



Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes

Guidance for policy-makers and implementing bodies



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This guide was prepared on the basis of an inter-service working group co-chaired by DG Regional and Urban Policy and DG Research and Innovation, with the participation of the Directorates General in charge of Enterprise and Industry, Communications Networks, Content and Technology, Education and Culture, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Agriculture and Rural Development, Energy, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the Joint Research Centre, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers, the Eureka Secretariat, the Research Executive Agency, and by Dr. Margaretha Mazura, Secretary General of the Forum of e-Excellence.

This publication contains the text of SWD(2014) 205 final. The web-version of the guide will in the course of the financial period 2014-2020 be enriched with good practice examples of synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, digital services CEF and possibly other EU programmes.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm

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1 Introduction

The European Commission and the Member States are mandated by the regulations that lay down the rules for the European Structural and Investment Funds¹ (ESIF), Horizon 2020, and other EU programmes directly managed by the Commission in the areas of **research, innovation and competitiveness** - in particular COSME, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI")² and the digital services part of the Connecting Europe Facility³ - to ensure coordination, synergies and complementarities⁴.

Although there has been a substantial increase in the budget of Horizon 2020 (almost EUR 80 billion) compared to the previous research framework programmes and although there has been a steep increase of the innovation and competitiveness-related budgets under cohesion policy over the past decade⁵, it is of utmost importance to ensure optimal synergies between the funds to face the ever increasing competitive pressure from global markets and maximise impact and efficiency of public funding⁶. The European Parliament and Council made it clear that this approach is no more a "nice to have" but a "need to implement". This political will needs to permeate all layers of stakeholders, at Member State level as well as Commission services level, including intermediaries and facilitators' networks.

To achieve this, it is crucial to align strategies and implementation modalities and complement existing and future roadmaps. However, translating this new reality will be a learning process, given that ESIF implementation is under Member States' shared management rules while Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus +, etc. support is allocated at EU level (directly or indirectly by the Commission). A first effort lies in making strategic choices and planning on the side of the regions and Member States, i.e. to foster excellence in the smart specialisation areas. On the Horizon 2020 side, it consists of implementing the programmes in a synergies-friendly manner in terms of raising awareness, providing information, engaging in communication campaigns, and connecting National Contact Points (NCP) as much as possible to national and regional ESIF policy makers and managing authorities.

¹ ESIF refers to: ERDF – European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, ESF - European Social Fund, EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and EMFF – European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

² See also guide to social innovation: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides>

³ The broadband part of digital CEF is addressed in a separate guide on broadband investments to be published here: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda>

⁴ Regulation 1303/2013 laying down common provisions of the ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF; Regulation 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the support from the ERDF; Regulation 1300/2013 on the Cohesion Fund; Regulation 1304/2013 on the ESF and Regulation 1302/2013 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC).

⁵ From some 6% of the funds in the 2000-06 period to around 25% in the 2007-13 period with a further increase in the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy programmes. Already in 2008 around 9% of the public spending on R&I in the EU came from the EU budget, roughly half and half from the 7th Framework Programme and the European Structural Funds. See Innovation Union Competitiveness report 2011.

⁶ The thematic concentration of ERDF on research, innovation, ICT, SME competitiveness, energy efficiency and renewables is expected to result in EUR109.5 billion (current prices) ERDF investments into these competitiveness drivers.

This staff working document is thus a guide geared at (but not limited to) staff and organisations involved in the strategy development – in particular smart specialisation strategies (RIS3)⁷, design of ESIF programmes and work programmes or work plans, design of the implementation modalities, making choices in terms of support tools, project formats, reporting requirements, audit systems and the drafting and interpretation of ESIF, Horizon 2020, COSME, ERASMUS+, Creative Europe and other regulations, rules for participation, delegated acts, etc. It targets public authorities at EU, national and/or regional levels, including agencies in charge of payments, control and audit; members of programme and monitoring committees, managing authorities in charge of designing and implementing ESIF programmes; institutions involved in the implementation of policy instruments for research, innovation and competitiveness at EU, national and regional levels; intermediaries that facilitate access to funding, such as NCPs for Horizon 2020, the Enterprise Europe Network, National Agencies for Erasmus +, etc.

The guide contains explanations on the basic rules and principles for obtaining synergies and combining the different funds, and contains recommendations to the relevant actors, as well as Commission support to facilitate synergies. It is accompanied by explanations on each programme (Annex 1) and guidance to a set of scenarios to inspire programme designers and implementers regarding project formats and potential and non-exhaustive combination schemes (Annex 2).

The guide is complemented by separate guidance on financial instruments⁸ and by guidance for potential beneficiaries of R&I and competitiveness related EU programmes⁹.

2 Basic principles and concepts for synergies

Combined funding of ESIF programmes and Horizon 2020:

- NO substitution of national/regional or private co-funding to EU projects/programmes under direct Commission management by ESIF money (and vice versa).
- NO double financing: in no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by any budget.

⁷ Smart specialisation strategy means the national or regional innovation strategies which set priorities in order to build competitive advantage by developing and matching research and innovation own strengths to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts; a smart specialisation strategy may take the form of, or be included in, a national or regional research and innovation (R&I) strategic policy framework. The development of smart specialisation strategies through involving national or regional MAs and stakeholders such as universities and other higher education institution, industry and social partners in an entrepreneurial discovery process is compulsory for the regions and Member States that wish to invest ERDF into research and innovation. Smart specialisation strategies shall include up-stream and down-stream actions with Horizon 2020. See: RIS3 Guide: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3pguide>

⁸ See http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/pdf/fi_esif_2014_2020.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/index_en.cfm

⁹ An up-date of the "Practical Guide to EU funding opportunities for research and innovation"

- **Synergies among programmes:** Synergies mean joint or coordinated efforts to achieve greater impact and efficiency, not only combining ESIF and Horizon 2020 money in the same project!

Synergies can be achieved through:

- bringing together Horizon 2020 and ESIF money in the **same project** (that could be a single action or a group of coordinated actions/operations, but always provided that there is no double funding of the same expenditure item) in view of achieving greater impact and efficiency¹⁰;
- **successive projects** that build on each other or;
- **parallel projects** that complement each other.
- ESIF programmes could also be designed and implemented¹¹ to take up high quality project proposals from Horizon 2020 or other centrally managed programmes, for which there is not enough budget available in the respective programmes.

2.1 Concept of Synergies

The Commission services identified synergies between the different Union funds as amplifying the research and innovation investments and their impact, combining different forms of innovation¹² and competitiveness support¹³, or carrying innovative ideas further along the innovation cycle or value chain to bring them to the market. Synergies are thus about obtaining more impacts on competitiveness, jobs and growth in the EU by combining ESIF, Horizon 2020 and other EU instruments in a strategic and also cohesion-oriented manner.

In order to achieve such synergies, the Commission services paved the way for a strategic approach with a medium to long-term perspective, starting at the stage of involvement of stakeholders ('entrepreneurial discovery process') to shape the smart specialisation strategies (RIS3 – Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation). Such RIS3 strategies set out the national or regional frameworks for investments in research and innovation not only from ESIF, but from all funding sources. Authorities directly concerned by Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes in the given territories shall thus be associated in this process¹⁴.

The Commission services strongly encourage synergies through bringing together Horizon2020 and ESIF money in the same project (possible only for Horizon 2020), or through successive projects that build on each other or parallel projects/roadmaps that complement each other (see funding options in annex 2).

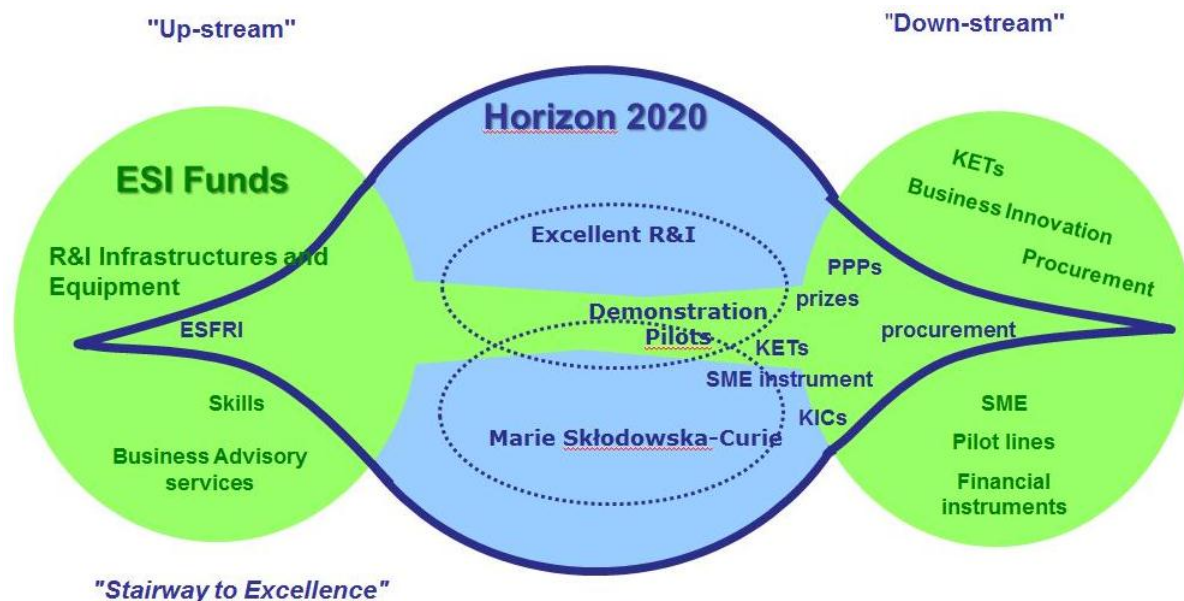
¹⁰ Nota bene that this is only possible for Horizon 2020 not other EU programmes

¹¹ Notably in compliance with Art. 125(3) of CPR as regards the selection processes and criteria for operations.

¹² This concerns all forms of innovation, including social innovation, service innovation, design, creativity, process innovation, work place innovation, user-driven innovation, public sector innovation, etc.

¹³ E.g. by fostering SME internationalisation, the development of innovation and specialised business support services and improved policy making and analysis

¹⁴ The same goes for the digital growth strategies as regards ICT-based innovation



2.2 Regulatory scope for synergies

The Regulations of 2014-2020 EU programmes contain a number of novelties that enlarge the possibilities for synergetic use of the EU funds.

2.2.1 Synergy-enabling rules in the ESIF regulations

The Regulation laying down common provisions (CPR) for ESIF sets out the following:

Article 15(1)b(i): Partnership Agreements (PAs) are to contain arrangements, in line with the institutional framework of the Member States that ensure coordination between ESIF and other EU and national funding instruments and with the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Article 65(11) provides for a possibility of cumulating grants from different EU funding instruments (or from one or more ESI Fund through one or more programmes and other Union instruments) for the same beneficiary or the same project, provided that the same expenditure/cost item does not receive support also from another EU fund (from the same Fund under different programmes, from another Fund or from other Union instruments).

Article 67(5)b and 68(1)c allows for an alignment of cost models (scales of unit costs, lump sums and flat rates) for corresponding costs and similar types of operations and beneficiaries in Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes.

Article 70(2) stipulates a possibility of up to 15% of the support from the ERDF, Cohesion Fund and EMFF at the level of the priority (up to 5% of the support from the EAFRD at the level of the programme), and up to 3% of the budget of a ESF operational programme (Article 13(3) ESF) to be allocated to operations located outside the programme area¹⁵.

¹⁵ Art. 13(3) of the ESF Regulation (Regulation (EU) N°1304/2013 of the EP and of the Council of 17/12/2013-OJ L 347/470 of 20.12.2013) allows that up to 3% of the budget of an European Social Fund (ESF) operational

Article 96(6)a: ESIF programmes are to set out the mechanisms that ensure coordination between ESIF and other EU and national funding instruments, and with the EIB, taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework (annex I to the CPR).

Article 96(3)d: programmes shall describe arrangements for interregional and transnational actions within the national and regional ESIF programmes with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State.

ANNEX I - Common Strategic Framework, sections 3 and 4, requires the Commission and Member States to foster synergies, effective coordination and complementarity between the different programmes.

2.2.2 Derogation of non-cumulative principle for combination with Horizon 2020¹⁶

ESIF

Art. 65(11) CPR: "An **operation** may receive **support** from one or more European Structural and Investment Funds or from one or more programmes and from other Union instruments, provided that the **expenditure item** included in a request for payment for reimbursement by one of the ESI Funds does not receive support from another Fund or Union instrument, or support from the same Fund under another programme."

Horizon2020

Article 37 Rules for Participation:
"Cumulative funding:
An **action** for which a **grant** from the Union budget has been awarded may also give rise to the award of a grant on the basis of Regulation [Horizon 2020] provided that the grants do not cover the same **cost items**."

Regulation EU No 1290/2013 laying down the Horizon 2020 rules for participation (Article 37) and the Common Provisions Regulation on the ESIF (Article 65(11)) allow for the funding of the same project (action/operation) through several grants from different EU instruments, including from different ESIF funds and programmes, subject to the absence of double funding.

To ensure the latter, Horizon 2020 and ESIF funding shall not cover the same cost / expenditure item.

The right to combine ESIF and Horizon 2020 does not waive the obligation for the beneficiaries to provide national/regional/private co-funding, if required by the grant agreement.

The non-cumulative principle set out in Article 129 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹⁷ applies only to grants. Hence, the derogation can only apply to grants and must be authorised in the relevant basic acts.

programme or ESF part of a multi-fund OP may be allocated to operations located outside the programme area, provided that it concerns the thematic objective 'promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility' or 'investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning', and provided that the relevant monitoring committee has given its agreement to the operation or types of operations concerned.

¹⁶ Nota Bene: this section applies exclusively to the cumulation of ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding. The interpretation of the rules for cumulation of ESIF with other EU instruments or the cumulation of funding from different ESIF programmes may differ.

¹⁷ [Regulation \(EU, EURATOM\) No 966/2012 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union](#) (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1)

There is no derogation from the non-cumulative principle in the regulations on Erasmus+, Creative Europe, CEF and COSME¹⁸, meaning that for these programmes a combination of funds within the same project is not possible.

Eligible costs/expenditures are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant and which meet the criteria of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

What exactly can be an eligible cost (including indirect cost, and depreciation costs, etc.) and thus a cost/expenditure item differs under Horizon 2020 depending on the project formats with their different grant agreement types (e.g. Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, standard collaborative R&I actions with at least three legal entities from three different countries, EIT-KIC funding, grants for pre-commercial public procurement or public procurement of innovative solutions, ERA Chairs, etc. – see Annex 2). Details regarding the required (minimum) number of participants, type of participant and geographical spread, funding rates, lump sums or scale of unit costs that can be used for an action, or exceptionally, beneficiaries that are identified for grants without a call for proposals, can be found in the work programmes (and “work plans” for Article 185 and 187 initiatives) of Horizon 2020¹⁹ and in the general annexes²⁰.

What is a cost / expenditure item?

Taking into account the objective of reference to a cost / expenditure item (i.e. the absence of double financing by the Union budget) a cost item can be defined as follows:

A cost / expenditure item is the amount declared as eligible for Union funding under a budget category.

Depending on the budgeting approach, the budget category may be defined per activity (e.g. costs of training activities, work package), per nature (e.g. personnel costs, costs for durable equipment or for consumables, etc.) or by a combination of the nature and activity (e.g. costs of personnel assigned to the training activities).

The amount declared as eligible corresponds to the costs complying with the eligibility conditions set out in the corresponding basic act. Since only costs incurred in relation to the action funded by the grant are eligible, a **cost /expenditure item is limited to the costs of the resources consumed for the action** (for example the personnel costs for the hours actually worked on the action or the depreciation costs of equipment corresponding to the duration of the action and the rate of actual use for the action).

¹⁸ Note however that Art. 10(2) COSME regulation allows the following: "*The Enterprise Europe Network may also be used to deliver services on behalf of other Union programmes such as Horizon 2020. This may include dedicated advisory services encouraging SME participation in other Union programmes*". Some services directly delivered to SMEs by the Enterprise Europe Network partners might also be covered by objectives of OPs and could therefore possibly be separated and supported by ESIF grants and at ESIF conditions.

¹⁹ See first calls under H2020: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html>

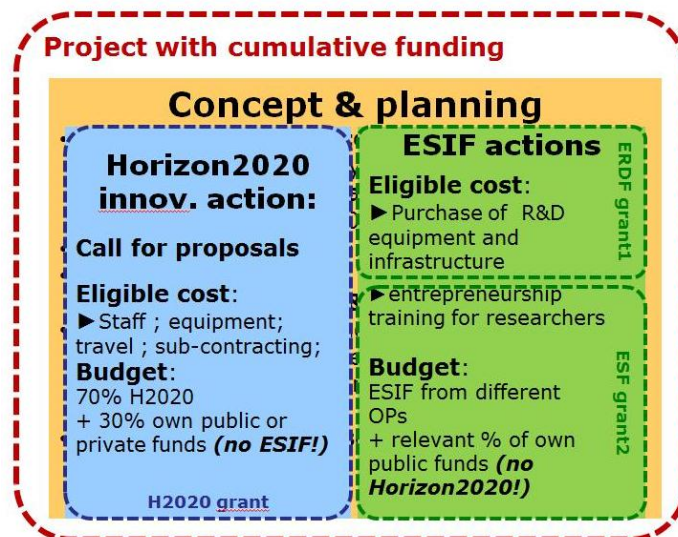
²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-ga_en.pdf

Project ≠ grant agreement:

A project can have different active grant agreements.

A project is a temporary endeavour designed to produce predefined results with a defined beginning and end, and has an identified and qualified project manager, as well as identified related project costs.²¹

In the context of synergies, projects are to be understood as operations²² that can consist of different actions, contracts, or groups of projects that are managed in a coherent manner. A project combining ESIF with Horizon 2020 funding will thus contain (several) separate grant agreements (e.g. one for Horizon 2020 and one per involved programme for the ESIF-funded components – see illustration).



²¹ See also R&D&I State Aid framework: "A R&D project may consist of several work packages, activities or services, and includes clear objectives, activities to be carried out to achieve those objectives (including their expected costs), and concrete deliverables to identify the outcomes of those activities and compare them with the relevant objectives. When two or more R&D projects are not clearly separable from each other and in particular when they do not have independent probabilities of technological success, they are considered as a single project." http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/modernisation/index_en.html

²² Operation is under ESIF a "project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the MAs of the programmes concerned, or under their responsibility, that contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities" of the operational programme from which it is funded. (Art.2(9)CPR)

3 Recommendations for next steps

3.1 Synergies need preparation and efforts at all stages of programming and implementation and by all actors involved

To achieve synergies all levels and stages of the programming and implementation need to be addressed, i.e.

- ✓ Starting at the strategic level with awareness and understanding of the opportunities offered by different EU programmes, the development of smart specialisation strategies and EU level strategies and plans,
- ✓ The development of work programmes and work plans in the framework of Horizon 2020, and the preparation of the Partnership Agreements and of ESIF programmes (including the choice of priorities, specific objectives, types of actions and beneficiaries, on the basis of an analysis of the needs - 'intervention logic' - see Annex 1) in the ESIF framework,
- ✓ And finally the set-up of the implementation mechanisms, project selection processes, information services, guidance to potential beneficiaries, monitoring of the implementation, etc.

At Strategic Level, the Commission made the development of coherent and comprehensive policy strategies and implementation plans an obligation if Member States and regions wish to invest ESIF into related policy areas.

The Commission's own strategy building efforts started with the adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy and its seven flagship initiatives that chart out a coherent jobs and growth agenda. Besides the Innovation Union flagship, in particular the Digital Agenda for Europe, the industrial policy for the globalisation era and the agenda for new skills and jobs are particularly relevant for research, innovation and competitiveness.

The commitment of the Innovation Union regarding improvement of national and regional policy-making for more innovation impact of its Cohesion Policy and ensuring that all regions participate in the Innovation Union materialised on the one hand in the focus of ERDF resources for research and innovation (thematic concentration) and in the introduction of smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) as ex-ante conditionality for ERDF investment priorities (see Annex 1). On the other hand Horizon 2020 pays increased attention to widening the participation and spreading excellence. It also materialised in the acknowledgement of the importance of regional policy actors in EU initiatives and translated into the opening up of certain initiatives to policy actors from regional level, e.g. to participate in programme coordination actions like ERA-Nets and joint programming, like the public-public partnerships (P2Ps) under Article 185 TFEU.

RIS3 strategies are required to prioritise fields, identified through the involvement of stakeholders ('entrepreneurial discovery process'), in which they have genuine and distinctive competitive advantages or the potential to develop competitive advantages. This process is crucial to orientate research and innovation activities towards the needs of the industries/public sector in the territory, stimulate private RDI investment, facilitate the information flows and achieve practical synergies. In this context, it is important to note that RIS3 is not only about science and technology-driven innovation, but should consider, as a focus area or as part of the policy mix, other forms of innovation as well, such

as public sector innovation, social innovation, organisational innovation, service innovation, user-centred innovation, demand stimulation for innovations, etc.²³

RIS3 strategies shall set out the national or regional frameworks for investments in research and innovation not only from ESIF, but from all funding sources.

At Programme design level, the Commission services in charge of ESIF and in charge of the directly managed programmes ensure regular consultation among them, including on the draft ESIF programmes prepared by Member States and work programmes, initiatives under Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and ESIF programmes respectively.

At Implementation level, the Commission is in charge of the implementation of the directly managed programmes, e.g. Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, EaSI" and the Connecting Europe Facility, as well as of the innovative actions for sustainable urban development under the ERDF. The MAs of the Member States and regions are in charge of the implementation of the ESIF programmes. The role of the Commission services with regard to the ESIF management consists of ensuring that the different authorities in charge of each programme (MA, certifying authority and audit authority) fulfil their responsibilities as regards management, selection, monitoring, financial management and control of operations supported; assessing the various documents forwarded by these authorities as provided for in the ESIF Regulations; and where applicable, appraising them and endorsing major projects.²⁴ The Commission is also responsible for monitoring, disseminating information and encouraging MA to coordinate.

