the deployment of alternative fuels are in scope of the fund. Priority is given to projects that contribute to reducing GHG emissions and environmental impacts.

Projects should have reached a certain level of maturity to be eligible for CEF funding. This includes having a well-defined scope, clear objectives, a cost-benefit analysis, environmental impact assessments, and the necessary permits and approvals.

Eligibility criteria

Projects proposed for CEF Transport funding must be located within the territory of EU Member States or European Economic Area (EEA) countries. A project can qualify for CEF Transport funding only when it has received approval from the countries where the project's executors are based.

Specific eligibility criteria to be found in the [calls for proposals](#).

Award process support and technical assistance

The European Commission evaluates and selects proposals with the assistance of independent experts, who judge projects judged based on the criteria defined in the call. The Commission creates a list of recommended proposals for funding, and successful applicants are invited to sign grant agreements.

Calls for proposals are published on the [Funding and Tenders portal](#), from where you will be able to build and submit your application. Information on how to apply and on the evaluation process is available in the [Application and Evaluation](#) site.

Useful links and additional information

- For further doubts, see the [FAQs document](#) on the implementation of CEF actions
- See the [Legal Framework](#) for the CEF for further information.

Who to contact for further information

A list of [National contact points](#) for CEF Transport applicants is available on the CEF website.

19 European Social Fund+

Overview

The [European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#) is the European Union's main instrument for investing in people and supporting the implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). The ESF+ provides an important contribution to the EU's employment, social, education and skills policies, including structural reforms in these areas, and aims to reduce socio-economic disparities between Member States and regions.

Scope & Objectives

The ESF+ aims to support Member States and regions to achieve:

- High employment levels,
- Fair social protection
- A skilled and resilient workforce ready for the future world of work
- Inclusive and cohesive societies aiming to eradicate poverty

The ESF+ complements policies of Member States ensuring equal opportunities, equal access to the labour market, fair and quality working conditions, social protection and inclusion.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The ESF+ contributes to fostering a greener, low-carbon Europe by enhancing the education and training systems required for skill and qualification adaptation, upskilling of all, including the workforce, and generating new jobs in sectors associated with the environment, climate, energy, the circular economy, and the bioeconomy.



Fisheries



Aquaculture



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure



Training and Capacity-building

Capacity building for social innovation is eligible. In particular, if supporting mutual learning, establishing networks, and disseminating and promoting good practices and methodologies.

Project stages

The ESF+ fund addresses projects in their implementation stages.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[The Green&Blue Economy Programme](#) project put together a huge range of courses directly related to roles within the green and blue economy in the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, by providing training by accredited vocational education and training professionals, focussing on strengthening people's skills and knowledge, and by helping entrepreneurs to start their own business.

Total budget: €59 089 786

EU contribution: €59 089 786 (100% of the overall budget)

[PT - Internship and Employment](#) project offers young people the chance to take up a professional internship, providing valuable work experience to help their employability. A success story: 'For Marine Biology graduate Hugo João, the project was just what he needed to steer him into his ideal career: fish farming'.

Total budget: €130 181 598

EU contribution: €83 351 774 (64% of the overall budget)

Duration: 26 years (1997 – 2023)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The ESF+ brings together four funding instruments: the European Social Fund (ESF), the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). The ESF+ funding is now distributed through two main strands:

- [The shared management strand](#) – which is implemented by Member States in partnership with the Commission.
- [The \(EaSI\) strand](#) – implemented directly by the European Commission.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€99.3 billion



**Budget managed
by the EU:**
€762 million
(1% of total)



**Budget managed
by Member States:**
€98.5 billion
(99% of total)



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The [co-financing rate](#) can range from 50% and up to 95%, but each specific call establishes the maximum rate.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Yes – prizes, public
procurement

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Target beneficiaries of the ESF+ include non-profit organisations (private or public), public authorities (national, regional, and local), international organisations, universities, educational institutions, research centres and companies.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Projects under the following scope of actions are eligible:

- Analytical and research activities such as surveys, studies, statistical data, monitoring.
- Policy implementation including cross-border partnerships, support services in cross-border regions, schemes to fill job vacancies, support for the development of social infrastructure and skills
- Actions aiming at capacity building of public sector institutions
- Communication and dissemination activities such as mutual learning, benchmarking, guides, and reports.

Eligibility criteria

Tenders are awarded following public procurement rules from the World Trade Organisation. Access is open to all entities established in the Member States and third countries covered under an international or bilateral agreements.

For grants, participation in [EaSI](#) calls for proposals is open to people and organisations from the following countries:

- 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
- Third countries may be included if it is needed to achieve of the objectives of an action. However, the organisations established in third countries should in principle bear the cost of their participation.