²³ For more information on design of RIS3 strategies see the RIS3 guide: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3pguide>

²⁴ Articles 100-103 CPR - projects in the field of research and innovation are considered as "major" when their total eligible cost exceeds EUR 50 million. This is not to be confused with "*large research infrastructures*" in the context of Horizon 2020 (above EUR 20 million). See: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/large_infra/h2020-hi-large-infrastructures-ass_en.pdf

3.2 Recommended Actions for National/Regional Policy-makers, Managing Authorities and intermediaries

3.2.1 How to enable synergies along programming and implementation stages

National and regional policy-makers in charge of the development of **smart specialisation strategies** are recommended to:

- Use the entrepreneurial discovery process to identify synergies: detect different stakeholders/interest groups, new innovative entrepreneurs (e.g. technology-based ICT start-ups), hidden champions among existing enterprises or persons with an entrepreneurial potential and an international outlook and capacity to create cooperation between the different groups²⁵.

This includes:

- Work together with authorities and bodies involved in designing SME and industry policy and research and innovation policies, e.g. Horizon 2020 actors²⁶.
- Include Horizon 2020 actors in the RIS3 development process and in the ESIF partnerships for Partnership Agreement and programme development.
- Consult international research *and* business networks (not only the players from their own region/MS).
- Evaluate as part of the smart specialisation process the needs of industry and public procurers²⁷, (e.g. hospitals, facility companies - water, waste, urban transport, etc. - and research for innovative solutions) and involve the relevant ministries.
- Focus the preparatory work for synergies on the strategic aim of their RIS3 in terms of economic transformation and the fields that emerge as smart specialisation priorities and on what individual Member States and regions can influence, i.e.:
 - Strengthen research and innovation capacity building, including research infrastructure (e.g. in universities, competence centres, etc.), innovation infrastructure and equipment (e.g. pilot lines, LivingLabs, FabLabs, Creative Factories, advanced manufacturing capabilities, science and technology parks) and skills (including in

²⁵ "The authorities directly concerned by Horizon 2020 shall be closely associated with this process" (see CPR, annex 1, 4.3.2.1). See also annex III of RIS3 Guide: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3pguide>

²⁶ Members of the H2020 programme committee, participants from their territory in European Innovation Partnerships (EIP), European Technology Platforms (ETP), Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) under the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), National Contact Points of Horizon 2020 (NCP), research institutions with success in FP7 or EUREKA including consultation of National Roadmaps for research infrastructures linked to the ESFRI Roadmap; furthermore with COSME Supported entities (e.g. the Enterprise Europe Network consortia members, participants in cluster/innovation platforms and large scale demonstrator projects, in projects for pre-commercial procurement and public procurement of innovative solutions, participants in the large-scale pilot projects for interoperable e-government solutions, etc.

²⁷ See current list of contracting authorities and entities in the Annexes to Commission Decision 2008/963/EC (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/rules/current/index_en.htm#maincontentSec3)

creative thinking, design, e-commerce), advisory services for potential Horizon 2020 applicants to increase chances to succeed in Horizon 2020 project proposals. The new Teaming actions under Horizon 2020 can help conceiving such infrastructure projects. The new Twinning and ERA-Chairs actions can help attracting leading professors and research teams, while Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND can support the internationalisation of human resources in research.

- Strengthen the capacity to provide innovation support services to facilitate getting innovations into the market. The Enterprise Europe Network (under the COSME programme) is invited to proactively transfer new and better practices in innovation and SME support to the region. This aims at strengthening the services of organisations that are partners in the network but also at other services providers in the region (like incubators, cluster organisations, investors and others). Support services to be strengthened in this way include but are not limited to: Innovation management, IPR management, advice for business plan development and investor readiness, technology audits to help SMEs detect needs and technology absorption potentials, etc. Also support for the up-take of results of FP7/Horizon 2020 and CIP/COSME projects is recommended.
- The implementation of substantial parts of the Horizon 2020 budget will be delegated to public-public-partnerships (Article 185 TFEU, e.g. EUREKA-Eurostars) and public-private-partnerships (in particular Joint Technology Initiatives under Art. 187 TFEU). Since MAs are often linked to the managers of the national/regional programmes (e.g. units within the same ministry) that for instance join up their programmes via Article 185 TFEU, this offers opportunities to use the governance mechanisms of the public-public-partnerships to optimise synergies with the RIS3 and programmes via shaping the annual work plans. The same applies to all Joint Technology Initiatives. Envisage teaming up with other Member States (e.g. via macro-regional strategies), e.g. to mobilise support for possible additional Article 185 TFEU initiatives or ERA-Nets.
- Get internationally connected to be faster in the development of multi-country proposals for Horizon 2020 and European Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG) calls for transnational cooperation. Team up with other MAs that will invest in related smart specialisation areas (also via macro-regional strategies and the above-mentioned types of platforms and networks) or have related public procurement needs (e.g. need for innovative solutions for environment, health, e-government, e-learning, or transport). MAs can identify the smart specialisation intentions of other Member States and regions via the S3Platform,²⁸ their sectorial and cross-sectorial regional industrial strength via the European Cluster Observatory and cluster organisations and other SME intermediaries

²⁸<http://s3platform.irc.ec.europa.eu/home;jsessionid=PbYvS6ZCpXwP7FVnMxzRnkgTJ7rvnV2xpQY65QyYChHLwQKNqbyv!1235507078!1392122210307>

active in or interested in the building of European Strategic Cluster Partnerships via the European Cluster Collaboration Platform²⁹. MAs are strongly recommended to join and flag their specialisation fields via the S3Platform and to encourage their SME intermediaries to register at the European Cluster Collaboration Platform in order to be identifiable for others in search of cooperation partners.

- Foresee close-to-market support in the RIS3 strategies, e.g. for technology readiness levels (TRL)³⁰ 4-7 industrial research, development (including via contract or collaborative research actions linking SMEs and universities/public research bodies), demonstration and experimentation grants. Also TRLs 8 and 9, i.e. market introduction and expansion of productive capacities can be supported (in particular through suitable financial instruments), e.g. via early product validation and first production actions, certain innovation infrastructures (e.g. LivingLabs, FabLabs, Creative Factories), cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains and cross-sectorial cluster cooperation, large scale demonstrators or public procurement of innovative solutions, and support to the development of advanced manufacturing capabilities.

The authorities in charge of the drafting of Partnership Agreements and ESIF programmes are recommended to:

- Open the programming documents for transnational activities, foreseeing explicitly the possibility to invest outside the programme area (Article 70(2) of CPR). In the ESIF programme section dedicated to interregional and transnational actions (Article 96(3)d of CPR) name more than one Member State to allow the cooperation potential with other Member States to be fully exploited (e.g. through making use of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies)³¹. Consider European territorial cooperation opportunities³².
- Envisage types of priorities, implementation and project selection methods that allow for combinations and synergies in the course of the ESIF programme implementation: permanently open submission of applications for funding to react timely to Horizon 2020 or other call/opportunity for combined funding / synergies; get familiar with the types of eligible costs and project formats under the different EU programmes to design appropriate complementary support types; allow all types of innovation activities³³ - including service innovation and non-technology driven innovation³⁴, besides the standard research activities and infrastructure and student mobility measures.

²⁹ www.clustercollaboration.eu

³⁰ Measure to assess the maturity of evolving technologies during its development (TRL scale from 1 – basic principles to 9 – first production); Horizon 2020 can support actions until TRL 8. ESIF can support actions until TRL 9 and beyond, subject to state aid rules.

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/index_en.cfm

³² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/cooperation/index_en.cfm

³³ Pilot lines, testing, value-chain networking, marketing, IPR and innovation management support, technology adoption/acquisition, etc.

³⁴ Design, creative thinking, demand tools like public procurement of innovative solutions, etc.

- Use the opportunity to align the cost models and eligibility rules to those of Horizon 2020 programmes (or COSME, Creative Europe, Erasmus +, etc.), in particular to allow the use of the same unit costs for similar operations and beneficiaries without restriction.³⁵ Provide a strong reference in the relevant ESIF programme sections to the alignment to the Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. cost models.
- Align the content and selection criteria for ESIF funding to Horizon 2020 type of activities³⁶, to be able to give ESIF support to projects that have passed successfully the Horizon 2020 evaluation threshold but could not be funded for lack of Horizon 2020 budget³⁷. Ideally these projects might be prioritised in the selection procedures as the Horizon 2020 evaluation procedures guarantee impartial assessment and high-quality proposals (provided that they fit into the relevant RIS3 and ESIF programme). Annex 2 provides further information on project formats under Horizon 2020 and other directly managed EU instruments that should be analysed when designing the policy mix for the smart specialisation strategies and type of measures, principles for selection and implementation methods that will be funded by their ESIF programmes.
- Install a “Horizon 2020 watch”, i.e. consult regularly Horizon 2020 Work Programmes and calls to identify forth-coming calls and initiatives. The same should go for the COSME, CEF digital services, Erasmus+ and CreativeEurope calls with a view to designing calls that allow for the exploitation of potential synergies. It could be organised via the relevant [NCPs](#) that would digest and send the information to the relevant MA.
- Improve capacities and services of business and innovation support structures (including via linking up to NCPs, Enterprise Europe Network, BICs), in line with international quality standards, such as the EBN Quality System for BICs or the quality label developed through the European Cluster Excellence Initiatives³⁸ so that they can deliver the relevant high-quality services (see above).
- Foresee full cost models to allow private co-funding without being conditional on public budgets. This would avoid hampering private R&I support for lack of national/regional co-funding.
- Provide R&I support service measures (possibly in cooperation with the NCPs and the Enterprise Europe Network to facilitate international R&I

³⁵ See Art. 65(11) and 68 CPR. The flat rate for indirect costs applying to the ESIF is now up to 25% of eligible direct costs (with a methodology to underpin it) i.e. the same flat rate as for Horizon 2020 (without any justification needed). It is up to 15% of eligible direct staff costs (without any justification needed). A delegated act will set out the EU policy areas where flat rates for indirect costs under the ESIF can be drawn from.

³⁶ e.g. Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions for researchers' training mobility and career development, EUREKA-Eurostars type of projects for SME R&D, knowledge-triangle projects like in the EIT-KICs, ERC proof-of-concept, SME feasibility study support, etc.

³⁷ This is in particular promising for proposals submitted by a single SME for support by the SME instrument. A very high oversubscription of available funds is expected and 'the European added value' will likely become a decisive factor for support. Project proposals failing for phase 2 support simply because of a lack of European dimension will be awarded a 'label of excellence' by the EC services and will be supported by Enterprise Europe Network to find alternative sources of funding. An easy entrance to regional programmes, potentially making use of the existing results of expert evaluations, could deliver high impact.

³⁸ <http://www.cluster-excellence.eu/>

partner finding) to advise potential applicants on Horizon 2020 procedures and requirements.

- Provide information and training on Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. and the relevant cost models.
- Design and implement grant schemes, which scale-up successful innovative initiatives supported by Erasmus + programmes.

The authorities in charge of setting up the management, audit and reporting systems for the new ESIF programmes are recommended to:

- In case of intentions to apply Art. 65(11) CPR for combining ESIF with Horizon 2020 grants in the same project:
 - Install a system of formal and conditional commitment of funding, including possibly the development of standard letters for conditional commitment of ESIF that can be provided to project applicants who prepare a cumulative funding project in the sense of Art 65(11) CPR.
 - Install a mechanism to reserve the relevant funds until the results of the Horizon 2020 project evaluation are available (in general 5 months after the deadline for project submission, which might fall into the next financial year). The final commitment can be made dependent on successful Horizon 2020 evaluation. There are usually 3 months between the communication of the results of the Horizon 2020 evaluation and the signature of the Horizon 2020 grant agreement. During this time a MA should be able to give the final commitment for the grant agreement under ESIF.
 - Align also the reporting requirements and timelines to the Horizon 2020 grant, as far as possible under the relevant ESIF programme.
 - Train ESIF auditors on the options for synergies, extra-territorial funding and Horizon 2020 rules on eligibility of costs, to avoid problems if combined funding occurs.
- Install a tracking system for synergies with Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes, e.g. by asking in applications or implementation reports for previous funding from Horizon 2020 or other EU support received or parallel actions under another EU instrument that lead to cross-fertilisations with the ESIF support.
- Analyse the information provided by the Commission/NCPs on Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus+ National Agencies, etc. results and participants in a territory to detect whether the projects and/or their results can contribute to the smart specialisation fields and how. Inform the RDI support providers about the results and participants.
- Recognise international cooperation as major driver of innovation and value it as a positive criterion for project selection. The use of international evaluators to assess the quality of the ESIF project application would be ideal. MAs can benefit from the new "Synchronised Call Initiatives" under Horizon 2020 that allow for an evaluation of purely national/regional R&I project proposals under national/regional programmes (incl. those with

ESIF support) by international experts from the Horizon 2020 database, provided that calls are coordinated and the proposals come in English.³⁹

- Offer potential participants in Union instruments directly managed by the Commission information sessions/material on the R&I support schemes available in the territory (e.g. via the Enterprise Europe Network or NCPs). MA could consider the following activities:
 - Awareness raising, information and advice on how to access the Union programmes, including early information regarding future calls for proposals, feedback from information events and assistance in participation to info days on calls and information on initiatives for facilitating access to risk-finance;
 - Creation of sectorial or cross-sectorial interest groups and *alumni clubs* of former and current beneficiaries from the region;
 - Promotion of local academia-industry cooperation and their cross-border networking;
 - Support to international partner search to facilitate the formation of trans-national consortia;
 - Advice and quick check of project ideas or grants for exploring project feasibility and validation of project ideas, unless the Union instruments directly managed by the Commission integrate such support, like in the case of Horizon2020 'SME instrument';
 - Support to ERA-Net projects on strategic topics. These projects are excellent springboards for regional actors' participation in Horizon 2020;
 - Provide training, mentoring and coaching to potential EU project managers, partners and stakeholders.
- Address regularly at the monitoring committee meetings the issue of synergies, good examples and the progress of the RIS3 implementation actions, in particular the up-stream and down-stream actions to Horizon 2020.⁴⁰
- Reconsider the value added of setting up own support schemes, instead of using dedicated instruments set up at Union level, e.g. the SME initiative⁴¹ or instruments under CEF⁴².
- Ensure inter-operability of ESIF supported e-government solutions with the CEF digital services infrastructures (see annex 2).

³⁹ See for example INSO-8-2014: Synchronised Call initiatives:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/work-programmes/societies_draft_work_programme.pdf

⁴⁰ CPR annex I, section 4.3.2 a) and b)

⁴¹ See Article 39 CPR and http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/index_en.cfm

⁴² See: http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/cef_brochure.pdf

3.2.2 How to enable combination of funds in the same project

The synchronisation of the timing of the funding decisions under Horizon 2020 and ESIF is a crucial issue for enabling the combination of funding in the same project.

When preparing ESIF programmes, managing authorities (MA) should envisage implementation modalities and selection methods that allow to align the timing of ESIF funding decisions under the relevant priority axis to the Horizon2020 time-lines (e.g. open calls with cut-off dates, preference to projects with international outlook, etc.) and proposal templates that allow identification and description of parts of a project supposed to be funded from Horizon 2020 (or of related projects if sequential or parallel projects are funded from other EU programmes)

As the Horizon 2020 grant agreements are in many cases⁴³ signed 6 to 8 months after the deadline for proposal submission, the MA could set up a system of conditional approval for ESIF grants that allows reserving ESIF budgets until the results of the evaluation of the Horizon 2020 project proposals are known (in many cases 5 months after the submission deadline). If a MA has agreed to a cumulative support to a specific proposal before its submission to a Horizon 2020 call, such conditional approvals should then allow the final approval of the ESIF grant in less than 3 months after the positive Horizon 2020 evaluation result is communicated.

Moreover, a system to alleviate the administrative workload for beneficiaries in terms of financial management, reporting and audits should be set-up. MAs should consider not only alignment of cost models to the Horizon 2020 standards, but also of their reporting requirements (i.e. accept a single report on the overall project progress) and coordination of the audits and on-site controls with Horizon 2020 project reviews.

Using financing from Horizon 2020 and ESIF for the same project requires adequate accounting practices at beneficiary level so that they are able to separate and appropriately record the respective cost items from the very beginning of the action. At the project conception stage MAs should remind potential applicants to identify the different work packages (e.g. a test series), or types of activity (e.g. costs of training activities), or types of cost (e.g. personnel costs) as well as the geographical location where the actions will be implemented and unfold their benefit (in the sense of Article 70(2) CPR). Thus, the costs can be attributed to the different corresponding EU funding sources from the beginning. Applicants should be reminded that they will have to monitor and record costs/expenditure accordingly.

⁴³ Depending on the H2020 project type this can be longer or shorter.

The different steps could be visualised as follows for the case of an industrial project:



In case the ESIF programme call allows for it (in terms of location of beneficiaries, cost model, etc.), it could be envisaged to invite proposers of Horizon 2020 projects that received a positive evaluation but cannot be co-financed under Horizon 2020 due to unavailability of budget, to contact the relevant ESIF Managing Authorities for exploring possibilities to take over the project.

3.3 Actions for National and Regional authorities involved in Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU programmes

In order to put the achievement of synergies between Cohesion Policy, rural development and maritime policies and EU policies in the fields of research, innovation and competitiveness high on the agenda of the evolution of the existing EU strategies and initiatives in these fields, the following actions are recommended:

- The European Innovation Partnerships, the Knowledge and Innovation Communities, the high-level group on Key Enabling Technologies, the SET plan steering group, the European Research and Innovation Area Board, the ESFRI Executive Board, the Enterprise Policy Group, groups and initiatives active in the Digital Agenda for Europe Assembly⁴⁴ and other bodies and initiatives that contribute to the shaping and monitoring of EU level policy strategies take note of the smart specialisation priorities that emerge in fields related to their activities and examine the potential for synergies with these bottom-up priorities and strengths.

In order to translate the regulatory scope for synergies and complementarities into reality, the authorities involved in the preparation of work programmes and work plans are recommended to take the following actions:

- NCPs of Horizon 2020 and similar national bodies for Erasmus+, COSME and Creative Europe should actively cooperate with MA and regional structures of support, interlink websites and provide information to beneficiaries on ESIF funding opportunities.
- Foster the understanding of potential beneficiaries of the budget structures for projects that combine Horizon 2020 and ESIF.
- Facilitate transfer of technology, dissemination and take-up of research results from Horizon 2020 (and other Research Framework Programmes⁴⁵) by companies (that may receive ESIF support).
- Facilitate access to finance in particular for start-ups and innovative SMEs by promoting the different schemes proposed through the EIB, EIF and local financial intermediaries.⁴⁶
- In view of preparing work plans and call specifications, the Dedicated Implementation Structures of P2Ps, Joint Undertakings of JTIs, as well as their partners in the JTO, P2P, and research infrastructures should contact the MAs of relevant ESIF programmes to explore synergy potentials.
- Organise workshops bringing together the relevant MAs and bodies in charge of RIS3 with representatives in the different Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. programme committees, to brainstorm about possible synergies and synchronisation of funding decisions, to regularly exchange information and mutually learn about the state of play of the RIS3 implementation. For example, they could explore potential alternative

⁴⁴ e.g. Startup Europe: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/about-startup-europe>

⁴⁵ http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html

⁴⁶ See for instance: <http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/funding-grants/access-to-finance/>

funding / reorientation of high quality Horizon 2020 proposals with a score above threshold, for which there was not enough Horizon 2020 budget available.

In order to translate the regulatory scope for synergies and complementarities into reality, authorities and bodies involved in EU innovation-related programmes' implementation are recommended to take the following actions:

- NCPs should inform MAs about projects, participants and results in their territory in a timely manner.
- Disseminate information on Horizon 2020 and FP7 results to national/local innovation stakeholders (cluster organisations and other SME intermediaries, business networks, science and technology parks, the Enterprise Europe Network centres, etc.).

4 Commission support to facilitate synergies

The Commission services support the synergies efforts by the national and regional authorities by the following:

Synergies friendly implementation of EU instruments directly managed by the Commission:

- Use, in implementing Horizon 2020 and other concerned directly Commission managed EU programmes, the full range of new regulatory possibilities for synergies, in particular Article 37 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation (cumulative funding with ESIF) as well as facilitating the use of ESIF up-stream measures in Horizon 2020 projects, encouraging the down-stream use of results of Horizon 2020 (and of the previous research framework programmes) projects for ESIF projects. This includes advice and support through the respective Commission help-desks⁴⁷ and relevant National Contact Points⁴⁸. In parts of the Horizon 2020 work programme 2014-2015 specific references to potential synergies with ESIF, leverage of other private, national or regional (including ESIF) funding or coherence with policy strategies and initiatives, including smart specialisation strategies, and their relevance for the scope, eligibility or expected impact of project proposals have been inserted⁴⁹. Information seminars with stakeholders on potentially interesting areas were organised.

Training

- Auditors involved in ESIF at regional, national and European levels and other Union programmes, will be trained and informed to get a greater

⁴⁷ e.g. see for example the Horizon 2020 Research Enquiry Service on the Web (see <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries>)

⁴⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html

⁴⁹ See for instance: calls for proposals under the "Twinning", "Teaming" and "ERA Chairs" (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-sewp_en.pdf), in the Nanotechnologies, Advanced Materials, Biotechnology and Advanced Manufacturing and Processing section (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-leit-nmp_en.pdf) and the 2014 Call for Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) proposals (<http://eit.europa.eu/kics/2014-call-for-kics/>)

understanding of the functioning of Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU programmes, including different accounting systems and terminologies. Furthermore, inform about new possibilities for synergies among the programmes, including knowledge of new forms of innovation support and widened possibilities under the modernised state aid rules for research, development and innovation (in particular the General Block-Exemption Regulation, the R&D&I Framework and the Important Projects of Common European Interest).

Evaluation

- In Horizon 2020, some specific topics (close to market activities) may be identified at the level of the biennial Work Programmes as particularly suitable for mobilising additional funding from other available instruments, involving public or private funding of research and innovation activities, including - but not limited to - EU instruments such as ESIF. In such a case, the particular Work Programmes and Calls for proposals could specify the additional conditions and/or lay down further details of the application of the evaluation criteria under which these actions would be considered for funding by Horizon 2020 including any possible additional contribution of other Union funding instruments.

However proposers need to note that, unless explicitly specified in the Work Programmes, the existence of potential funding synergies between different EU instruments will not be considered and assessed during the evaluation of a proposal submitted under Horizon 2020 (hence such cases will not in themselves lead to a higher evaluation score). The impact of a Horizon 2020 proposal is measured by its potential to develop new products and / or services in the market or solve a societal challenge / problem .Nevertheless, it would be still worth-while to plan and foresee such synergies, since this would enable a more integrated implementation on the ground and has the potential to stimulate a better local uptake of the project's outcomes and give it a wider perspective.

- Include in the briefing sessions for the evaluators of project proposals under Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU instruments information on the concept of synergies, the specific references to synergies related issues in the specific call, relevant ESIF, Horizon 2020, etc. specific rules and opportunities arising from cumulative funding of Horizon 2020 with ESIF.

Collecting data, providing information and guidance, raising awareness

- Information will be provided to the prospective participants in Horizon 2020 calls for proposals about possibilities for combined, cumulative or consecutive funding in a particular area of the Horizon 2020 Participant's Portal⁵⁰.
- Information on ESIF funding in the participant portals of COSME, Erasmus+, CEF digital services, CreativeEurope, etc.
- New links to the INFOREGIO website and other relevant ESIF websites⁵¹ on the websites of Horizon 2020 and other programmes (COSME, Erasmus+,

⁵⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/other/index.html#collapseFive>

⁵¹ See links to the relevant ESF, EAFRD and EMFF web-sites in annex 1

digital CEF, CreativeEurope, etc.) to make information on relevant ESIF programmes, contacts to MAs and information on open calls easily accessible.

- Updated "Practical guide to EU funding opportunities for research and innovation" to help identifying the most suitable EU funding or support sources for research, innovation, digital growth and SME competitiveness via a checklist (implementation of Article 13 CPR).⁵²
- Information provided to successful applicants in directly managed EU programmes, on potential ESIF support in their territory (e.g. through a reference to the InfoRegio or other relevant ESIF websites, or in the standard cover letters to the Evaluation Summary Reports on the Horizon 2020 project evaluation).
- A system will be developed able to target relevant information at MAs, in particular:
 - identify the territory in which a Horizon 2020 participant is located to allow to send the information on project participants and on their successful Horizon 2020 projects to the relevant NCPs who may wish to share this information with the relevant MA;
 - classify the Horizon 2020 results by research / technology/ sector in order to allow for a matching with smart specialisation fields;
 - classify Horizon 2020 projects also according to the ESIF thematic objectives and investment priorities whenever relevant;
 - set-up a system to track synergies with ESIF in selected Horizon 2020 proposals;
 - develop a system that allows to identify for each successful Horizon 2020 project the technology readiness level and / or the potential for further RDI measures towards commercial use, public procurement needs, in order to facilitate potential innovation actors' understanding of the Horizon 2020 results and needs for further investment and its business innovation potential (e.g. through inserting in the templates for the Horizon 2020 mid-term / final reports appropriate sections for Horizon 2020 participants to assess the needs and potentials for further R&I support);

Analysing and disseminating information with regard to synergies

- Published scenarios describing the different Horizon 2020 project formats and cost models and sketching out possibilities for synergies to facilitate the understanding of this for national and regional authorities.⁵³

⁵² See existing practical guide:

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/0/new_practical_guide_EU_funding_opportunities_R%26I.pdf

On-line check list: http://cordis.europa.eu/eu-funding-guide/finding-sources_en.html#checklist Update is in preparation. See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/activity/index_en.cfm

⁵³ See annex n.2 to this document.

- Analysis and dissemination of policy mixes and approaches that proved to be successful for increasing synergies between the EU funds, including in the framework of the European Parliament Pilot Project "Cohesion Policy and the synergies with the research and development funds: the stairway to excellence", will be ensured. For instance, the Erasmus+ programme puts demonstration of EU added value, impact and results of projects at the core of its actions. To this end, performance results and dissemination have been embedded in a dedicated chapter of the legal basis. The ultimate objective of dissemination and exploitation of results (D&E) is to feed into system development, to show the results obtained by the projects financed in the framework of the three key activities, their usefulness and transferability and their relevance in strengthening the links and synergy between the Programme and the main EU policy priorities and processes, particularly the implementation of Europe 2020, Education and Training 2020 and Youth Strategies and the priorities of the EU external action.
- Directly managed Union instruments are used to facilitate the testing of and experimentation with good practices and new forms of research, innovation and competitiveness support and for facilitating capacity building at national and regional levels. This should in particular include large-scale demonstrators, public procurement of innovative solutions, pre-commercial procurement, social innovation, "widening" actions, innovation in the public sector (see annex 2 under Horizon 2020), cluster cooperation along value chains, advanced business and innovation support services (see annex 2 under COSME), Knowledge Alliances (see annex 2 under Erasmus+), inter-operable e-government solutions (see annex 2 under CEF digital services). Set up a system of channelling such best practices, methods and tools developed and tested into ESIF programme management and into the policy mix of RIS3 strategies.
- A tracking system for identifying and measuring progress of synergies between ESIF investments and Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, CEF, COSME etc. projects will be set-up. This could be done via an invitation to report on synergies in implementation and progress reports, i.e. ask to describe whether ESIF funding related to the programme proposal/project directly managed by the Commission was received in the past. The Commission services will work closely with the Executive Agencies managing Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. projects to track-down all available information and data on developing synergies with ESIF in selected projects.
- Identification and dissemination of good practice examples for synergies, e.g. via requesting systematically in all European Commission awards and prizes (e.g. European Entrepreneurship Awards, EU prize for Women innovators, EIT Entrepreneurship Awards, European Capital of Innovation Award, European Social Innovation Competition, European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration, European Business Awards for the Environment, European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) Award, etc.) information on previous ESIF support and vice-versa in the RegioStars

Awards. Also, specific studies could be launched, like the report on synergies in the field of transport research.⁵⁴

Stimulating dialogue and cooperation between the stakeholders involved in ESIF and directly managed Union instruments

- NCPs, Enterprise Europe Network, EGESIF⁵⁵, programme/management committee meetings, etc. will be used to ensure better and more systemic information flow during implementation, and strengthen the collaboration of the NCPs with MAs and regional structures of support (e.g. regional development agencies, cluster organisations, etc.).
- Horizon 2020 and other programmes beneficiaries will be invited to inform MAs about their participation and potential interest in ESIF support.
- Add a sentence in the cover letter to the Evaluation Summary Report for projects above threshold, but not funded (notably for Horizon 2020 SME instrument), inviting them to contact the relevant ESIF MA to explore potential alternative funding/ reorientation of the proposal towards ESIF rules and conditions.
- The inclusion of policy-makers and innovation actors who flagged in their RIS3 strengths and potentials in fields that are relevant for an EIP, KIC, SET plan, etc. will be promoted in order to fully exploit the innovation potential of Europe for addressing the societal challenges.
- Linked up the innovation investments under the EAFRD to the EIP for 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability'.⁵⁶

Integrating new elements in the Horizon 2020 projects life cycle

- The RIS3 specialisations (e.g. via the Eye@RIS3 tool⁵⁷) are being screened, identifying which MS/region has selected which smart specialisation priority field (and if relevant which ESIF programme will be funding them) and consider this information when up-dating Horizon 2020 work programmes, or when developing and implementing European Innovation Partnerships agendas.
- Insert further references to potential synergies in Horizon 2020 work programmes whenever relevant.

Providing specific support for smart specialisation strategy development, preparation of Partnership agreements, ESIF programmes and their implementation

- Since 2011, the Commission provides hands-on support for individual regional and national governments for the development of smart specialisation strategies through experts.
- The Commission set up the S3Platform that is hosted by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) in Seville, part of the Commission's Joint Research Centre. The S3Platform is open to regional and national administrations of EU, candidate and neighbouring countries.

⁵⁴ See http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/pdf/report_synergies_horizon_2020_cohesion_policy_en.pdf
[55 Group of experts on European Structural and Investment Funds](#)

⁵⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/index_en.htm

⁵⁷ <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/map>

Its services include providing information, methodologies, expertise and advice to national and regional policy makers, promoting mutual learning (incl. peer-reviews of RIS3 strategies), trans-national co-operation and contributing to academic debates around the concept of smart specialisation. In particular, it provides information on the emerging fields of smart specialisation priorities and potentials for synergies with ESIF to the relevant bodies and groups, allowing detecting areas that represent a particular potential, also for less research intensive regions and to others seeking strategic transnational partnerships.⁵⁸ The S3Platform is complemented by the cluster mapping of sectorial and cross-sectorial regional industrial strength by the European Cluster Observatory, the Regional Innovation Monitor and the regional Innovation Union Scoreboard⁵⁹.

- Upon request, provide MAs and ESIF intermediaries with contacts to independent experts registered in the Commission's expert databases (in particular the database for Horizon 2020 evaluators⁶⁰). Such independent experts can be appointed to assist research and innovation assignments including the evaluation of proposals, monitoring of projects, evaluation of programmes, or design of policy tools. Such requests might be sent to a functional e-mail box. The right to personal data protection under Reg. No 45/2001 will be guaranteed.
- A platform/network for exchange of information, best practice examples and solving practical issues which might arise during implementation of synergetic projects will be set-up.
- Support to the completion of RIS3, their monitoring and possible revisions will be provided via the S3Platform, the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility⁶¹ and experts.
- "Synchronised call initiatives" will be used under Horizon 2020 to improve the evaluation systems in the Member States and regions via international joint peer reviews for calls for proposals addressing a pre-determined research and innovation field with one identical call deadline. The funding decision will be made by each national/regional research funding body.⁶²
- ESIF programmes and progress with the implementation of major research projects under ESIF will be analysed to make information about new research capacities available to Horizon 2020 programmers.
- Thematic guides for MAs to be used as guiding principles for the selection of operations and for the choices of types of projects and support

⁵⁸ See Eye@RIS3 database: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/eye-ris3>

⁵⁹ See: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/facts-figures-analysis/index_en.htm

⁶⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html>

⁶¹ The PSF aims to improve the design, implementation and evaluation of national/regional research and innovation policies. It will offer expert advice to public authorities at national or regional level on a voluntary basis, covering the needs to access the relevant body of knowledge, to benefit from the insight of international experts, to use state of the art methodologies and tools, to receive tailor-made advice. See " Spreading excellence and widening participation" part of the work programme

⁴³ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/2474-inso-8-2014.html>

mechanisms has been published and will be further completed and up-dated.⁶³

- Commission services' support for the improvement of the policy mix to support innovation and competitiveness, notably via the S3Platform, mutual learning, studies, analysis and the provision of experts will be enhanced⁶⁴.
- Data and analysis to facilitate international and EU wide comparisons is published and regularly up-dated.⁶⁵

⁶³ Guides are available on service innovation, innovation-based incubators, entrepreneurial skills, advanced SME support policies, connecting universities to regional growth, cultural and creative industries in smart specialisation, energy efficient innovation through procurement, eco-innovation, converting research into commercial success and on social innovation (see: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides>). Guidance on science and technology parks, clusters in less favoured regions, ICT and digital entrepreneurship support, and innovation procurement will be available soon.

⁶⁴ Call for expression of interest to establish a list of experts to assist the Directorate-General for Regional Policy in the appraisal, implementation and monitoring of Cohesion policy interventions. TED: 2012/S 55-088796. See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/tender/expression_en.cfm

⁶⁵ e.g. the [national and regional innovation scoreboards](#), the [Regional Innovation Monitor](#), the [European Cluster Observatory](#), the [European Competitiveness reports](#), the KETs Observatory, the Innovation Union Competitiveness reports, etc. see: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/benchmarking>

List of acronyms

(See also glossary section of Horizon 2020 participants' portal : http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/reference_terms.html)

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| CEF | Connecting Europe Facility |
| COSME | Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (see details in annex 1) |
| CP | Cohesion policy (see details in annex 1) |
| CPR | Common Provisions Regulation for all European Structural and Investment Funds (2014-2020) Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the EP and the Council of 17 December 2013 (OJ L 347, p. 320 of 20.12.2013) |
| CSF | Common strategic framework for all European Structural and Investment Funds (2014-2020) |
| EAFRD | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development |
| EaSI | European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation |
| ECSEL | Electronic Components and Systems Initiative JTI (merger of former ENIAC and ARTEMIS JTIs) |
| EEN | Enterprise Europe Network |
| EGTC | E uropean G rouping of T erritorial C ooperation |
| EIB | European Investment Bank |
| EIF | E uropean I nternational F und |
| EIP | European Innovation Partnerships are innovation stakeholder platforms around societal challenge themes, currently: Active Healthy aging, agricultural sustainability and productivity, Smart Cities and Communities, Water, Raw Materials. No funding from Horizon2020 for substance activities, only funding of networking activities. |
| EIT | E uropean institute of I nnovation and T echnology |
| EMFF | European Maritime and Fisheries Fund |
| ERA | European Research Area |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund |
| ERIC | E uropean R esearch I nfrastructure C onsortium |
| ESFRI | European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures |
| ESIF | European Structural and Investment Funds |
| ESF | European Social Fund |
| ESR | Evaluation Summary Report, i.e. the evaluation result of Horizon 2020 project proposals |
| ETP | European Technology Platforms are industry-led stakeholder fora (participants are mostly from industry) that develop short to long-term research and innovation agendas and roadmaps for action at EU and national level to be supported by both private and public funding. There are currently 20 ETPs under the themes of Bio-based economy, Energy, Environment, ICT, Production and processes, Transport, nano-technologies and industrial safety. H2020 only funds their networking activities. |
| JTI | Joint technology Initiatives (see details in annex 2) |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| JPI | Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI) aim to pool national research efforts (funding programmes) in order to tackle common European challenges more effectively in a few key areas. They start with a structured process whereby Member States agree, on a voluntary basis and in a partnership approach, on common visions and Strategic Research Agendas to address major societal challenges. On a variable geometry basis, Member States commit to JPIs where they implement together joint Strategic Research Agendas mainly financed from own national programmes. |
| JU | Joint Undertaking |
| KICs | Knowledge and Innovation Communities |
| MA | Managing Authority in charge of the implementation of ESIF |
| MSCA | Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions |
| MSC COFUND | Marie Skłodowska-Curie Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes |
| NCP | National Contact Points of the directly managed EU programmes, in particular Horizon 2020 |
| PA | Partnership Agreement setting out the framework for all 2014-2020 ESIF programmes in a Member State |
| PCP | pre-commercial procurement |
| PPI | public procurement of innovative solutions |
| PPP and P2P | Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) or JTI under Art.187 TFEU or on contractual basis under Horizon 2020 and Public-Public-Partnership (P2P) under Art. 185 TFEU (see details in annex 2) |
| R&I or RDI | Research and Innovation or Research, development and innovation |
| RI | Research Infrastructures |
| RIS3 | Research and Innovation strategies for smart specialisations |
| SET | The European Strategic Energy Technology Plan |
| SMEs | Small and medium-sized enterprises |
| TO | Thematic Objectives correspond to the goals of Europe 2020: TO 1-3 for smart growth, TO 4-7 for sustainable growth, and TO 8-11 for inclusive growth. They are also aligned to the thematic areas of Horizon 2020. |
| TRL | Technology Readiness Level, see definition for Horizon 2020: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf |
| WP | Horizon 2020 work programme: the (bi)annual work programme of Horizon 2020 are the basis for calls for proposals Besides descriptions of the topics of the calls, work programmes may introduce additional eligibility criteria, specify details on the number of participants, type of participant and place of establishment, lay down further details for the application of the award criteria (excellence, quality and efficiency of the implementation, impact), and specify weighting and thresholds, specify the funding rate for an action, specify that lump sums or scale of unit costs can be used for an action (subject to prior separate Commission Decision) or exceptionally even identify beneficiaries for grants without a call for proposals. |

Annex 1

Overview of differences and communalities between relevant EU programmes

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Basic principles of the Cohesion Policy and ESIF⁶⁶

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) include the financial tools for implementation of Cohesion Policy, aiming at promoting and supporting the overall harmonious development of its Member States and Regions.

As stated in Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in order to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion, the Union aims at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions or islands.

The funds providing specifically support under cohesion policy are the following:

- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, aiming at redressing the main regional imbalances in the Union and investing in growth)
- **European Social Fund (ESF)**, investing in people
- **Cohesion Fund (CF)**, investing in environment and trans-European networks in the area of transport infrastructure,

Apart from the three Funds under the Cohesion policy, other ESIF have the potential to contribute to structural and investment goals, i.e.

- **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**
- **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**

For the 2014-2020 period the Funds supporting cohesion policy have been brought together with the EAFRD and the EMFF under a common strategic framework in order to maximise their effectiveness and optimise synergies. They are named "European Structural and Investment Funds" (ESIF).

In order to contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020) and to economic, social and territorial cohesion, in the 2014-2020 programming period the ESIF should focus their support on a **limited number of common thematic objectives**, to ensure maximum impact for these investments.

Under the EU's 2014-2020 budget, Cohesion Policy will invest EUR 366.8 billion⁶⁷ in Europe's Member States, their regions and cities to deliver the EU-wide goals of growth and jobs, as well as tackling climate change, energy dependence and social exclusion.

Cohesion Policy will invest in all EU regions, adapting the level of support and the national contribution (co-financing rate) to their levels of development:

- Less Developed regions (GDP < 75% of EU-27 average)
- Transition regions (GDP 75% to 90% of EU-27 average)
- More Developed regions (GDP > 90% of EU-27 average)

⁶⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/how/index_en.cfm

⁶⁷ Please note that these figures do not include EAFRD and EMFF.

Investments under ERDF will be concentrated on **4 key priorities**: innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and the low-carbon economy. EUR 109.5⁶⁸ billion will be dedicated to these sectors.

Around EUR 66 billion will be focused on priority Trans-European transport links and key environmental infrastructure projects through the Cohesion Fund.

Through the **ESF**, Cohesion Policy will provide a significant contribution to EU priorities in the field of employment, for example through training and life-long learning, education and social inclusion (at least 23,8% of the ESF in each Member State will have to be used to support this objective).

The **EAFRD**⁶⁹ disposes of around EUR 95.3 billion (current prices) and includes among its priorities the fostering of knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas and enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forests.

The **EMFF**⁷⁰ will have a budget of around EUR 5.5 billion (current prices) and has among its priorities the fostering of innovative, competitive and knowledge based fisheries and aquaculture including related processing. This includes strengthening technological development, innovation and knowledge transfer.

Cohesion policy is delivered under **shared management**. While Commission sets priorities, negotiates and approves the strategies through Partnership agreements and Operational Programmes (OPs) proposed by the Member States, and allocates resources, Member States manage the programmes, select the projects, monitor and assess them, in partnership with the relevant regional and local authorities, economic and social partners as well as civil society bodies.

The Commission is involved in monitoring and evaluation commits and pays out approved expenditure and verifies the control systems

The responsibilities of Member states are carried out by the **Managing authorities (MAs)**, i.e. public or private authorities or bodies at national, regional or local level, designated by the Member State to manage assistance from the ESIF. If the Member State designates a MA other than itself, it shall determine all the modalities of its relationship with the MA and of the latter's relationship with the Commission.

The assistance from ESIF follows the principles of complementarity - **EU assistance should be additional to national investments and not replace** public or private expenditure by a MS, multi-annual programming/financing, proportionality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and sustainable development.

⁶⁸ Please note that the figures are expressed in current prices.

⁶⁹ See http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-funding/budget/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/research-innovation/index_en.htm

⁷⁰ See http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/emff/index_en.htm

Specific conditions – "**ex-ante conditionalities**" must be fulfilled before funds can be channelled to ensure more effective investments. For example, "smart specialisation strategies" identifying innovation strengths and potential are conditional to investments into the RDI field. Other conditionalities include business-friendly reforms, transport strategies, measures to improve public procurement systems, compliance with environmental laws, strategies to fight youth unemployment, early school leaving or to promote gender equality and non-discrimination are all necessary preconditions.

A Common Strategic Framework provides the basis for better coordination between the European Structural and Investment Funds. This also links better to other EU instruments like Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility or the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. In addition, a common set of rules for all European Structural and Investment Funds as well as simpler accounting rules, more targeted reporting demands and more use of digital technology ("e-cohesion") are in place.

Investments from ESIF are disbursed on **territorial basis**, to the region or member state subject of the OP. Nevertheless, there is also room for **cross-border cooperation**, making the setting up of more cross-border projects easier with the possibility to support projects located outside the programme area. Moreover, ensuring macro-regional strategies like the Danube and the Baltic Sea is supported by national and regional programmes.

Co-financing rates for each OP are fixed by the relevant adopting Commission decision. The co-financing rates vary on the basis of the category of region and are applied at the level of the priority axes (specific priorities within each OP). Therefore, at the level of single projects, they might be different and will be determined on the basis of selection criteria defined within the calls.

Cohesion Fund: co-financing rate of 85%, eligible MS those with GNI per capita <90% of EU 27 in 2008-2010

ERDF and ESF: depending on the GDP, may vary between 50%, 60%, 80% and 85%.

Differences and Communalities with other EU programmes

While ESIF acts mainly at national and regional level, with some leeway towards trans-territorial activities, Horizon 2020 and other Union research and/or innovation programmes are mainly centrally managed and most often foster transnational projects.

By their different goals, the nature of actions will be different.

Nevertheless, overarching themes that originate in the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives⁷¹ for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are reflected at national/regional level in the ESIF ex ante conditionality of Research & Innovation smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) that defines priority areas that can be linked to research and innovation topics of other programmes.

The Commission Services compiled an overview of differences and communalities by programme with ESIF, to better illustrate the potential opportunities:

⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/flagship-initiatives/index_en.htm

Horizon 2020

[Horizon 2020](#) supports the implementation of the [Innovation Union](#), a [Europe 2020](#) flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with a EUR 79.4 billion budget (in current prices), this R&I Framework Programme is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe.