EaSI is also open to any legal entity created under Union law or any international organisation.

Award process support and technical assistance

There are regular calls for project proposals throughout the fund's duration. Eligible parties can apply through the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](#) during open calls for projects. Each call for proposals includes a call document, outlining eligibility criteria, evaluation and award procedure, and guidance on the proposal submission process. Each call also outlines call-relevant FAQ and a contact email to inquire about the call-specific issues. The [online Manual](#) is available to applicant, containing relevant information on the EU Funding & Tenders application process.

Useful links and additional information

- [The regulation](#) governing the ESF+ provides the detailed information on the fund.
- [National Contact Points](#) can be contacted for further information.
- The [EaSI Annual Work Programme](#) lists the upcoming activities for each year (calls for proposals, procurements, etc.).
- Previously [supported activities](#) and can be consulted together with their results.

Who to contact for further information

The EaSI team at the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion can be reached by email at: EMPL-EaSI@ec.europa.eu.

20 Cohesion Fund

Overview

The [Cohesion Fund](#) (CF) provides support to EU Member States with a Gross National Income (GNI) below the 90% of EU average with the aim to enhancing the economic, social, and territorial cohesion of the European Union.

Scope & Objectives

- CF financial support contributes to environmental and transport initiatives including:
- Investment in the environment, including areas related to sustainable development, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.
- Trans-European networks in the area of transport infrastructure ([TEN-T](#));
- Technical assistance.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The CF covers projects addressing one or more of several key objectives. These include promoting a fair shift toward cleaner energy sources, supporting environmentally friendly investments in both land and sea-based activities, fostering the circular economy, addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures, enhancing risk prevention and management, and promoting sustainable urban mobility. Notably, a substantial 37% of the CF is earmarked to support climate mainstreaming objectives



Fisheries

Although fisheries are not specifically targeted by the fund, they fall in scope of the fund's goal of promoting clean and fair energy transition, including green and blue investments.



Aquaculture

Similarly, aquaculture is not specifically targeted by the CF, but the fund's scope promoting clean and fair energy transition may be used to fund aquaculture investments.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades: providing public buildings with improved energy efficiency and the reduction of their GHG emissions are within scope, including improvements in Ports.



Training and Capacity-building

Project stages

The CF focusses on the development and enhancement of research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[The Port of Gdynia](#) project aimed to enhance its infrastructure and capabilities to accommodate larger cargo ships by expanding quays, deepening the approach fairway, and modernizing facilities. This development not only increased the port's economic potential and job opportunities but also benefited the environment by reducing emissions per tonne of transported goods.

Total budget: € 107.65 million
EU contribution: €64.95 million (60% of the overall budget)
Duration: 7 years (2014 – 2020)

How much money is available and how is it managed?

The management of the CF is a shared responsibility between the European Commission and national and regional authorities in Member States, which may include local, urban and other public authorities, as well as civil society, economic and social partners, and, on occasion, research organisations and universities. The Member States' administrations are in charge of selecting which projects to finance and take responsibility for their day-to-day management.

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€48.03 billion, of which €11.29 billion transferred to the Connecting Europe Facility.



Fund Lifespan:
2021 – 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The volume available for each individual project is determined based on the specific objectives it covers. Project managers can address the contact points below to learn about the amounts they can perceive.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
No

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

The CF provides support to projects undertaken in Member States with a GNI per capita below 90% of the EU-27 average.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

The CF supports (a) investments in the environment, including investments related to sustainable development and energy presenting environmental benefits, with a particular focus on renewable energy; (b) investments in Trans-European networks; (c) technical assistance, and (d) information, communication, and studies. Member States must ensure an appropriate balance between investments under points (a) and (b), based on the investment and infrastructure needs of each Member State.

There is no minimum size for projects, as long as they add value to European objectives with positive impacts on employment, innovation, and regional development and competitiveness.

Investments excluded from CF support are included in Article 7 of the [regulation](#).

Eligibility criteria

For the 2021–2027 period, the Cohesion Fund concerns Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Before applying for a grant, check the European operational programmes in your region. Project applications must meet the selection criteria and investment priorities of [your regional programme](#).

Award process support and technical assistance

Application procedures are managed by the relevant managing authority in your EU Member State. Some of them are ongoing procedures, while others accept applications only at specific times. Check the website of your [Managing Authority](#) to find out who to contact in your region.

Useful links and additional information

[Information on Regional Policy performance](#) including the CF is also available.