H2020 Programme: 3 main priorities:

1. [Excellent Science - includes:](#)

- European Research Council ([ERC](#))
 - Future and Emerging Technologies ([FET](#))
 - [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions \(MSCA\) for researchers' training, mobility and career development](#)
 - [Research infrastructures](#) (including e-infrastructures) – support to feasibility study and building (incl. for large infrastructures above EUR 20 million).
- } Fundamental research; proof of concept grants for ERC projects that proved to be successful

2. [Industrial Leadership \(applied research projects up to TRL⁷² 8\) - includes](#)

- [Enabling and Industrial Technologies such as:](#)
- ICT (including two [Key Enabling Technologies \(KETs\)](#) photonics and micro- and nano-electronics),
- Other KETs: nanotechnologies, advanced materials, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and processing
- Space
- Access to risk finance; and
- Support for "Innovation in SMEs" (including 'policy actions for better SME support' and the topics addressed by the SME instrument, that provides staged support for feasibility study and an innovation project that is core to realise an ambitious business plan).

3. [Tackling societal challenges](#)

Horizon 2020 reflects the policy priorities of the [Europe 2020](#) strategy and addresses major concerns shared by citizens in Europe and elsewhere. It will include establishing links with the activities of the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP).

⁷² Technology Readiness Levels: see definitions in http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

All Work Programmes and ancillary documents can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_documents.html

See also: Horizon2020 Official Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/h2020-sections>

| Horizon 2020 | ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds |
|---|---|
| DIFFERENCES: | |
| Non-territorial , mainly transnational approach based on excellence and impact; H2020 does not take into account geographic specificities in allocating funding | Place-based approach supporting economic and social cohesion.; co-funding rates vary according to the region and programme |
| Individual (R&I) Projects tackling the whole cycle of innovation, taking into account strategic approaches at EU level, e.g. through European Innovation Partnerships and the Strategic Energy Technology plan; Co-Fund actions: focus on co-funding specific R&I Calls or programmes PCP/PPI, PPP, P2P, ERA-NETs, etc.) | Largely focused on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities (RIS3). There is also an increase of support to R&I activities as such, e.g. business-university cooperations and closer to the market activities (prototyping, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production). |
| Directly managed (European Commission/executive agency) and awarded directly to final beneficiaries or managed by a Union body or multi-country entity; in case of Programme Co-Funding, with Dedicated Implementation Structure (indirect management) | Shared management with national and regional public intermediaries (managing authorities, implementing agencies and intermediate bodies) which define the implementation details and allocate the funding to final beneficiaries |
| Not counted for EU State Aid purposes | Counted for EU State Aid purposes |
| Competitive calls for proposals addressed to multi-country consortia (participation beyond the EU is possible) without geographic pre-allocation. (European Research Council and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions | Policy-related prioritisation based on cohesion considerations and RIS3 priorities to individual firms/bodies and consortia within the territory covered by the operational programme ⁷³ (and only within the EU). Use of competitive attribution through |

⁷³ ESIF/S3 can support (to a limited extent) cooperation with actors outside the programme territory: up to 15% for the ERDF, the CF and the EMFF [Art.70(2)b CPR] – 5% in case of EAFRD.

| | |
|--|---|
| also address individuals; SME instrument also address single SME) | calls and aid schemes based on project selection criteria are also increasingly used (depending on MS) |
| OPPORTUNITIES: | |
| <p>Horizon 2020 will focus on: industrial leadership and tackling major societal challenges, maximising the competitiveness impact of research and innovation and raising and spreading levels of excellence in R&I.</p> <p>Horizon 2020 includes actions to close the research and innovation divide: ERA Chairs, EIT Regional Innovation Scheme, teaming and twinning, research infrastructure development, etc.</p> <p>Horizon2020 has the objective of spreading excellence and widening participation compared to FP7</p> <p>It is foreseen that for certain types of actions (including the SME instrument) proposals that fulfil excellence criteria but cannot be supported from Horizon2020 are awarded a 'Seal of excellence'. This seal might be taken up by national / regional programmes to facilitate access to project funding⁷⁴.</p> | <p>Besides improving the innovation eco-systems, Cohesion policy will partly increase the capacity of regions and Member States to participate in Horizon 2020 ("Stairway to Excellence") and partly fund R&D&I activities in a MS/region that can build on FP7 and Horizon2020 projects.</p> <p>ESIF programmes can take up good practices and project formats that were tested under Horizon 2020, e.g. public procurement of innovative solutions, pre-commercial public procurement, stage-gating for projects (like in the SME instrument), knowledge-triangle settings like in the EIT-KICs, "proof-of-concept" type of actions like under the ERC, social and public sector innovation approaches, etc.</p> <p>Horizon 2020 can provide support for the policy development at national and regional levels.</p> |
| <p>Similar cost options that may facilitate combining funds: lump sums, flat rates, unit costs etc. (Art 67 and 68 CPR & H2020 Rules for Participation)</p> | |

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

⁷⁴ The Commission declared following the suggestions from the European Parliament that "Union level intervention enables EU-wide competition to select the best proposals, thereby raising levels of excellence and providing visibility for leading research and innovation.

The Commission considers that positively evaluated European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska-Curie, teaming actions, phase-2 SME instrument or collaborative project proposals that could not be funded for budgetary reasons, have still met the Horizon 2020 criterion of excellence.

Upon approval of the participants, this information can be shared with the responsible authorities. The Commission therefore welcomes any initiatives to fund such projects by national, regional or private sources. In this context, cohesion policy also has a key role to play through building capacity."

COSME

The new Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises ([COSME](#)) will run from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of EUR 2.3 billion, of which 60% shall support financial instruments and EUR 350 million shall support the operations of the Enterprise Europe Network in all regions.

| COSME | ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds |
|---|--|
| DIFFERENCES: | |
| Non-territorial, COSME does not take into account geographic specificities in allocating funding, except for the Enterprise Europe Network where 'informal pre-allocation of funds to MS/regions takes place' | Place based approach supporting economic and social cohesion |
| Focus on projects strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the Union's enterprises, particularly SMEs and encouraging, entrepreneurial culture and promoting the creation and growth of SMEs (no support to individual SME's projects) | Largely focused on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities (RIS3) |
| Directly managed (European Commission/executive agency) and awarded directly to final beneficiaries | Shared management with national and regional public intermediaries (managing authorities, implementing agencies and intermediate bodies) which define the implementation details and allocate the funding to final beneficiaries |
| Competitive calls for proposals addressed to legal entities without geographic pre-allocation. | Policy-related prioritisation based on cohesion considerations and RIS3 priorities to individual firms/bodies and consortia mainly within the territory covered by the operational programme (and only within the EU). Use of competitive attribution through calls and aid schemes based on project selection criteria are also increasingly used (depending on MS) |

| | |
|---|--|
| OPPORTUNITIES: | |
| Enterprise Europe Network provides business support services with a trans-national dimension directly to SMEs and shall catalyse the transfer of better practices in business support to the region | Business support services are customised to the needs of SMEs in a territory and focus on place-based support. Funding the testing of new and better support schemes originating from partner regions. |
| Improvement of cluster management, and international cooperation (incl. beyond the EU) | Funding cluster secretariats and activities, science and technology parks and other innovation infrastructure |

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

Erasmus+

[Erasmus+](#) is the EU's new programme for education, training, youth and sport with a budget of around EUR 14.5 billion. It supports three main types of activities:

- Learning mobility for individuals.
- Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, including with non-EU countries, through partnerships and IT platforms.
- Support for policy reforms in Member States including experimentation and forward-looking projects, transparency and recognition tools, knowledge development and dialogue with stakeholders.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

| ERASMUS+ | ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds |
|--|--|
| DIFFERENCES: | |
| Differences: Mainly indirectly managed , awarded directly to final beneficiaries through National Agencies . Knowledge Alliances (Key action - KA2), Sector Skills Alliances (KA2), Policy experimentations and Forward Looking Projects (KA3) managed via the Executive Agency (EACEA) | Managed by Managing Authorities in Member States in the framework of shared management |
| Supports mainly transnational mobility actions (KA1) and transnational cooperation projects (KA2, KA3) | Place-based approach supporting economic and social cohesion |
| Focus on mobility actions (KA1), multilateral cooperation (KA2) and policy support projects (KA3) to improve education and skills, modernise education and training systems and foster cross-sector cooperation. Competitive call for proposals , some also including non-EU countries | Focus on improving education and training systems , including through grant schemes. Focus on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities |

| OPPORTUNITIES: | |
|--|--|
| <p>Focus on improvement of skills level through (trans-national) mobility (KA1). Cooperation in the fields of education, training and youth to promote exchange of knowledge and experience, employability and innovation through partnerships including education institutions, administrations, public bodies, enterprises youth organisations etc.) (KA2).</p> <p>Supporting policy reforms through knowledge development, transparency and recognition tools, policy experimentation and support to stakeholder organisations (KA3).</p> | <p>Focus on improvement of skills levels and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training</p> <p>Mainstreaming and up-scaling successful policy experimentations and innovative practices funded by Erasmus+</p> |

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

Creative Europe

[Creative Europe](#) plans to help the cultural and creative sectors to seize the opportunities of the 'digital age' and globalisation while safeguarding and developing European cultural and linguistic diversity. The programme has a budget of EUR 1.46 billion for the period 2014-2020. It builds on the former Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA mundus programmes, adding a new component which strives to facilitate an access to finance for cultural and creative sectors. It aims at enabling the sectors to reach their potential so that they can contribute to the Europe 2020 goals for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion and to open up new international opportunities, markets and audiences.

| CREATIVE EUROPE | ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds |
|--|---|
| DIFFERENCES: | |
| Foster European cultural and linguistic diversity and promote European heritage | Foster socio-economic development, incl. redressing the main regional imbalances through structural adjustments, etc. |
| OPPORTUNITIES: | |
| <p>Support artists and cultural professionals to develop their skills, competences and know-how that contribute to strengthening the cultural and creative sectors (e.g. encouraging adaptation to digital technologies, testing innovative approaches to audience development and testing of new business and management models).</p> <p>Support artists and cultural professionals to work across borders.</p> <p>Funding for transnational cultural activities within and outside of the EU</p> | Possibility of mainly place-based support of SMEs active in the cultural and creative sector and potential support for digitisation |

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm

Connecting Europe Facility – digital services

The [Connecting Europe Facility](#) is specifically designed to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at European level. It will support the roll-out of high-performing, sustainable and joined-up trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy, and broadband & digital services.

For more details see [brochure](#) and amended proposal for a Regulation on guidelines for trans-European telecommunications networks ([COM\(2013\)329 final](#)) and <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/connecting-europe-facility>. Synergies with the CEF broadband component are explained in the revised version of the Broadband guide.⁷⁵

| Connecting Europe Facility – digital services | ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds |
|---|--|
| DIFFERENCES: | |
| Facilitate the deployment and operation of trans-European digital services, e.g. for public procurement | At national or regional/local level: Foster e-skills, e-commerce and establishment of new businesses and business models based on ICT. Foster e-government, e-health, e-procurement, etc. |
| OPPORTUNITIES: | |
| <p>Platforms will facilitate interoperability of public IT services and applications in a transnational perspective.</p> <p>Building block for Digital Services Infrastructures (DSI) are components reusable at EU and national level. The following priorities for such DSI have been identified in the work programme 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic identification and authentication – eIdentification and eSignature • Electronic delivery of documents – eDelivery • Electronic Invoicing – eInvoicing • Europeana - single access point to | <p>Public sector IT solutions funded from ESIF could be designed or adopted to be interoperable with CEF digital services.</p> <p>Public sector IT solutions funded from ESIF could reuse existing building block DSIs saving costs, reducing time-to-market and increasing interoperability throughout the Union.</p> |

⁷⁵ See: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides>

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Europe's digital culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safer Internet - Creating a Better Internet for Kids• Open Data- facilitate access to public sector information, e.g. geographical information, statistics, weather data, data from publicly funded research projects, and digitised books from libraries• Automated Translation - make online content available in every European language.• Cyber-security | |
|---|--|

Calls for tender, proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/connecting-europe-facility>

Annex 2

Guidance for generating synergies between selected project types for research, innovation and competitiveness under directly managed Union instruments and support under the European Structural and Investment Funds

The present document complements the Guide on how to enable synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes by describing the main support / project types under Horizon 2020, COSME, ERASMUS+, Creative Europe and the digital services part of the Connecting Europe Facility, and some of the possible scenarios for the combination of funds or other ways of generating synergies.

It aims to help national and regional authorities, including ESIF Managing Authorities, to decide whether a project format or scenario would be suitable for building support forms into the policy mix of their smart specialisation strategies (or into their ESIF programmes) that are aligned with or complementary to the cost models and intervention logic described in the scenarios. It also aims to help the managers of the directly managed EU instruments identifying how possible combinations with ESIF funding could enhance the projects' impact under their calls.

The selected scenarios represent a non-exhaustive list for the most probable or feasible synergies scenarios. The on-line version of this document may be updated and evolve in the course of the 2014-2020 financial period based on experiences to be gained with the new funding instruments and their work programmes.

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Introduction

Why should national and regional innovation policy-makers know about the different project types in EU programmes?

In order to be able to seize the opportunities for synergies the policy-mix offered to research and innovation actors at national and regional level would have to either complement or replicate the offers for support via directly Commission managed programmes. National and regional authorities, including ESIF Managing Authorities, therefore need an understanding of these project types when designing the policy mix for the implementation of their smart specialisation strategies, including the type of measures, principles for selection and implementation methods that will be funded by their different ESIF programmes. In particular the following should be considered:

(1) Horizon 2020 standard collaborative R&I actions with at least three legal entities from three different countries could be interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers, because:

- ✓ Such R&I actions can help implement the international aspects of a RIS3 strategy and provide insights into the quality of R&I projects conceived and the international connection of R&I actors in the region.
- ✓ The results of projects under the Research Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020 can be carried further towards market take-up via ESIF support, if in line with the relevant smart specialisation strategy (RIS3).
- ✓ If in line with the relevant smart specialisation strategy, ESIF programmes could foresee to fund cost items that are not eligible under Horizon 2020 to give the project more scope or leverage.
- ✓ If the ESIF programme monitoring committee agrees and the benefit of the project materialises mainly in the area of an ESIF programme, it might be possible to fund from this ESIF programme a short-listed project proposal for which there was not enough Horizon 2020 budget available (see scenario 1.1.5.). Of course the rules set out in Article 70(2) CPR for such cases must be respected.

Therefore, Managing Authorities and national and regional policy designers could explore – in particular with the help of Horizon 2020 National Contact Points - the different project formats and conditions in view of aligning the cost and project models to them or foreseeing in their ESIF programmes priorities and implementation mechanisms that allow to seize these opportunities, notably:

- *Research and Innovation Actions*, i.e. actions with research and development activities as the core of the project intending to establish new scientific and technical knowledge and/or explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution - may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation on a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment - may contain closely connected but limited demonstration or pilot activities aiming to show technical feasibility

in a near to operational environment. The normal Horizon 2020 funding rate for such actions is 100% of the eligible costs (NB: there might be cost items that are not eligible or not included in a Horizon 2020 grant, that could be funded by ESIF).

- *Innovation Actions*, i.e. actions primarily consisting of activities directly aiming at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. For this purpose they may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating^{76,77} piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication⁷⁸. Projects may include limited research and development activities. See: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-ga_en.pdf
- The normal Horizon 2020 funding rate for such actions is 70% of the eligible costs (100% for non-profit legal entities).
- *Coordination and Support Actions*, i.e. consisting primarily of accompanying measures such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructure and may also include complementary activities of strategic planning, networking and coordination between programmes in different countries.

In order to make the best out of this, the above-mentioned tracking of calls, participation in international networking activities for policy-makers or for innovation actors, and regular exchanges with the different NCPs are an indispensable first step.

(2) ERA Chairs, Teaming and Twinning actions could be interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers, in particular in less research performing countries⁷⁹, because they are aimed at spreading excellence and widening participation in Horizon 2020.

- ✓ They can facilitate the development of centres of competence and the improvement of R&I capacities under ERDF investment priority 1a⁸⁰. Such ESIF support can either be cumulative to the Horizon 2020 grant or subsequent to it once the equipment and infrastructure needs have been identified via the Horizon 2020 project.

⁷⁶ A '**demonstration or pilot**' aims to validate the technical and economic viability of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution in an operational (or near to operational) environment, whether industrial or otherwise, involving where appropriate a larger scale prototype or demonstrator.

⁷⁷ Demonstration or pilot projects in the field of Environment or Climate Action may also be funded by the LIFE Programme. See: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>

⁷⁸ A '**market replication**' aims to support the first application/deployment in the market of an innovation that has already been demonstrated but not yet applied/deployed in the market due to market failures/barriers to uptake. 'Market replication' does not cover multiple applications in the market of an innovation that has already been applied successfully once in the market. 'First' means new at least to Europe or new at least to the application sector in question. Often such projects involve a validation of technical and economic performance at system level in real life operating conditions provided by the market.

⁷⁹ Currently defined for Horizon 2020 purposes as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Croatia, Malta, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Portugal and Luxembourg

⁸⁰ List of investment priorities: article 5, ERDF regulation 1301/2013.

- ✓ They can help remedying brain drain and attract internationally renowned researchers and professors.
- ✓ There may also be potential for synergies between ERA Chairs, ESF programmes, Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions thanks for instance to the prestige of an ERA Chair holder who can make an institute more attractive for students and researchers.

If an ERA Chair / twinning / teaming proposal positively evaluated cannot be funded by Horizon 2020, ERDF and/or ESF could be used to implement it. To enable this, the ESIF programmes would have, however, to include relevant priorities and implementation / selection mechanisms.

(3) The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (in particular COFUND) and the Erasmus+ type of actions for researchers, student and trainee mobility could be interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national / regional policy designers, because they allow to:

- ✓ Improve the skills levels in a region (through outgoing mobility) and to prevent or reverse brain-drain by attracting talents to a region (through incoming mobility).
- ✓ Experiment with new forms of cooperation between education and research centres and businesses, also with a view to better targeting the education and training offers to the skills needs, which can be crucial for the success of a RIS3.
- ✓ Support the internationalisation of human resources in education and research.

ESF programmes could be designed in a way to give more foreign researchers and students the opportunity to come to your region or country than would be possible with Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ budgets only, possibly with similar conditions as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie or Erasmus+ grants to facilitate the application process.

ERDF / ESF programmes could include axis aiming to make regions/MS more attractive for innovation talents, e.g. include among their priorities and implementation mechanisms the development of post-graduate courses, entrepreneurial skills and other training of researchers.

(4) the so-called “Programme Co-fund Actions” (e.g. ERA-Nets) and Article 185⁸¹ or Article 187⁸² initiatives are aiming to foster collaboration between Member States (and increasingly also regions) and their research and innovation programmes and also pooling private research efforts, in order to make better use of Europe's RDI resources and to tackle common European challenges more effectively. They could be interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national and regional policy designers because this objective is

⁸¹ Public-Public Partnerships (P2P)

⁸² Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

also part of the smart specialisation approach and thus relevant for the planning and implementation of the research and innovation investments under ERDF. Via this type of coordination, MA could also make their voice heard in the context of the definition of details of calls for proposals and their timing.

Such actions and initiatives work always at two levels:

- ✓ At the first level Horizon 2020 incentivises the pooling / coordination of research efforts into more or less permanent settings⁸³. At this level the cumulation of Horizon 2020 with ESIF funding is not possible.
- ✓ At a second level the Horizon 2020 tops-up the co-funding to projects that emanate from joint calls for proposals. At this level the same synergies forms with ESIF can be carried out as for the standard collaborative actions under (1).
- ✓ A programme co-fund action may also include complementary activities of networking and coordination between programmes in different countries. In the case of ERA-Nets even the launch of a call for proposals that draws entirely on national / regional / ESIF funding is possible.

There are different Horizon 2020 funded support mechanisms to prepare for such actions, for instance:

- Horizon 2020 can fund the coordination costs involved in the Joint Programming Initiatives that have been identified by a High Level Group on Joint Programming and recommended by the Council.⁸⁴

Also European Territorial Cooperation programmes could provide support for the preparation of such co-fund actions (that might emerge also in the context of macro-regional strategies).

(5) the “Knowledge and Innovation Communities” (KIC) under the European Institute for Innovation and Technology can also be interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national / regional policy designers, because the KIC-model of cooperation between research and education institutes and enterprises (“knowledge triangle”) and its opening to cooperation and complementarities with other countries is inherent to the smart specialisation approach and can help improving the cooperation among research, education and business in the regions/MS in line with ERDF investment priority 1.b.

(6) Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI) is a rather new project format and can be interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national / regional policy designers, including non-innovation focused policy-designers, e.g. in the field of transport, environment and energy. PCP and PPI type of actions (see specific

⁸³ For ERA-Nets this is conceived to last normally only for one joint call, whereas the Dedicated Implementation Structures or Joint Undertakings are set up following often years of preparatory work and European Parliament and Council Decisions or Council Regulations and the Article 185 and 187 initiatives are like separate trans-national R&D programmes with annual work plans, governance structures, etc..

⁸⁴ Information on how the process works: http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/how-does-it-work_en.htm

grant agreement models⁸⁵) offer a win-win situation as they help to develop faster concrete solutions to societal challenges and improve public services and infrastructures, enable cost-savings in the medium to long term e.g. through higher energy savings than standard solutions, while helping innovators to bring their solutions faster to the market.

Joining such Horizon 2020 actions has the advantage that in the case of PCP the developed solutions have better chances to match the needs of the city / region / country. In the case of PPI, the advantage of joining such Horizon 2020 actions is that they help preventing errors as regards the EU public procurement rules and moreover they help drawing up tender specifications that ensure that innovative but technically feasible solutions are procured.

In order to be able to seize such opportunities, ESIF programmers could envisage PPI type of actions not only under ERDF investment priority 1.b, but also under investment priorities related to energy, transport, health, environment, etc., including in the Cohesion Fund parts of their programmes.

(7) Horizon 2020 SME instrument actions and European Research Council “proof of concept” type of grants are interesting for ESIF Managing Authorities and national / regional policy designers, because:

- ✓ They are advanced models for innovation support⁸⁶ in the case of the SME instrument with different phases, starting from a small lump-sum based feasibility action, stage-gating only the successful projects through to market introduction, which could improve the innovation eco-system in certain countries or regions and improve the impact of public funding.
- ✓ As they allow for single participants, proposals positively evaluated that cannot be funded under Horizon 2020 due to limited availability of budget, could be funded from ESIF (in particular EAFRD, ERDF and EMFF) to potentially un-changed conditions. Also the results of the first or second phase of the SME instrument grants under Horizon 2020 could be carried further towards the market via ESIF support if they meet the Horizon 2020 excellence standards. Through this the quality of ESIF research and innovation projects could be raised thanks to the international peer-review of the proposals.

In order to seize these opportunities, the cost and project model in relevant ESIF programmes would need to be aligned to the SME instrument grant conditions⁸⁷. On the Commission side, mechanisms to communicate short-listed Horizon 2020 projects to the MA (e.g. via a “seal of excellence”) are being developed.

⁸⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2020-mga-sme

⁸⁶ See for Proof of concept: <http://erc.europa.eu/proof-concept> and for the SME instrument: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/sme-instrument> (and scenario 1.11)

⁸⁷ See: model grant agreements for the SME instrument Phase 1 and phase 2 both for mono-beneficiary grants and multi-beneficiary grants: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html

(8) The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is co-funded from the COSME programme and is of particular interest for ESIF Managing Authorities and national / regional policy designers, because of the special distribution of the EEN centres across all of the EU countries and many regions.

- ✓ It offers direct access for SMEs to international business or innovation partners. It also offers advanced high-quality advisory services that could serve as models to be replicated within an ESIF programme's territory with ESIF funding (e.g. brokerage events)
- ✓ Or amplified through offering similar types of internationalisation support under ESIF.
- ✓ The Enterprise Europe Network is also charged with providing comprehensive information to SMEs, including directing SMEs towards suitable Horizon 2020 calls and ESIF funding or support opportunities, i.e. they can serve as one-stop-shops also for ESIF SME support that complements the EEN support.

To seize these opportunities, the relevant ESIF programmes would need to provide for the possibility to fund similar or complementary support, e.g. voucher schemes, financial instruments, incubation services, entrepreneurship training schemes, etc.

(9) Creative Europe also offers an interesting potential for synergies to ESIF Managing Authorities and national / regional policy designers, because:

- ✓ Technology is often not enough to be a successful innovator. Besides entrepreneurial skills, also creative thinking is central in the innovation process. Cultural and creative activities such as, design related activities and the use of new media can be crucial for innovations to succeed. CreativeEurope projects can be crystallisation points for this and countries / regions could amplify or carry further these projects to achieve a durable impact on competitiveness, innovation and growth.

Also projects from the cultural and creative sectors that initially received ESIF support (including as part of social integration projects under ESF or rural development projects under the EAFRD) could be carried further via the CreativeEurope Loan Guarantee Facility (available as of 2016) provided that they comply with the selection criteria of the action.

Cultural heritage initiatives might also consider the sequential use of Horizon 2020 support for research in the field of cultural heritage preservation and digitisation and CreativeEurope support.

(10) The digital service platforms supported via the Connecting Europe Facility have also a particular interest for synergies with ESIF investments in ICT take-up and improvement of administrative capacities. Investments into e-government solutions under ERDF investment priority 2.c or ESF investments in thematic objective 11 (institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations) can gain in quality and efficiency if they are designed to be

inter-operable with the solutions in other EU countries or at EU level via aligning with the CEF digital services platforms.

1. Horizon2020

1.1 R&I Actions

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- R&I actions can help implement the international aspects of a RIS3 strategy and provide insights into the quality of RDI projects conceived in a region and the international connection of RDI actors in a region.
- They can optimise the use of research and innovation capacities that have previously been built (see scenario 1.1.3).
- The results of projects under the Research Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020 can be carried further towards market take-up via ESIF support, provided they are in line with the relevant smart specialisation strategy (RIS3) (see scenario 1.1.4)
- When in line with the relevant smart specialisation strategy, ESIF programmes can foresee to fund cost items that are not eligible under Horizon 2020, to give the RDI project more scope or leverage (see scenario 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.)
- If the ESIF programme monitoring committee agrees and the benefit of the project materialises mainly in the area of an ESIF programme, positively evaluated proposals that are not funded for unavailability of Horizon 2020 budget might be funded by the ESIF programme (see scenario 1.1.5.). In such cases, the rules set out in Art.70 (2) CPR must be respected.

Programme Overview:

Horizon 2020 R&I and Innovation actions facts:

Definition: RDII and Innovation actions are collaborative projects carried out by consortia (= a partnership among R&I or Innovation actors, including universities, researchers, enterprises, public bodies etc.) with participants from different countries. Minimum requirement are 3 partners from 3 different Member States or associated countries. The size, scope and internal organisation of projects can vary from action to action.

Implementation:

The (bi)annual Work programme is the basis for Calls for proposals (with or without deadlines). See Horizon 2020 [Work Programmes 2014/15](#).

Besides descriptions of the topics of the calls, work programmes may introduce additional eligibility criteria, specify details on the number of participants, type of participant and place of establishment, lay down further details for the application of the award criteria (excellence, quality and efficiency of the implementation, impact), and specify weighting and thresholds, specify the

funding rate for an action, specify that lump sums or scale of unit costs can be used for an action (subject to prior separate Commission Decision) or exceptionally even identify beneficiaries for grants without a call for proposals.

In the case of calls for proposals through funding bodies entrusted with part of the implementation of Horizon 2020 in accordance with Article 58(1)c of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 966/2012, e.g. in the framework of Art. 185 and 187 initiatives, the document similar to the Commission work programmes are called "work plans".

External selection process based on 3 criteria: S&T Excellence, Impact and Implementation. Scores 1-5 with threshold 3 on single criteria. Only proposals that pass the overall threshold 10 will be on the short list. Only the best ranked proposals on the short list will be funded (for the proposals with lower scores there may not be sufficient Horizon 2020 budget available, even if they are on the short list). For ranking of Innovation actions, impact criterion 2 will be weighted 1.5.

Funding:

Subject to specific provisions indicated in the Work Programme, in principle actions that focus on **research with innovation** elements⁸⁸ will be funded at 100% (see detailed descriptions in the work programme annexes⁸⁹); more market-near **Innovation actions** are funded at 70%, independent from the beneficiary or activity. Exception: Non-profit organisations are funded at 100% even for Innovation actions and can also include an additional "bonus" salary⁹⁰.

Indirect costs (Overheads): a flat rate of 25% of direct eligible costs (minus subcontracting).

Eligible Cost & Cost/Expenditure Items:

Normally, all costs directly related to a RDI/Innovation action are eligible, but individual calls may specify more details and exclude certain types of expenditure.

A detailed description of eligible costs and budget categories is given in the [Model Grant Agreement](#).

⁸⁸ Definition of "**Research and innovation action**": Action primarily consisting of activities aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose they may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation on a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment. Projects may contain closely connected but limited demonstration or pilot activities aiming to show technical feasibility in a near to operational environment.

⁸⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-ga_en.pdf

⁹⁰ See for calculation examples for this bonus: Multi-beneficiary Annotated General Grant Agreement: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amqa/h2020-amqa_en.pdf

Combined Funding Options: Upstream/downstream sequential funding, simultaneous funding, parallel/additional funding or alternative funding.

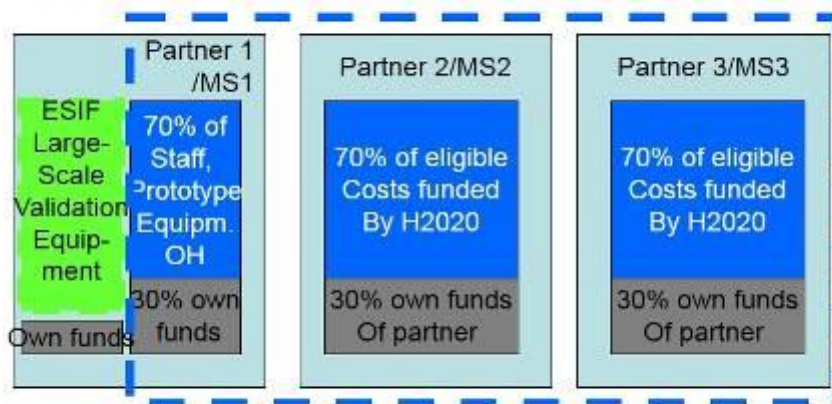
Nota bene: the co funding of actions supported by Horizon 2020 cannot come from ESIF (no substitution principle). In particular, in case of an innovation action, the 30% of co-funding to complement the 70% Horizon 2020 funding cannot come from ESIF.

In case of a RDI project with 100% Horizon 2020 funding it might be interesting to explore possibilities for additional activities funded from ESIF to support or expand the Horizon 2020 actions.

Combined Funding Scenarios:

1.1.1 ESIF and Horizon 2020 funds in the same project (Simultaneous/Cumulative use of funds). This new combination is possible in Horizon 2020 (Art. 37 Rules for Participation), provided that the grants do not cover the same cost items.

Simultaneous/cumulative funding
H2020 Innovation Action 70% funded:



- H2020 GA (Grant Agreement) that includes all partners (simplified version with 3 partners from 3 MS=minimum number required)
- ESIF grant contract for partner 1: may be up to 85% in MS of EU13

Figure 1 Cumulative funding

Possible form of ESIF investments for this purpose: Funding of specific parts or expenditure items within a Horizon 2020 project (equipment, staff costs for a specific activity etc.). ESIF could fund costs non-eligible under Horizon 2020 (but

possible under ESIF) or eligible costs NOT submitted under the Horizon 2020 project, e.g. equipment (see example below). The equipment for large scale validation must not be critical to the project, in case the ESIF funding does not materialise. Alternatively, a guarantee by the MA of Partner 1 as suggested, in case the Horizon 2020 project is accepted, would solve the problem.

NOTA BENE: Costs submitted under another EU funding source than Horizon 2020 (e.g. ESIF) are considered non-eligible costs for Horizon 2020 (see Art. 6.5 b) [Model Grant Agreement](#))

Example: An SME (Partner 1 in Figure 1) is a member of a consortium in receipt of a grant under Horizon 2020 with a 70% co-financing rate for a close-to-market action. The action consists in two activities, prototyping and large-scale validation. The budget of the action is presented per activity and per nature, with three categories, direct personnel costs, direct equipment costs and indirect costs. The company's personnel are assigned at 80% of their working time to the action.

In this case, the **cost items** could be the eligible personnel costs for prototyping and the eligible personnel costs for large-scale validation, the direct equipment costs for prototyping and the direct equipment costs for large-scale validation, and the eligible indirect costs.

The application of the [Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation](#) implies notably the following:

Personnel costs:

- The **remaining 20% working time of the personnel can be assigned to another action** (e.g. ESIF action) and may be declared as eligible for another Union grant (e.g. an ESIF grant) since the 'no double financing principle' is ensured.

The beneficiary will declare as eligible 80% of its personnel costs and will receive as reimbursement only 70% of those 80% personnel costs. **The remaining 30% of eligible costs not covered by the Horizon 2020 grant may not be reimbursed by a grant under the ESIF** in accordance to the co-financing principle and the non-cumulative principle (substitution is not possible);

Equipment costs:

- If the beneficiary receives a grant under the ESIF to purchase the equipment necessary to the large-scale validation activities, costs under the item "direct equipment costs for large-scale validation" (including depreciation costs) may not be reimbursed under Horizon 2020. Obviously, other costs related to the action are eligible under the Horizon 2020 grant.

IN ADDITION:

- If instead the beneficiary declares depreciation costs related to a 40% use of one piece of equipment as eligible for the grant under Horizon 2020, the costs of the remaining 60% of equipment use may be declared as eligible for another Union grant under the Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 966/2012;

Indirect costs:

- If the beneficiary receives an operating grant from the Union, it may not declare as eligible any indirect costs, including in the form of a flat-rate (see [Model Grant Agreement](#) D.4.E).

While the activities are within **one** project (the Horizon 2020 Innovation Action), the ESIF support is subject to a **separate grant agreement** according to the national rules of the MS of the SME partner.

1.1.2 ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding are running in parallel (Parallel use of funds in separate projects) **and are mutually supportive**

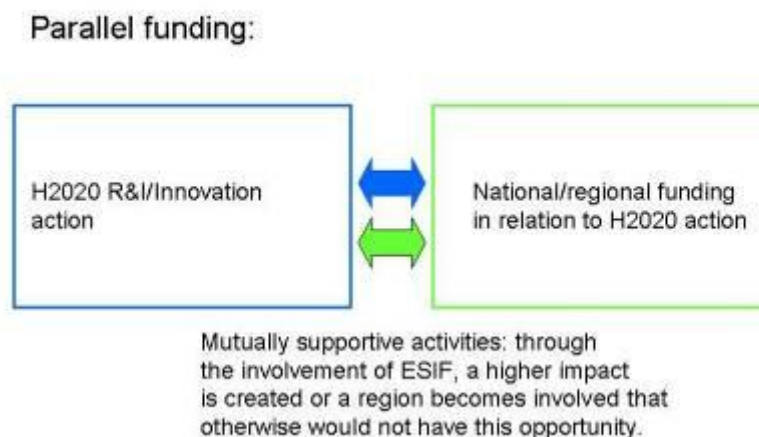


Figure 2 Parallel use of funds

Example: A project proposal on geo-monitoring based soil analysis receives a Horizon 2020 grant. A partner in the project in a rural region obtains EAFRD support to develop more drought/bacteria resistant crops analysing their reactions to specific soil compositions.

While the two projects are legally separate, synergies are developed through the targeted, parallel use of funds.

1.1.3 ESIF investment that enables Horizon 2020 participation (Upstream sequential combination)

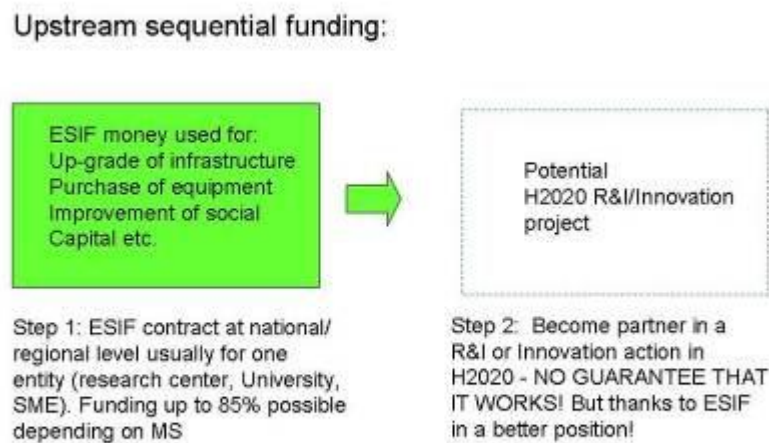


Figure 3 Up-stream sequential funding

Typical form of ESIF investments for this purpose: **capacity building in physical capital** (construction or improvement of research infrastructures, purchasing equipment (high potential for innovation procurement PCP –PPI), including IT equipment and connections, data storage capacities, etc.), **innovation infrastructures** (LivingLabs, FabLabs, Design factories, etc.) **and social capital** (assistance for building networks, clusters and consortia; ERDF investment priority 1a).

Example: MS X provides ESIF money to a university hospital for state of the art IT content management systems and data storage space for patient data, and trains staff in handling this IT equipment. This equipment is needed to being able to exchange patient data and enable patients to handle data themselves in a secure way. The hospital may use this "up-grade" to become a partner in a Horizon 2020 project in Societal Challenges, e.g. "secure societies". While the equipment means a clear advantage, it *does not guarantee* that the hospital will become a partner in a Horizon 2020 project, or that a Horizon 2020 project will be successful.

Upstream sequential funding is a potential "stepping stone" for stronger involvement in R&I activities.

Regarding depreciation costs, see scenario 1.1.1.

1.1.4 Downstream sequential combination: Horizon 2020 or FP project results are used or further developed with subsequent ESIF investments

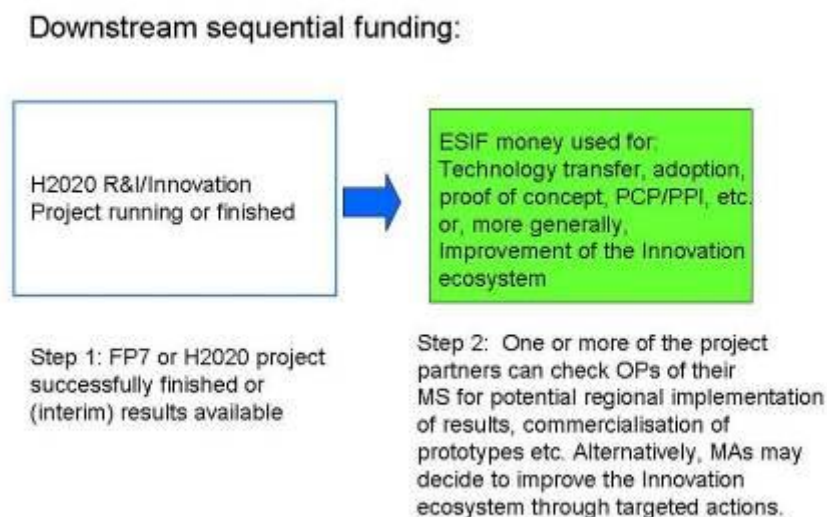


Figure 4 Down-stream sequential funding

Possible form of ESIF investments for this purpose:

A) Support to **individual firms or research bodies or consortia** of them or public procurers, for carrying out:

1. applied research, development and demonstration activities, experimental development, prototyping;
2. technology transfer and adoption;
3. technology and innovation audits to identify potential demand for RDI results;
4. proof-of-concept funding;
5. pilot lines for first production;
6. pre-commercial procurement projects (RDI procurement followed by public procurement for innovative solutions).

B) Support to **improve the innovation eco-system** in a territory that facilitates follow-up to successful RDII activities in order to bring them either higher up on the technology readiness level scale⁹¹ or closer to commercialisation, in particular:

⁹¹ See re. TRL: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-q-trl_en.pdf

1. Incubation, financial engineering instruments (loans, guarantees, VC);
2. Technology parks, clusters, partnerships between research, education and business, Living Labs, demonstrators, etc.;
3. Entrepreneurial and creative skills development for researchers;
4. Business advisory services, incl. design, user-involvement methods;
5. Support of patenting, licensing and defence of IPR;
6. Brokerage events;
7. Development of buyer's groups of innovation PCP –PPI starting from needs assessments;
8. "Meet the buyers" innovation events.

Example 1:

- A FP7 project developed a prototype for mobile health monitoring. While a pilot has been carried out successfully during the project phase (notably via pre-commercial procurement), the commercial app is not yet ready. The app development can be carried out by two SMEs of the consortium. These SMEs could check via the [INFOREGIO](#) website which are the relevant MA for their territory and check with them if their region has a priority on ICT for health (see also in the [Eye@RIS3](#) mapping of the specialisation fields of the RIS3s, as most MS and regions have innovation support programmes that are not ERDF co-funded). If the RIS3 refers to the mentioned domain and the ESIF programme has an appropriate priority and disposes of funds and appropriate implementation mechanisms, the SME or public procurers will be able to apply for ESIF support to develop/procure a commercial app based on the FP7 results. Additionally, the SME of the MS/region will be able to cooperate with stakeholders from other MS/regions if the MA has chosen to use up to the 15% of its ERDF programme for this purpose (respecting the procedure set out in Art. 70(2) CPR).

This downstream sequential funding shows effective exploitation of FP7 results at national/local level.

Example 2:

In the [SET](#) (Strategic Energy Technologies)-Plan, the European Commission, Member States and Industry collaborate to define RDII technology "road-maps" that identify RDII projects needed to achieve energy policy objectives. As an example, the **Wind Energy roadmap** will identify projects for deep-sea wind platforms, but also work needed for grid interconnection of offshore wind farms, part of a strategic schedule of projects needed to increase renewable electricity production from wind energy sources. Deep-sea wind platforms require new technology to be developed, and would suit the objectives and scope for **collaborative R&I Horizon 2020 projects**. Offshore grid interconnections may require less RDII, and work will be more specific to the location, so these projects might be better suited to ESIF (**ERDF**).

Similar examples could be envisaged in relation to existing technology road-maps in the SET-Plan for wind energy, solar energy, carbon capture and storage, nuclear energy⁹², bio-energy and new grid technologies.

This downstream sequential funding option could also be envisaged as parallel funding, if the timeline of Horizon 2020 correlates with ESIF funding timing.

1.1.5 Reorientation of Horizon 2020 projects that were positively evaluated towards ESIF (Alternative funding through ESIF)

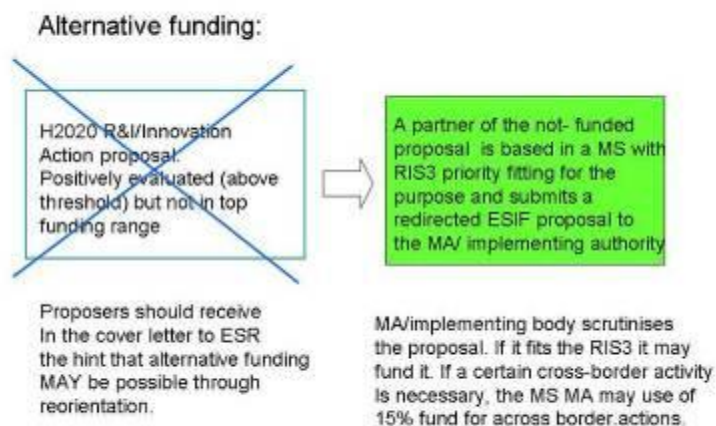


Figure 5 Alternative funding

Possible form of ESIF investments for this purpose: **funding of applied research, development and demonstration activities, etc.**

Example: A proposal to create a platform for the re-use of Big (open) Data for the benefit of SMEs was submitted, received a positive (above threshold) evaluation but ranked too low to be funded due to oversubscription.

The partner in charge of setting up the Big Data platform for SMEs finds out that this may be a topic under the ESIF programme of his MS. The partner therefore reorients the project towards a local/regional platform for (national open) Data for SMEs.