Who to contact for further information

- Contact for further information: regio-a2-communication@ec.europa.eu
- The [Europe Direct](#) information relays offer hundreds of information points all over Europe.
- The [Enterprise Europe Network](#) provides specialised guidance to small businesses on how to access EU public funds and grants for research and development, innovation, investment, employment and training.

21 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Overview

The [European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development \(EAFRD\)](#) is a funding programme included as part of the [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)](#), that supports the development of social, environmental, and economic sustainability in rural areas.

Scope & Objectives

EU countries implement EAFRD funding through rural development programmes. Rural development programmes are prepared on a national or regional basis and consist of projects that:

- Improve competitiveness of agriculture
- Encourage sustainable management of natural resources and climate action
- Support development of rural economies and communities.

Use of the fund for Energy Transition projects

The EAFRD is predominately aimed at supporting agricultural and forestry sectors through EU countries rural development programmes, of which [30% must be assigned to environmental and climate change related measures](#). There are examples of where the EAFRD has supported aquaculture sectors where the business has a relationship or involvement in agricultural food production cycle.



Fisheries



Aquaculture

Aquaculture energy management

There are examples of where the EAFRD have supported aquaculture sectors where the business has a relationship or involvement in agricultural food production cycle, and therefore supporting the agriculture industry development in some way.



Energy transition of land/marine infrastructure

The fund has priorities related to resource efficiency and shift towards low-carbon and climate resilient economy related to infrastructure upgrades in rural areas.



Training and Capacity-building

Funding for fisheries and aquaculture is specified in the EAFRD, however the fund's scope has priorities related to knowledge transfer and skills development which could support rural areas in the energy transition.

Project stages

The EAFRD provides funds from the proof-of-concept tests, through demonstration of feasibility studies, all the way up towards the wider uptake to investments in the implementation.



Proof of concept



Piloting



Demonstration



Scale-up



Roll out

Examples of successful projects

[AQUANOR AQUAPONIE NORMANDIE](#) project was a pilot and educational aquaponics structure allowing an analysis of different cultural methods. It set up aquaponic systems associating aquaculture production and hydroponics allowing recycling of nutrients emitted by aquaculture farming by vegetable crops, reusing water for animal husbandry reducing chemical inputs for horticultural production.

Total Budget: €136 578
Duration: 2019 - 2022

[EIP-AGRI](#) project - Quality intensification on fish and plant products in aquatic systems - built a fish and plant production in aquatic systems, dealing with a combination of a renewable energy carrier and structures of manufacturing, distribution, and commercialisation.

Total Budget: €507 500
Duration: 2015 - 2019

How much money is available and how is it managed?

EAFRD funding for rural development is used through programs created by EU Member States, combining both national and regional resources. Each country outlines its specific goals and priorities and comes up with a strategy that includes policies to achieve those goals. In the most recent program period, there has been a strong focus on coordinating EAFRD with other funds like cohesion policy and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Size and management of the fund



Total budget:
€95.51 billion



Fund Lifespan:
2021 - 2027

Funds available for individual projects

The [minimum EAFRD contribution rate](#) is 20% of the project costs, and the maximum rate ranges between 40% and 100%, depending on the region and the type of project.



Direct grants:
Yes



Financial instruments:
Yes – loans, microcredits,
guarantees and equities

Who to contact for further information

The Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development can be contacted via the online form in case of any questions. [National authorities](#) can also be contacted.

Beneficiaries, Eligibility and Awarding Process

Target beneficiaries

Funding from the EAFRD can be granted to a range of beneficiaries including farmers, foresters, public authorities, economic and social partners, local action groups, and relevant bodies representing civil society. Recipients can come together to form their own local action groups and prepare their own local development strategies. This bottom-up approach to establishing local action is referred to as the [LEADER approach](#) and at least 5% of Rural Development Programme funding must go to actions based on this approach.

SME

LE

Eligible projects/investments

Eligible projects include those that fall under any of the six priority areas:

- Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
- Enhancing the viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture
- Promoting food chain organisation, animal welfare and risk management
- Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry
- Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors
- Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria for the EAFRD is determined by the relevant national authority as part of its national CAP strategic plan.

Award process support and technical assistance

EU countries implement EAFRD funding through rural development programmes which are developed by national or regional public authorities or 'Managing Authorities'. The managing authorities are supported by 'Paying Agencies' who allocate payments to project beneficiaries.

A list of rural [development programmes](#) by country is available.

Useful links and additional information

- The [EU CAP Network](#) offers a forum for knowledge and information-sharing.
- The [FI Compass website](#) provides information on EAFRD financial instruments
- More information on the EAFRD's opportunities for aquaculture can be found in this guide on [EU funding opportunities available for aquaculture](#)