Extended example: If this partner needs the know-how of an organisation in another country to package the data for re-use on the platform, the MA of the original MS may decide to modify the proposal slightly and sub-contract the provision of this service, if this is in line with the rules for the relevant ESIF programme. The MA may also ask the monitoring committee of the ESIF

⁹² The ERDF may not be used to support the decommissioning or the construction of nuclear power stations

programmes to give its agreement to the operation including the elements that take place outside the programme area, if the project is to the benefit of the programme area and is within the 15% limit for such operations under the relevant ERDF priority axis.⁹³ **NOTA BENE:** As the Horizon 2020 project proposal must include a consortium of minimum 3 partners, the reorientation may be feasible only to those project partners which are eligible to the ESIF programme.

1.2 Spreading excellence/widening participation:

ERA Chairs, Teaming and Twinning

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It can facilitate the development of centres of competence and the improvement of R&I capacities under ERDF investment priority 1a. Such ESIF support can either be cumulative to the Horizon 2020 grant or subsequent to it once the equipment and infrastructure needs have been identified via the Horizon 2020 project.
- It can help remedying brain drain and attract internationally renowned researchers and professors.
- Even if a positively evaluated proposal cannot be funded from Horizon 2020, ERDF / ESF could be used to implement it, provided an ESIF programme allows for similar support measures.

Programme overview:

Horizon 2020 Spreading excellence and widening participation facts:

Definition: This Horizon 2020 sub-programme helps to bridge the Research & Innovation divide in Europe: It consists of mainly 3 actions: Teaming, Twinning and ERA Chairs.

The separate actions of *Teaming* and *Twinning* will create new (or significant upgrades of existing) Centres of Excellence and expertise and encourage pan-European networking among researchers with a strong focus on excellence and innovation.

ERA Chairs will bring outstanding researchers to universities and other research institutions that have high potential for research excellence. On their side, institutions should mobilise support from different funding sources, including from the European Structural and Investment Funds, to invest in facilities and

⁹³ The 15% limit applies to ERDF, Cohesion Fund and EMFF per priority axis; for EAFRD the limit is 5 % at the level of the programme (see Article 70(2) CPR) ; for ESF it is 3% of the budget of the operational programme (Article. 13(3) ESF)

infrastructures in the context of Smart Specialisation Strategies and commit to institutional change and a broader support to innovation.

Implementation:

(Bi) annual Work programme as basis for Calls for proposals

[SEWP Work Programme 2014/15](#) where also details about funding and maximum amounts of funding can be found.

Applicants (and compulsory coordinators) for *all three actions* must be from an RDI underperforming MS, i.e. the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Croatia, Malta, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Portugal and Luxembourg.

ERA Chairs: single partner application; for any area of S&T, in line with RIS3.

The ERA Chair person selection must be open to researchers from EU and non-EU countries. Max. 5 years, 2.5 MEUR; Coordination and Support Action⁹⁴ (CSA) covering 90% of total budget. The Horizon 2020 Work Programme mentions ESIF expressly as potential additional funding source (but under the provisions of avoidance of double-funding).

Funding:

Funding for the salary of the ERA Chair and an associated research team;

Work plan and implementation costs (ERA priorities, training, meetings, publication and patenting costs, etc.). Non-eligible costs for ERA Chairs: research costs, large infrastructures.

Teaming: minimum 2 partners: Applicant organisation from a low performing Member State (for example a national or regional authority, or a research agency at national or regional level; the presence of a local partner research institution is encouraged as it could provide additional relevance to the teaming process) and an excellent research centre.

Two stages: First stage: 12 months; Clear strategy for the new (or up-graded) centre of Excellence including alignment with RIS3, long-term S&I strategy, business plan with SWOT analysis. Commitments from the interested national or regional authorities to commit financial resources need to be provided (e.g. resources coming from the European Structural and Investment Funds).

⁹⁴ Definition of CSA: Actions consisting primarily of accompanying measures such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructure and may also include complementary activities of strategic planning, networking and coordination between programmes in different countries. Horizon 2020 funds 100 % of the eligible costs.

Second stage: For successful Stage 1 projects: 3-5 years strategy, EUR 15-20 million Grant coverage/Cost item: Administrative costs, staff costs

Non-eligible costs: infrastructure support, large equipment costs

Twinning: minimum 3 partners, applicant plus 2 internationally recognised research centres/universities from 2 different MS and different from applicant MS; in line with RIS3! Coordination and Support Action (Horizon 2020 funds 100 % of the eligible costs), EUR 1 million

Grant Coverage/Cost item:

Funding for short term staff exchange, training, workshops, summer school-type activities, conference attendance;

Non-eligible costs: infrastructure, equipment, new permanent research staff;

Given the different, shorter termed scope of Twinning, combined funding might not be appropriate.

Combined Funding Options:

Upstream sequential/cumulative funding through ESIF for non-eligible costs under Horizon 2020 Teaming and ERA Chair.

Scenario ERA Chair: ESIF used for costs non-eligible under Horizon 2020
(up-stream sequential or cumulative funding)

ERA Chair combined funding:



Eligible costs under H2020 ERA Chair are well defined. Applicants can therefore apply for non-eligible costs such as infrastructure/large equipment under ESIF. As ERA Chairs run up to 5 years, parallel ESIF application or after H2020 acceptance can make sense.

Figure 6 ERA Chair

Possible forms of ESIF investments in support of ERA Chairs:

- Construction or improvement of research infrastructures, etc.
- Research activities and R&I projects and other cost items **not** co-financed by Horizon 2020.

Example – ERA Chair:

A research institution in Romania applies for an ERA Chair grant. The topic is one of the priorities of Horizon 2020 and the RIS3 of its region. Once the research institution received the information from Horizon 2020 that its application is selected, it contacts the ESIF authorities for ERDF funding for improvement of its research infrastructure, in order to provide better research conditions for the ERA Chair research team.

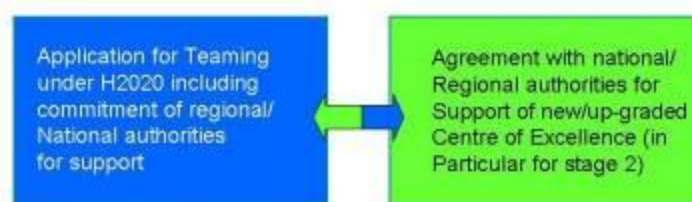
Alternatively, the applicant organisation can apply for ESIF before or in parallel to the ERA Chair application to avoid time constraints.

Recommendations: The hosting institutions and the MA should explore together the way the institution could contribute to the RIS3 and ESIF programme.

The MA could consider the “label” ERA Chair positively when deciding on spending ESIF money. The MA can make its funding conditional to the acceptance of the ERA Chair project.

Scenario Teaming: ESIF used for costs non-eligible under Horizon 2020 (cumulative or parallel funding)

Combined Funding for Teaming:



H2020 teaming expects alignment of proposed Teaming with RIS3 and commitment of national/regional authorities' co-funding (e.g. ESIF) already at stage 1.

Figure 7 Combined funding for teaming

Possible form of ESIF investments in support of Teaming:

- **Construction or improvement of research infrastructures, large equipment etc.**

Example – Teaming:

A research agency (with or without a research organisation) in Bulgaria applies for a Teaming project. The focus of the envisaged Centre of Excellence resulting from the Teaming action is one of the priorities RIS3 of its country/region. In order to comply with Horizon 2020 selection criteria, the applicant institution needs to provide a proof from the interested national or regional authorities to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from the European Structural and Investment Funds) as appropriate, for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment.

This investment is particularly crucial for phase 2 of Teaming, i.e. the implementation of the Centre of Excellence.

Remark: The applicant institution and the MA **must** explore together the way the institution will contribute to the RIS3 and to which purpose and magnitude ESIF can be used.

1.3 Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It can help remedying brain drain and attract internationally renowned researchers.
- ESF could be used to give more excellent foreign researchers the opportunity to come to the region /MS than possible under Horizon 2020.
- ERDF / ESF could be used to make the region /MS more attractive for research talents, e.g. through development of post-graduate courses, entrepreneurial skills and other training opportunities for researchers.

Programme overview:

Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND facts:

Definition:

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSC) COFUND scheme co-finances doctoral or fellowship programmes for training, mobility and career development of researchers. Its goals are:

- Stimulate regional, national and international programmes to foster excellence in research training and career development and to improve working/employment conditions for researchers
- Numerical impact and leverage effect
- Encourage regional and national programmes to open for transnational mobility
- Structuring the European Research Area in terms of objectives, evaluation methods and working conditions of regional, national or international programmes in this area.

Implementation:

Annual calls, published in the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions \(MSCA\) Work Programme](#). (COFUND p.14 ff.)

A sole participant that will be responsible for the availability of the necessary matching funds to execute the proposal. Maximum Horizon 2020 contribution EUR 10 million per applicant per call.

Project duration 3 to 5 years.

Proposed fellowship programmes are encouraged to cover all scientific disciplines ("bottom-up"), but can also focus on specific disciplines provided they allow reasonable flexibility for the researchers. Programmes that prioritise specific scientific disciplines based on national or regional RIS3 strategies will also be supported.

Researchers to be recruited within the programmes are required to undertake trans-national mobility (i.e. move from one country to another)

Funding:

Unit cost contribution to researcher cost and to institutional cost:

Horizon 2020 contribution to living allowance of early-stage researchers with employment contract: EUR 1855 per person-month; for experienced researchers with employment contract: EUR 2625 per person-month

Horizon 2020 contribution to management costs: EUR 325 per person-month

Cost items other than living allowance and management (such as research costs, travel and mobility allowances) may be funded through other resources including EU programmes other than Horizon 2020 e.g. ESIF.

For details see [MSCA COFUND Funding Rates](#).

Combined Funding Options:

Cumulative funding; upstream sequential funding.

Scenario MSCA: ESIF used for costs non-eligible under Horizon 2020

MSCA COFUND combined funding:



Eligible costs under H2020 MSCA are limited to part-management of funds and contribution to researchers' subsistence costs (unit costs). Applicants can therefore apply for non-eligible costs such as infrastructure/large equipment under ESIF (ERDF) or for training events, networking under ESF.

Figure 8 Combined Funding MSCA

Possible form of ESIF investments in support of MSC COFUND: Construction or improvement of research infrastructures, large equipment (ERDF) or training, networking (mainly ESF). COFUND beneficiaries may, in parallel and through other resources than MSC COFUND (for example, ESIF), support researchers that are not transnationally mobile to participate in the Programme.

Example 1 (cumulative funding):

In their Smart Specialisation Strategy, a regional authority in an EU-13 country has identified as weakness a lack of international human resources at universities in its region. As one of the measures to tackle this issue, it decides to set up a funding programme for doctoral candidates from abroad. The main research funding agency in this region applies for MSC COFUND for in total 50 research positions to be divided over the 5-6 universities that are located in this region. Job vacancy notices are drawn up by the universities and are widely advertised⁹⁵, including a description of the work that has an international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral dimension. The programme itself is managed by the research funding agency, which is also the beneficiary of the COFUND project. It recruits doctoral candidates for whom MSCA pay the Horizon 2020 contribution per person-month (for living allowance and management cost). The regional authority can fund research, travel and training costs (which are not eligible under MSC COFUND) by ESIF if all ESIF rules are respected.

Example 2 (sequential funding upstream, real life example):

The Czech Republic: ESIF are used to build large research infrastructure and MSC COFUND fellowships to attract researchers.

⁹⁵ including via the EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion portal
<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/jobs/index>

1.4 ERA-NET Cofund

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It can help improving the quality of research and innovation in the region / MS through cooperation and comparison with policy-makers and research funders from other regions.
- It can help implementing the RIS3 as regards smart specialisation priorities for which there is need for complementarities with innovation actors in other regions and MS (e.g. as identified in the framework of macro-regional strategies or thematic RIS3 platforms)

Horizon 2020 ERA-NET Cofund facts:

Definition: The ERA-NET scheme is supporting collaboration between Member States and their research programmes.

It is designed to support Public-Public Partnerships, including Joint Programming Initiatives between Member States (see below under 1.5.) and macro-regional strategies⁹⁶, in their preparation, establishment of networking structures, design, implementation and coordination of joint activities as well as Union topping-up of a trans-national call for proposals.

ERA-NET under Horizon 2020 combines the former ERA-NET and ERA-NET plus.

Activities eligible: one joint call with top-up funding (compulsory); additional option: Implementation of other activities and joint actions including additional calls without top-up funding.

It allows for transnational programme coordination in any part of the entire research-innovation cycle, involving both, MS priorities and Horizon 2020 topics.

[Annex on ERA-NET of Work Programme 2014/15](#)

[More information on P2P initiatives](#)

Implementation:

Horizon 2020 Work Programmes include ERA-NET Cofund actions; annual calls.

[For 2014](#) (e.g. photonics, health, food security, climate, to mention but a few).

⁹⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/index_en.cfm

[For 2015](#) (similar topics as in 2014)

Participants in ERA-NET Cofund actions must be research funders: legal entities owning or managing public research and innovation programmes.

5 years duration maximum.

Funding:

Projects resulting from ERA-NET cofunded joint calls are financed by MS with a topping up from H2020.

1. Top-up funding

The cost item for the Horizon 2020 top-up funding is the total public funding of the topped-up joint call. Horizon 2020 funding is a proportional contribution (33%) to the total public funding (as it was the case for FP7 ERA-Net Plus), between EUR 5 and 50 million.

2. Unit costs

The coordination cost for **other activities** than the topped up joint call takes the form of unit costs per partner per year with a maximum of EUR 29000 (of which 33% or EUR 11,962.5 EU money).

EXCEPTION: Coordination and Support Action (CSA) for preparatory purpose in cases foreseen in the Work Programme and for JPIs.

3. Trans-national Projects from Joint Calls:

At least 2 entities from 2 MS/AS must participate in a project

2 phases of project selection: Phase 1 at national/transnational level (following national criteria); Phase 2 international peer review following Horizon 2020 criteria. Funding according to national rules. A two-step procedure is necessary to ensure that only entities that are eligible for funding under the national programmes involved in the joint call are invited to step 2 and that consortia can balance the requested funding and available funding per participating state between step 1 and step 2.

Combined Funding Options:

Cumulative funding at Level 1 for non-eligible costs within Horizon 2020; Parallel funding at Level 1; parallel funding for third-country participants at level 2.

ESIF can be used for ERA-NET Cofund but no ESIF contribution can be taken into account to calculate the Horizon 2020 contribution (33%).

Scenario ERA-NET:

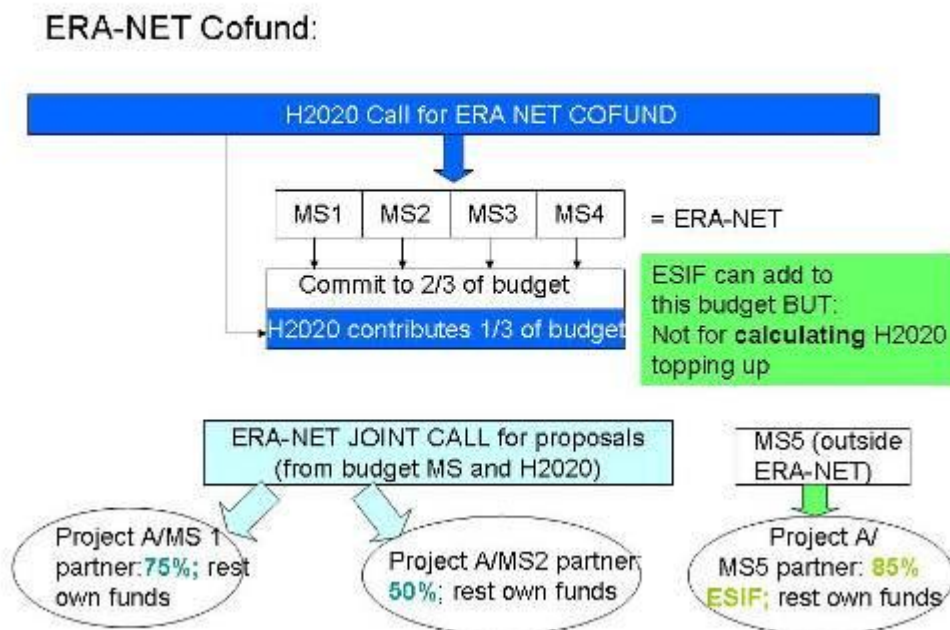


Figure 9 ERA-NET and ESIF

The total budget of the joint call or additional joint calls may include ESIF, provided that they are **not declared as eligible costs and are not used for calculating the topping-up by Horizon 2020 grants**. ESIF will be used in parallel to the ERA-NET.

Beneficiaries in an ERA-NET joint call research project

Financial support to the participants in the projects selected following joint calls topped-up by Horizon 2020 funds is considered one cost item *and* subject to State Aid rules which exclude additional funding through ESIF.

If a project stemming from a joint call involves a partner from a MS not participating in an *ERA-NET*, this partner is usually not funded by the ERA-NET. Hence, it is possible to use the funding for this partner through ESIF. In the above example, MS5 is a less advanced MS which allows for a funding rate of ESIF of up to 85%. Such a partner can only participate in addition to the obligatory 2 minimum partners from ERA-NET MSs/ASs.

Examples for use of ESIF in ERA-NETs at Level 1:

ERA-NET Cofund (1)

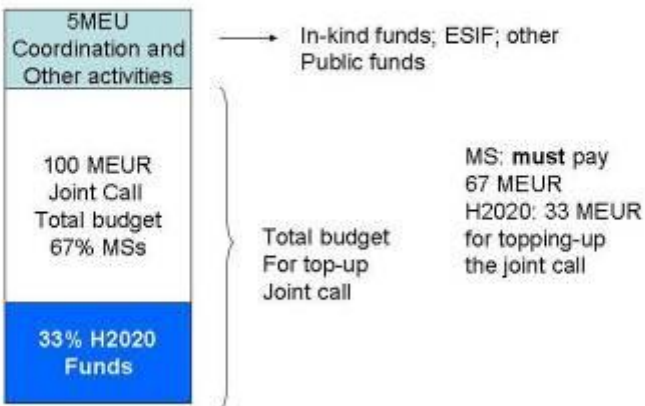


Figure 10 ESIF for Coordination activities

For activities that do not form part of the Horizon 2020 grant agreement, like coordination and management costs of the call that are not eligible under Horizon 2020, ESIF could be used if the national ESIF rules foresee the use of these funds for such purpose.

ERA-NET Cofund (1a)

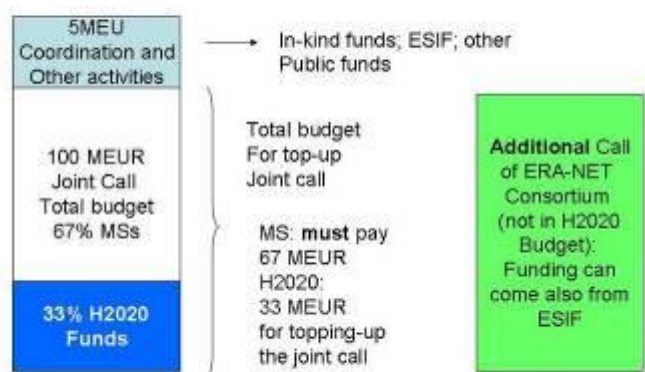


Figure 11 ESIF for additional calls

It is more likely that MSs foresee funding for areas that may be part of an additional call within the ERA-NET (outside the compulsory joint call). Hence,

ESIF can be used to finance such calls and subsequent funding of projects. These projects follow national funding rules regarding selection and funding (while selection of joint calls follows the 2-step evaluation process and only then national funding rules).

ERA-NET Cofund (2)

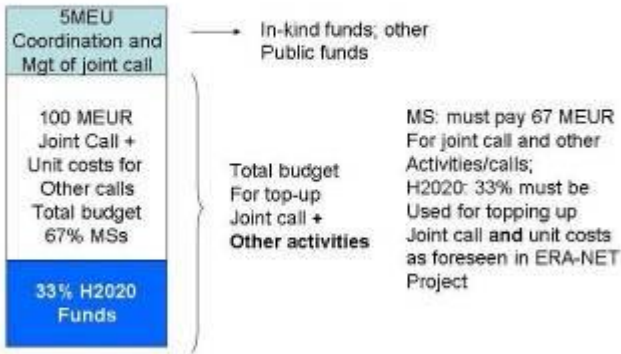


Figure 12 Horizon 2020 for topping-up and unit costs

When considering ERA-NETs in Horizon 2020, Member States will usually contribute with their own budgets to the Joint Call (that is the central element of the ERA-NET) and the costs of additional coordination activities. These budgets will be complemented by additional amounts from Horizon 2020 (in the case of a successful evaluation of this proposal) that will depend on the overall amount of budgets involved: Horizon 2020 reimburses up to 33% of the total of the national budgets involved in the call, and costs for additional activities on the basis of a unit cost.

In order to avoid the risk of any potential double funding, no ESIF money should be used to cover these national budgets (and costs for additional coordination activities) as these form the basis for calculating the Horizon 2020 contribution.

However, projects that will be generated from this Call can later on use additional national funds to which corresponding additional matching ESIF funds could be added. This would require however a very rigorous follow-up and accounting system from the MS involved.

1.5 Joint Programming Initiative

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It can help improving the quality of research in the region / MS through cooperation and comparison with researchers from other MS.
- It can help implementing the RIS3 as regards smart specialisation priorities for which there is need for complementarities with research actors in other regions and MS.
- Horizon 2020 can fund the coordination costs involved in the Joint Programming Initiatives that have been identified by a High Level Group on Joint Programming and recommended by the Council.⁹⁷

JOINT PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES facts:

Definition: The overall aim of the Joint Programming process is to pool national research efforts in order to make better use of Europe's public RDI resources and to tackle common European challenges more effectively in a few key areas. Joint Programming is a structured and strategic process among Member States on a voluntary basis with variable geometry. By early 2014 the following JPIs have been launched:

- Alzheimer and other Neurodegenerative Diseases (JPND)
- Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE)
- A Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life
- Cultural Heritage and Global Change: A New Challenge for Europe
- Urban Europe - Global Urban Challenges, Joint European Solutions
- Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe (CliK'EU)
- More Years, Better Lives - The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change
- Antimicrobial Resistance- The Microbial Challenge - An Emerging Threat to Human Health
- Water Challenges for a Changing World
- Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans

MSs agree on a strategic research agenda (SRA) which is a common plan to identify the common research priorities. On a variable geometry basis, MS then jointly implement it by launching Joint Calls and other actions for the priorities identified. They launch these calls with their own public research funding.

Example: JPI on Food, Agriculture and Climate Change (<http://www.facejpi.com>). 21 countries cooperate and issue a SRA – Strategic

⁹⁷ Information on how the process works: http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/how-does-it-work_en.htm

Research Agenda. To implement it, they can issue (national) calls, participate in EU RDI projects (e.g. ERA-NETs) or any other funding (ESIF). JPIs are politically driven by the MSs and *a priori* do not receive any Horizon 2020 or other Union funding.

Horizon 2020 funding for coordination of JPI:

The Horizon 2020 Work Programme foresees some Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) to coordinate JPIs (6 million EUR are directly dedicated for coordinating JPIs). For details see:

[Calls 2014](#)

[Calls 2015](#)

Synergies between Horizon 2020 and JPIs

Where the areas being addressed by JPI fit with Horizon 2020 priorities, their instruments may be used to support JPIs where appropriate:

1. In general, JPI joint actions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assess whether the EU value-added justifies funding via the ERA-NET scheme.
2. Only in cases where a JPI realises significant collaboration as well as scale and scope of achievements could the possibility of an Art. 185 initiative (see below under 1.6.) be considered.
3. Coordination activities in a JPI may be supported through CSA (co-ordination and support measures).

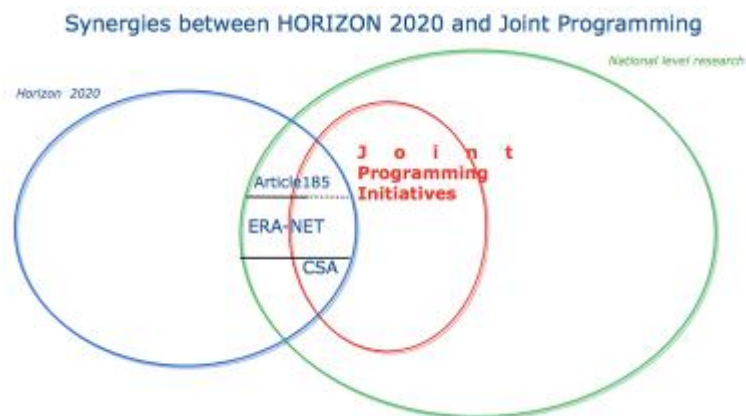


Figure 8 Synergies between Horizon 2020 and JPI

Use of ESIF in JPI

There is no limitation to use ESIF in for joint calls in the framework of a JPI, provided that respondents to Joint Calls observe the rules for ESIF funding and that an ESIF programme foresees such competitive award of research grants.

The only exception is when the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) of a JPI (or part of it) is implemented via ERA-NET or Article 185 initiative. In those cases, the conditions to combine Horizon 2020 and ESIF applicable for ERA-NET and Article 185 initiatives must be met (see 1.4 and 1.6).

Example:

A MS participates in the joint call of JPI JPND (JPI on neuroscience research) on optimisation of biomarkers. Co-funding from ESIF is used to fund the costs of the research centres in the projects under this call (in case of a less developed region co-funding from ERDF can be up to 85%).

1.6 Art. 185 initiatives and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It can help improving the quality of research and innovation in the region / MS through cooperation and comparison with policy-makers and research funders from other regions.
- Participation in Article 185 initiatives can help implementing the RIS3 as regards smart specialisation priorities for which you need complementarities with innovation actors in other regions and MS. It allows voicing the RDI needs via the governance structure of the initiative and content of annual work plans.

Art. 185 facts:

Definition: Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) enables the participation of the EU in the joint implementation by several Member States of (parts of) their *national* (not regional) research and development programmes, including participation in the structures created for the execution of national programmes. They are also used to enhance the complementarity and synergy between Horizon 2020 and activities carried out under intergovernmental structures such as [EUREKA](#) and [COST](#).

Art. 185 is applicable in cases where there is a need for a Dedicated Implementation Structure and where there is a high level of commitment of the participating countries to integration at scientific, management and financial levels. Examples under FP7⁹⁸:

- Ambient Assisted Living (AAL)
- Eurostars (Joint research programme for RDI performing SMEs and their partners, undertaken by 33 countries, in the context of EUREKA)
- BONUS ('Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme' is fully aligned with the objectives of the European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research)
- European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP)
- European and Developing Countries Clinical trials Partnership (EDCTP)

In July 2013, the Commission adopted the Innovation Investment Package that included proposals for European Parliament and Council Decisions on renewed Article 185 initiatives:

- AAL2 (Active and Assisted Living 2),
- EDCTP2 (European and developing countries clinical trial partnership),

⁹⁸ See: http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/art-185-individual-initiatives_en.htm

- EMPIR (European Metrology Programme for Innovation and Research) and
- Eurostars-2 (Support for RDI performing SMEs within the EUREKA framework).

For more details, visit http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/art-185_en.htm

These proposals are under inter-institutional discussion, with a view to their adoption by the Parliament and the Council foreseen for May 2014.

The Decisions will set up Dedicated Implementation Structures (DIS), legal entities that are in charge of contract and budget management, the development of the (annual) work plans, organisation of the calls for proposals, handling of the evaluation and ranking of proposals for funding. Every Article 185 initiative will have a board or other governing body to steer the implementation of the initiative.

Funding:

There are 2 levels of funding:

Level 1: No grant but contribution to the legal entity through a delegation agreement signed between the Commission and the Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS).

Union funding usually matches MS funding (50%-50%) with the exception of Eurostars 2 (under EUREKA) where the EU contributes 25% or 33% of the total amount allocated for Eurostars 2 (see final EP and Council Decision for precise rate).

Level 2: For calls issued by Art.185 initiatives' DIS:

The Horizon 2020 rules for participation apply to Art. 185 initiatives with some derogations foreseen in the basic acts setting up the initiatives. Some Art. 185 initiatives foresee application of rules of the national programmes, provided they are compatible with EU legislation, plus any additional requirements which may be imposed by the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation, the Decision for the respective initiative and the Delegation Agreement (see also [Art. 185 implementation](#)).

Cost Item:

A cost item is to be understood as the amount eligible for Union funding under a budget category.

Combined Funding Options:

Parallel funding at level 1 and cumulative at level 2.

Scenario Art.185 initiative:

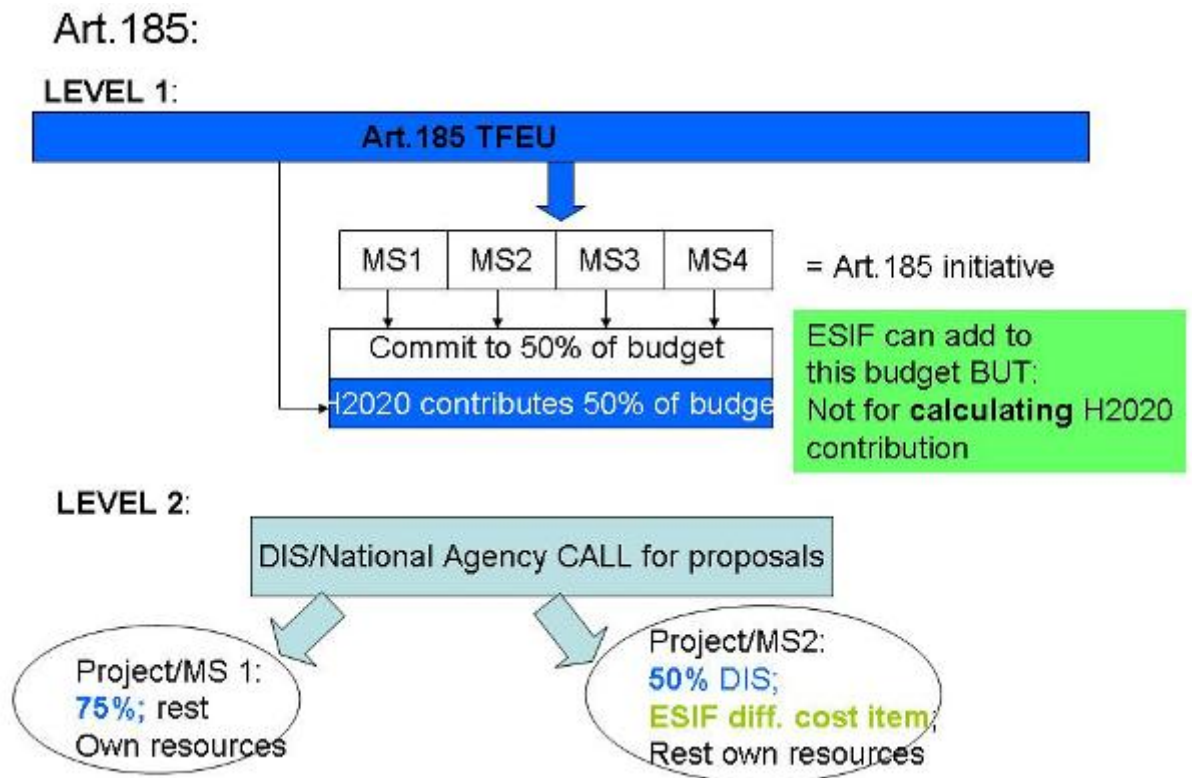


Figure 9 Combined Funding Art. 185

Level 1: National contribution to joint programme

The Union's contribution to the Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS) is not provided through a grant. Therefore, the non-cumulative principle does not apply. However, as one main objective of Art. 185 initiatives is to integrate national public research funding, matching contributions from the Participating States to the programme may not come from other EU funding sources such as ESIF. This means in practice that for the calculation of the Horizon 2020 contribution (50% in general, possibly only 25% or 33% for Eurostars-2) only the national contribution per country is counted.

However, this does not prevent the partner countries to additionally allocate ESIF money for this purpose to allow for more projects in the MS to be funded (leverage effect).

ESIF contribution at that level can look like that:

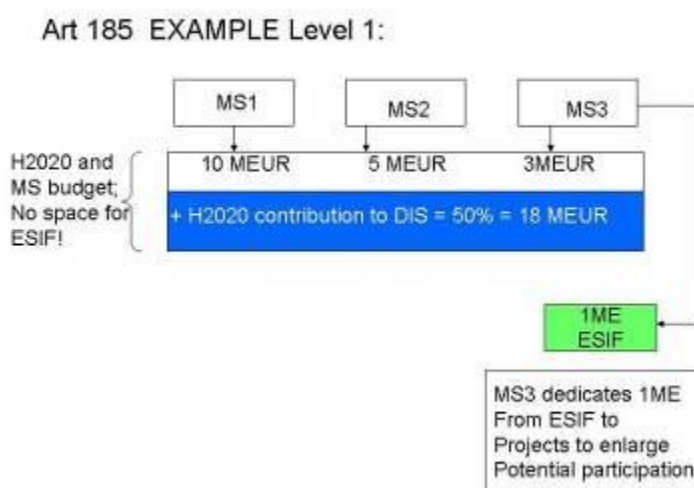


Figure 10 Level 1 ESIF example

Level 2: Beneficiaries in an Art.185 research project

Beneficiaries in research projects stemming from an Art. 185 initiative call are funded according to the national funding rules applicable in the respective MS, including rules regarding State Aid. If these rules allow for additional funding (e.g. through ESIF), this is possible but for *different cost/expenditure items* (see fig.14 Level 2 example).

EXAMPLE:

A research institute in MS X is specialised in Ambient Assisted Living robotics. To carry out the research work, it receives 50% support for cost items covered by a grant from its National Agency (that is financed with a mix of Union contribution received via the so-called *Dedicated Implementation Structure* and national funds). For necessary equipment (that is not part of this grant), it applies for co-funding through ESIF (through the relevant Managing Authorities). The remaining % of the budgets is for both grant agreements covered by own resources.

NOTA BENE: MSs involved in an Art. 185 initiative may make additional contributions in kind by putting national or regional research institutions that benefit from ESIF support at the disposal of the Art. 185 projects. In these cases, it must be ensured that cost items covered by the national contribution to the ESIF RDI capacity building action are not double financed by any Horizon 2020 indirect cost support (for instance: clearly separate the purchase and installation of equipment (ESIF) from the running costs (Art.185)).

Scenario Art. 185 Eurostars 2:

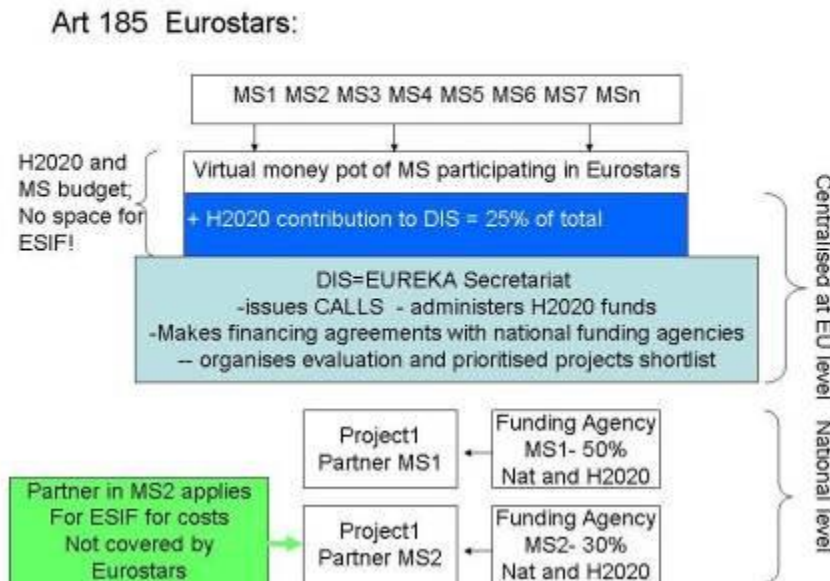


Figure 11 Eurostars 2 combined funding scenario

At programme level MS participating in Eurostars 2 calls commit themselves to contribute with national funds to the call which then is topped up by Horizon 2020 funds (see for exact percentage (25% or 33%) the final version of the Eurostars 2 Decision). At that level, there is no space for ESIF.

At project level (selection according to a prioritised shortlist centrally managed by the DIS (the EUREKA secretariat in this case), MSs foresee funding according to national funding rules. These differ considerably. Hence, depending on the respective MS, there might be space for additional ESIF funding, always provided that no double funding occurs (different expenditure items!).

HOWEVER: Eurostars2 participating MSs can use ESIF (that might provide higher co-financing rates than Horizon 2020) to fund projects that were evaluated positively in a Eurostars2 call (but cannot be funded for lack of Eurostars’ budget) or use ESIF for cumulative funding with self-standing grants for parts of an overall project proposal in line with Article 37 Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation / Article 65(11) CPR (like in scenario 1.1.1. above). This option is only possible if the respective PA (Partnership Agreement) and subsequent ESIF programme foresee the use of ESIF for the Eurostars2-type of projects.

1.7 Art. 187 Joint Technology Initiatives

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- Contacts with companies in the territory that participate in the JTIs can facilitate the implementation of the RIS3 in particular as regards the stimulation of private RDI investments and the generation of critical mass and complementarity with the ESIF and national / regional investments in other MS and regions.

Art. 187 facts:

Definition:

Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs) are public-private partnerships (PPPs) on a long-term basis providing a combination of private and public funding for selected fields of technology. The research funding programme is implemented through a funding body, the JTI **Joint Undertaking** (JU), which funds indirect actions in accordance with the Horizon 2020 Rules for participation, mainly through competitive calls for proposals.

The aim is to increase the competitiveness of the European industry in these technology fields. These initiatives mainly result from the European Technology Platforms⁹⁹ (**ETPs**) that were set up at the time of FP6.

The JTIs JU are set up by the Council through the adoption of individual Council Regulations (The JTI JU basic acts). Under FP 7 the Council adopted 6 JTIs:

- Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)
- Nano-electronics (European Nano-electronics Initiative Advisory Council - ENIAC)
- Embedded systems (Advanced Research and Technology for Embedded Intelligence Systems - ARTEMIS)
- Air Transport (Clean Sky)
- Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Initiative (FCH)
- Shift2Rail to contribute to the implementation of the strategic research plan for the European rail system

Future [JTIs proposed and discussed at inter-institutional level](#) (Status: March 2014):

- Innovative Medicines Initiative 2

⁹⁹ See: http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/individual_en.html

- Fuel cells and hydrogen 2
- Clean Sky 2
- Bio-based Industry
- Electronic components and systems (ECSEL, combining ARTEMIS and ENIAC)

The JUs will be in charge of contract and budget management, the development of the (annual) work plans, organisation of the calls for proposals, handling of the evaluation and ranking of proposals for funding. Every Article 187 initiative will have a board or other governing body to steer the implementation of the Joint Technology Initiative.

FUNDING: Public/private funding, typically between 25% and 50% from Horizon 2020, and rest from industry; in case of ECSEL, there are also direct financial contributions from the MSs and possibly also from countries associated to Horizon 2020.

At the level of the JU (Level 1) no combined funding is envisaged.

According to the draft basic acts of some JTI JUs under Horizon 2020, it is also expected that the private partners provide “in-kind” contributions consisting of the costs incurred by them in implementing additional activities outside the work plan of the JU, contributing to the objectives of the Joint Technology Initiative. In this case, other Union funding programmes may support these costs in compliance with the applicable rules and procedures. However, in such cases, Union financing shall not substitute the regulatory “in-kind” contributions from the private (or in the case of ECSEL public) partners. The costs relating to additional activities shall not be eligible for financial support by the Joint Undertaking.

At the level of the indirect actions (“projects”, Level 2), there will also be in-kind contributions by the private partners, consisting of the costs incurred by them in implementing these indirect actions less the contribution of the Joint Undertaking and any other Union contribution to those costs.

COST ITEM:

Projects financed through grants under a JTI/JU, can enjoy combined funding, provided that double funding is avoided (different cost items funded by different grants).

COMBINED FUNDING OPTIONS: Simultaneous funding (JTI2 ECSEL example) and parallel funding (JTI 1 example).

Scenario JTI 1: Parallel funding at level 2

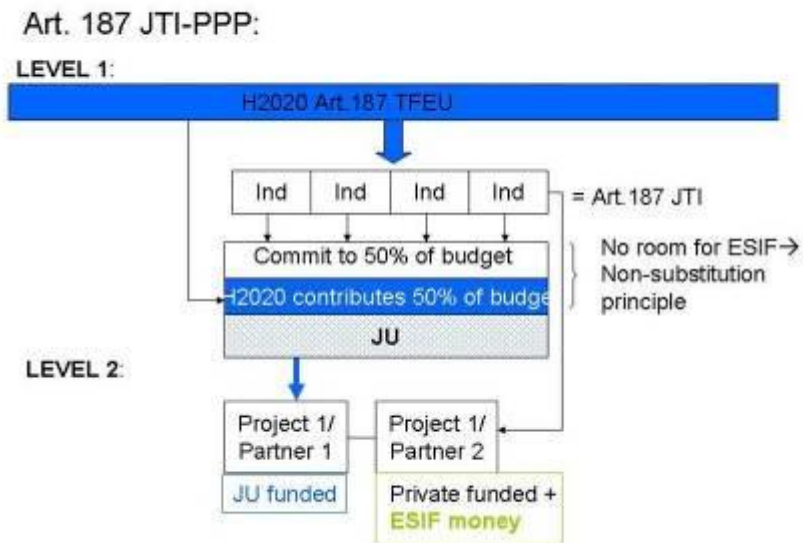


Figure 17 JTI and ESIF at level 2

JTIs are Public-Private Partnerships that combine funding contributions from industry and Horizon2020. Hence, when setting up the fund for the Joint Undertaking, the private (and in the case of ECSEL: public) funds cannot be substituted by ESIF.

However, to enlarge the potential of research projects under the JU, ESIF funds may be used as described under 1.1 (depending on national funding rules, ESIF priorities and State Aid rules).

Example:

EUR 1.8 billion are committed by industry. Of this, EUR 0.9 billion are combined with EUR 0.9 billion from Horizon 2020 to fund the projects emanating from the calls launch via the JU.

The other EUR 0.9 billion coming from the industry are invested in other projects, e.g. demonstration and flagship plants co-funded by EUR 0.9 billion from ERDF (or at other co-financing rates, depending on State Aid limitations and the relevant ESIF programme).

Scenario JTI 2: ECSEL cumulative funding – level 2, different WPs:

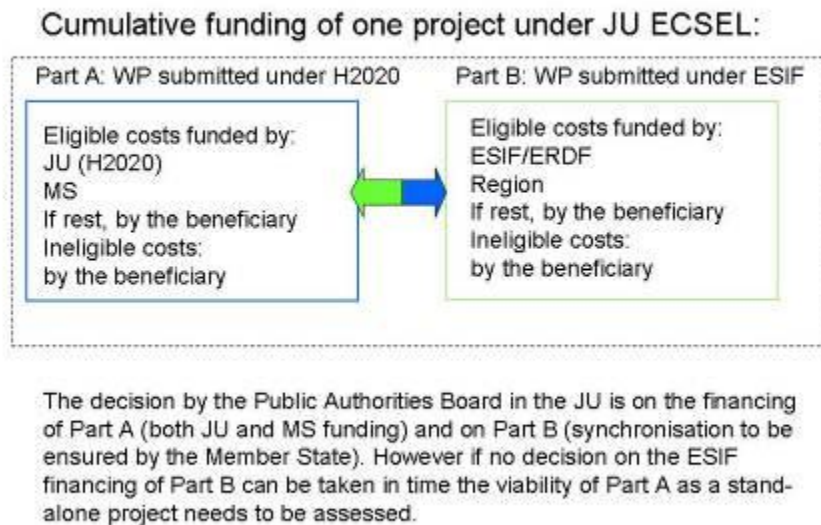


Figure 18 Simultaneous funding - ECSEL

The ECSEL JTI combines funding from industry, Horizon 2020 **and** Member States.

Projects under the ECSEL JU are usually divided in Work Packages and tasks, to which the partners allocate a budget. Hence, a work package and an allocated funding can be submitted under either Horizon 2020 or ESIF as the budget for each WP can be considered one cost item.

Some points need attention:

1. The proposal that is submitted consists of Part A and Part B and includes the total financing plan
2. Part A of the proposal is evaluated by the JU – under the assumption that there will be financing for Part B. Part B of the proposal is evaluated by the Member State or Region concerned using the rules applicable in the Member State (and the relevant ESIF programme, if ESIF co-financing is envisaged).
3. The decision by the Public Authorities Board in the JU is on the financing of Part A (both JU and MS funding) and on Part B (synchronisation to be ensured by the Member State). However, if no decision on the ESIF financing of Part B can be taken in time, the viability of Part A as a stand-alone project needs to be assessed. Please note that for part B MS and regions may consider pooling the ESIF funding from different

countries / regions in line with Article 70(2) CPR that allows ESIF investments outside the EISF programme areas under certain conditions (see scenario 1.1.5.).

4. To determine whether or not a project needs to be notified for State Aid purposes the sum of 'A MS funding', 'B ESIF' and 'B Region' needs to be taken. The 'A JU (Horizon 2020) Funding' does NOT need to be added to this sum.
5. The two essential conditions no profit from public funding and no double funding are in this model easy to verify. The latter is ensured by the project set-up. The former is ensured by reimbursement rates that are applied – the reimbursement rate by the JU (Horizon 2020) and the MS cannot exceed the maximum reimbursement rate from Horizon 2020 and is calculated on 'A eligible'.

Monitoring by the JU will only cover Part A (not part B), but the governing board of the JU should be kept informed about the implementation of part B and the MAs should vice-versa be informed about the progress with part A.

Please note that ESIF/ERDF Managing Authorities cannot be obliged to co-fund plants planned by a JTI. Their funding decisions depend on the ESIF programme priorities and those of the relevant RIS3. It is strongly recommended to **discuss with the relevant MA even before conceiving the project** proposal and its A and B parts.

Scenario Combined Funding in large investments in KETs observing State Aid rules - example ECSEL

- Total investment: EUR 6 billion
- Project separated in EUR 2 billion pilot line plus EUR 4 billion investments for manufacturing.
 - **Pilot line:** the pilot line project has clearly separated cost items that allow to attribute them to either the JU (Horizon 2020 plus industry or own national / regional funding) or ESIF plus industry or national / regional funding. State Aid intensities for experimental development + collaboration could be as high as 25% + 15% = 40%; 40% = EUR 800 million; assuming that for clearly identified cost items of the pilot line construction an ECSEL Participating State or a Region will provide 25% own funding (combined with ERDF funding), while the ECSEL JU will provide for the remaining cost items further 25% (Horizon 2020) that do not constitute State Aid combined with private industry funds.
This means that half of the pilot line is funded by industry funds. The other half in this example would be funded by Horizon 2020 and ESIF.
 - **Manufacturing:** 10.5% of EUR 4 billion = EUR 420 million

In total: EUR **1420 million** or **23.66%** of the total investment.

1.8 EIT / KICs and ESIF

European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) and [Knowledge and Innovation Communities](#) (KIC)

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- KIC participation can help implementing the RIS3 as regards smart specialisation priorities for which there is need for complementarities with innovation actors in other regions and MS.
- The KIC-model can help improving the cooperation among research, education and business in the region in line with ERDF investment priority 1.b.

EIT /KICs facts:

Definition: The **EIT**'s mission is to contribute to sustainable European economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the Member States and the Union in order to address major challenges faced by European society. It shall do this by promoting synergies and cooperation among, and integrating, higher education, research and innovation of the highest standards, including by fostering entrepreneurship.

A **KIC** is a highly autonomous partnership of top-class higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders in the innovation process that tackles societal challenges through the development of products, services and processes and also by nurturing innovative entrepreneurial people.

Co-location Centres (CC) are parts of a KIC, embedded in a regional or local context.

Goals: Integrating the knowledge triangle HE/Research/Business:

- from idea to product
- from lab to market
- from student to entrepreneur

Activities include:

KICs carry out a whole range of activities, covering the entire innovation chain – including training and education programmes, reinforcing the journey from research to the market, innovation projects and business incubators.

[EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda](#)

[Principles for financing, monitoring and evaluation of KICs](#): define the principles and details on the functioning of the EIT funding model and the principles and design of the EIT's monitoring system.

[Framework of Guidance](#): is intended to help those interested in forming a KIC. This document presents what the EIT is and how it works, what the KICs are and how they work, and what makes a KIC successful. Based on the lessons learnt since the establishment of the EIT and its first three KICs, it also contains tips on starting a KIC and key information what happens after the designation of new KICs including the EIT and KIC contractual relations, the EIT funding model and the EIT monitoring system. It mentions ESIF for funding of KIC activities, including the "RIS – Regional Innovation Scheme" (not to be confounded with RIS3!) that promotes the engagement of KICs with the wider Innovation community.

Themes:

The existing KICs concern Energy, ICT and Climate Change. The new KICs will be established in three waves, starting in 2014 with "Healthy living and active ageing" and "Raw materials", followed in 2016 by "Food4Future" and "Added value manufacturing" and in 2018 by "Urban mobility".

[Call for KICs 2014](#)

FUNDING:

As set in the EIT Regulation, the EIT funding on average may not exceed 25% of a KIC's overall funding, which means that the remaining minimum 75% must come from non-EIT sources.

For KIC [Added Value Activities](#) (KAVAs, i.e. activities contributing to the integration of the knowledge triangle of higher education, research and innovation, including the establishment, administrative and coordination activities of the KICs, and contributing to the overall objectives of the EIT) the EIT grant may cover up to 100% of the total eligible costs).

Other KIC activities, the so called [KIC Complementary Activities](#) (KCAs), are not financed by the EIT grant, but must come from other sources, such as, in particular, the ESIF and Horizon 2020). KCAs must contribute to the implementation of the long term strategy of the KIC and relate to at least one KAVA.

EIT can use around 5% of its budget (2014-2020) for dissemination and outreach activities (including the financing of the mobility actions under the Regional Innovation Scheme).

KIC partner organisation centres can also participate in RDI programmes.

Horizon 2020: EUR 2.7 billion for 2014-2020 for EIT

Combined funding scenarios: Using ESIF for complementing KIC “added value activities”.

Scenario EIT/KIC: Using ESIF for complementing KIC added value activities

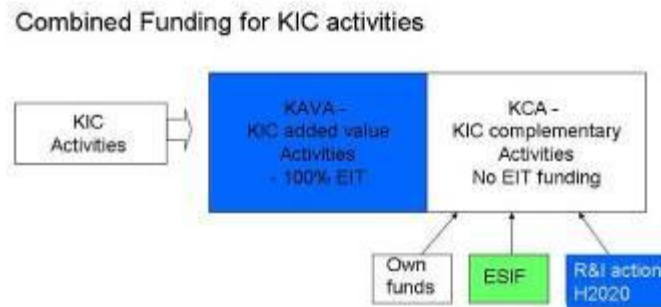


Figure 19 ESIF for activities not funded by EIT

While KICs are funded up to 100% by EIT for the so-called “added value activities”, the “complementary activities” are not funded by EIT. It is up to the KIC to find funding sources for these activities. Amongst them can be ESIF (if the activities correspond to ESIF priorities in the region of the KIC), but also RDI actions within Horizon 2020.

1.9 Research Infrastructures and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It can help prepare better for the construction or up-grade of research infrastructures under ERDF investment priority 1.a.

Research Infrastructures: ERIC/ESFRI/"major projects" facts:

Definition:

Research infrastructures are facilities, resources and services that are used by the research communities to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields.

[RIs](#) are a key instrument in bringing together a wide diversity of stakeholders. They offer **unique research services** to users from different countries, attract young people to science and help to shape scientific communities. RIs are part of the **knowledge triangle** of research, education and innovation, producing knowledge through research, diffusing it through education and applying it through innovation.

Activities funded under Horizon 2020 RI grants foster the innovation potential of research infrastructures, for example by reinforcing partnerships with industry, transfer of knowledge and other dissemination activities, use of research infrastructures by industrial researchers, and involvement of industrial associations in consortia or in advisory bodies.

Research Infrastructures (RIs) are natural candidates for synergies as they involve national/regional research centres in priority disciplines, often trans-territorial, and involve a high budget for planning and implementation. Existing research infrastructures already use the different financing schemes.

[WP 2014/15 of Horizon 2020 regarding research infrastructures including e-infrastructures](#): The Work programme specifically mentions the potential synergies with ESIF (p.53); many thematic areas include research of/into national or regional research activities. Most of these topics will be implemented via R&I, Innovation actions or Coordination and Support Actions (CSA).

More info on research infrastructures on the [Horizon 2020 website dedicated to Research Infrastructures](#).

ESFRI – “European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures” was established to support a coherent approach to policy-making on Research Infrastructures in Europe.

ESFRI is a coordination body to agree on a set of research infrastructure initiatives of European added value (the so-called [ESFRI roadmap](#)). ESFRI has an incubator role, the implementation can be carried out via ESIF or Horizon 2020 (and subsequently, often national/regional resources). Support will be provided for central coordination, operation, access provision, enlargement of the membership, training and innovation activities. Activities can include setting up and initial running of the central coordination office, enhancement of the technical architecture, detailed RDI and engineering work, development of innovative components, users' access, data management (including possible open access to data), inter-operability, standardisation, outreach, training and international cooperation.

[EGTC](#) - European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (=legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote transnational and interregional cooperation and to give these consortia a legal personality). Currently no EGTC is involved in managing research activities but potentially will in the future.

For “**Major projects**” under ERDF (= operations of EUR 50 million or more total eligible costs comprising a series of works, activities or services intended in itself to accomplish an indivisible task of a precise economic or technical nature with clear goals which may be research infrastructures) please note:

- major research infrastructure projects need to be referenced in the ESIF programme’s indicative list of major projects
- they have to be in support to the RIS3 priorities
- they have to be in line with the indicative multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of RI investments (ex ante conditionality 1.2.).

A Managing Authority (MA) can request assistance from JASPERS, technical assistance facility set up with REGIO support. JASPERS assists in producing mature project proposals compliant with EU requirement. See: <http://www.jaspers-europa-info.org/index.php/what-we-offer.html>

Network of National Contact Points for RI under FPs: <http://www.euroris-net.eu/>

By the nature of RI, combined funding will be either **sequential** or **parallel**. For RDI or Innovation actions, combined funding scenarios as described under Horizon 2020 multi-country projects are possible.

Scenario RI 1: Sequential funding from different sources

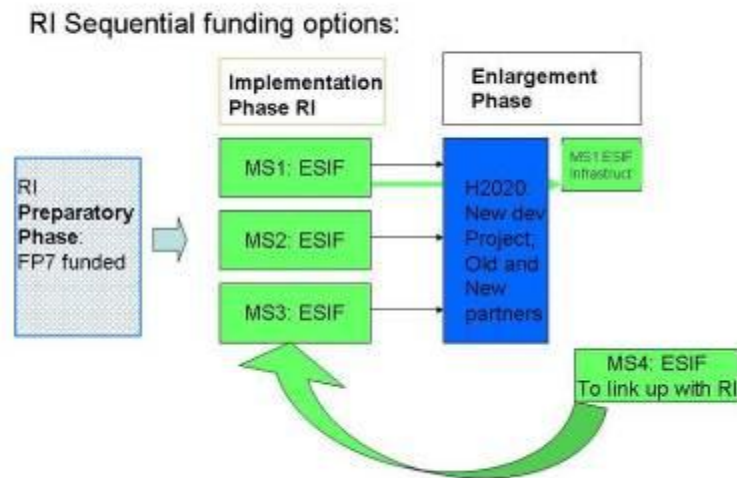


Figure 12 RI Sequential funding options

The RI scenario is best explained by a real-life example that is currently running:

[Extreme Light Infrastructure \(ELI\)](#)

Sequential funding:

1. FP7 supported preparatory phase of ELI.
2. Currently, implementation is co-funded by ERDF in the respective MSs - Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic. Please note that as of 2014 only ESFRI projects that fit into the relevant smart specialisation strategy may be supported from ERDF.
3. In case ELI proves useful for the RIS3 of the relevant country, for enlarging to other players or involving SMEs, Horizon 2020 or ERDF funds can be used: Horizon 2020 for the joint development of parts of ELI not yet funded; (running costs of existing RI and fees for using existing RI such as CERN are NOT eligible under ERDF). ESF could be used to up skill the researchers in ELI, e.g. giving them training in entrepreneurial skills.
4. Horizon 2020 could provide risk capital to possible spin-offs from ELI.

Future management structure of ELI: ERIC is planned.

Scenario RI 2: Parallel ESIF Funding

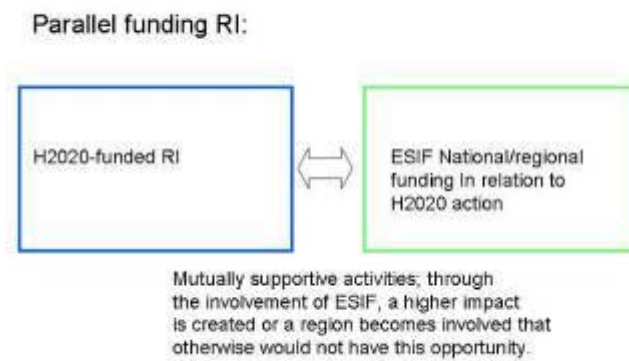


Figure 131 RI parallel funding

ESIF could be used to up-grade a research infrastructure (if this supports the socio-economic development of the host region and is in line with the RIS3 and relevant ESIF programme), while Horizon 2020 funds the research activities.

1.10 Pre-Commercial Procurement and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- PCP and PPI offer a win-win situation as they help to develop faster concrete solutions to societal challenges and improve public services and infrastructures, while helping innovators to bring their solutions faster to the market.
- PPI can be used under ERDF investment priority 1.b, but also under investment priorities related to energy, transport, health, environment, etc.

PCP and PPI facts:

Definition:

PCP = Pre-Commercial Procurement, i.e. procurement of RDI services involving risk-benefit sharing under market conditions (IPR ownership is owned by the RDI provider as in Horizon 2020 grants). PCP under Horizon 2020 is run in several phases with competitive development work by different RDI providers. There is a clear separation of the RDI services procured from the deployment of commercial volumes of end-products (the actual large scale procurement of the innovative solutions). Horizon 2020 calls for PCP cofund actions aim to co-finance PCP procurements carried out by trans-national buyers groups (= public procurers from different countries). This enables procurers to share the cost and experience of undertaking a PCP to address a challenge of common interest. PCP falls under the RDI exemption of the EU public procurement procedures /directives: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/pcp/home_en.html and <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/pre-commercial-procurement>

Goal: to foster demand-driven innovation; speed up the development of innovations to address public / societal needs.

[For details see Annex to Horizon 2020 WP on PCP](#)

PPI = Public Procurement of innovative solutions that do not require RDI but maybe a new combination of technologies and service models. Normal procurement procedures / EU public procurement directives apply. PPI is procurement where procurers act as a launch customer, also called early adopter, for innovative goods or services which are not yet available on a large-scale commercial basis, and may include conformance testing. Horizon 2020 calls for PPI cofund actions aim to co-finance PPI procurements carried out by trans-national buyers groups (= public procurers from different countries). This enables procurers to pool resources (both as regards administrative, technical

and legal capacities and as regards generating a sufficiently big demand to attract good value for money offers from innovative firms) and obtain economies of scale.

Goals: speed up the market introduction of innovations and thus improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services and infrastructures and create return on investments for innovative firms.

CSAs = Coordination and Support Actions. In several priorities of Horizon 2020 there are calls for CSAs to support the creation of buyers groups and the preparation of future PCPs and PPIs.

[For details see Annex to Horizon 2020 WP on PPI](#)

Support for networking and capacity building for PCP and PPI: [Procurement Forum](#)

Implementation:

In Horizon 2020, calls for proposals to reinforce support to 'pre-commercial procurement' and 'public procurement of innovative solutions' are available across all priorities of the programme where mentioned in the Work Programme. All PCP and PPIs co-financed by Horizon 2020 launch an open market consultation in preparation of the procurement to inform potentially interested tenderers across Europe about the upcoming call for tender. PCPs and PPIs are open to companies of all sizes in line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU principles. Phase 3 of the SME instrument may also connect to such measures to promote PCP and PPI opportunities to SMEs (see graph below).

Info can be found: [PCP/PPI website](#)

Apart from calls for PCP/PPI in specific domains addressed by Horizon 2020, there are also calls open to PCP/PPI proposals to address a challenge in any area of public interest:

ICT-35(f): EUR 1 million call for CSAs - for procurers interested to prepare potential future PCPs or PPIs (call deadline: 23 April 2014)

ICT-36: EUR 4 million call for PCP COFUND actions - for procurers interested to do together a PCP (call deadline: 25 April 2015)

Funding:

Consortium of participants from minimum 3 different Member States (MS) or countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC), of which minimum 2 public procurers from 2 different MS or AC investing in the joint procurement that form the buyers group (+ possibly other procurers – e.g. private, NGO procurers - that

are providing services of public interest and other entities that are assisting the procurers)

Horizon 2020 co-financing rate: 100% for Coordination and Support Actions (CSA, e.g. the set-up of a trans-national buyers group and the identification of a common procurement need and other relevant preparatory activities), 70% for PCP cofund actions and 20% for PPI cofund actions. PCP and PPI cofund actions can reimburse the price of the call for tender as well as related coordination and networking costs to prepare, manage and follow-up the call for tender. CSA actions cannot reimburse the price of procurement, only coordination and networking costs.

Combined Funding Options:

Simultaneous/cumulative funding, sequential funding, alternative funding, parallel funding

The following figure shows that PCP and PPI may be linked, i.e. based on identified needs/demand, PCP funds research work in different phases with different “vendors” pursuing different solution approaches. PCP ends with the original development, testing and possibly the deployment of a limited set of end-solutions. The PCP may lead to a PPI that calls for the deployment of commercial volumes of products/services and a first "early adoption" at broad level.

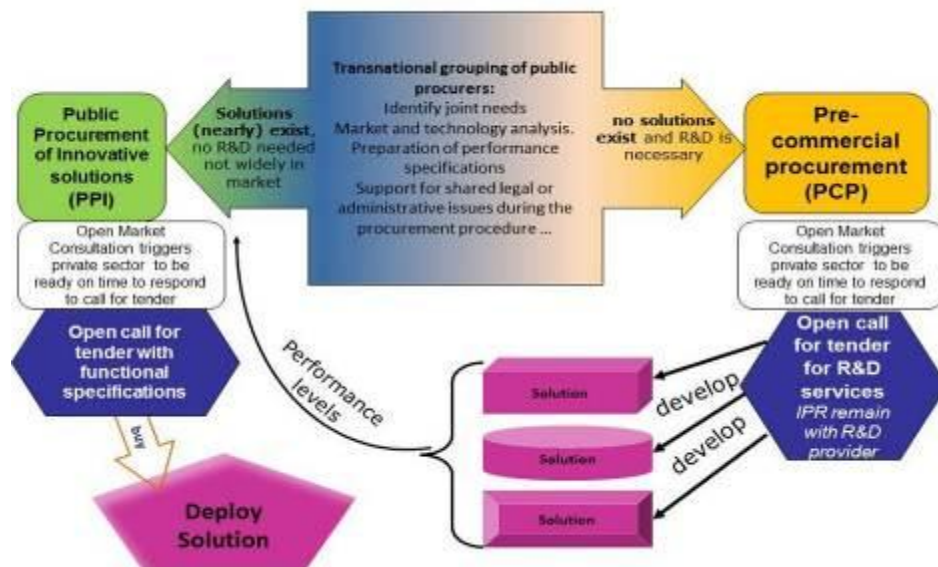


Figure 14 Relation between PCP and PPI in the innovation value chain

A PCP can thus be the first step, followed by the PPI. However, a PPI can also be launched independently without previous PCP. If the buyers group realised during its formation and demand aggregation that the sought after innovative solutions do not require RDI, they directly launch a PPI procedure.

Scenarios for preparing a PCP or PPI:

A first step for MA/procurers is to identify other public procurers who have similar needs for innovative solutions. The different European Innovation Partnerships, or the transport, environment, energy etc. related groups of Member States and regions, or thematic RIS3 platforms, or the Innovation Procurement platform could be used for this task (see: <http://www.innovation-procurement.org>).

A buyers group should then consolidate itself, identify common needs for innovative solutions and work out ToR (Terms of Reference) for their procurements.

A buyers group is a group of procurers that is interested to invest together in a PCP or PPI procurement to address a common challenge. The buyers group can consist of procurers from different MS/regions that already have an ongoing cooperation agreement (e.g. EGTC) or procurers that form an ad-hoc consortium for tackling one specific common public need. Common needs for innovative solutions may be identified among regions with similar priorities in their smart specialisation strategies.

The preparatory work conducted by the buyers group to prepare together the PCP or PPI procurement may include conducting an open market consultation with industry, preparing the tendering documents, appointing a lead procurer to coordinate and lead the procurement, etc.

ESIF can support the above type coordination and networking activities to prepare a PCP or PPI, e.g. via European Territorial Cooperation actions and technical assistance under ESIF programmes. Alternatively a Horizon 2020 funded Coordination and Support Action (CSA) can support these activities at 100% funding rate where foreseen in the Work Programme. Alternatively, max. 30% (PCP) or 50% (PPI) of Horizon 2020 funds can be used for coordination, preparation and networking activities to prepare, manage and follow-up a PCP or PPI.

Regardless of whether procurers from different MS/regions get together in the framework of an ESIF or Horizon 2020 funded project to prepare a PCP or PPI, sequentially the execution of the actual PCP or PPI procurement can be co-financed either by Horizon 2020 or by ESIF or by a combination of both.

NOTA BENE: Not all areas of Horizon 2020 foresee CSA funding for preparing PCP or PPIs. Having obtained ESIF funding gives no up-front guarantee to receive Horizon 2020 funding. Proposals for CSAs, PCP and PPI Cofund actions are accepted for funding after a separate process of submission and evaluation of proposals to the appropriate Horizon 2020 call for proposals.

Scenarios for executing a PCP:

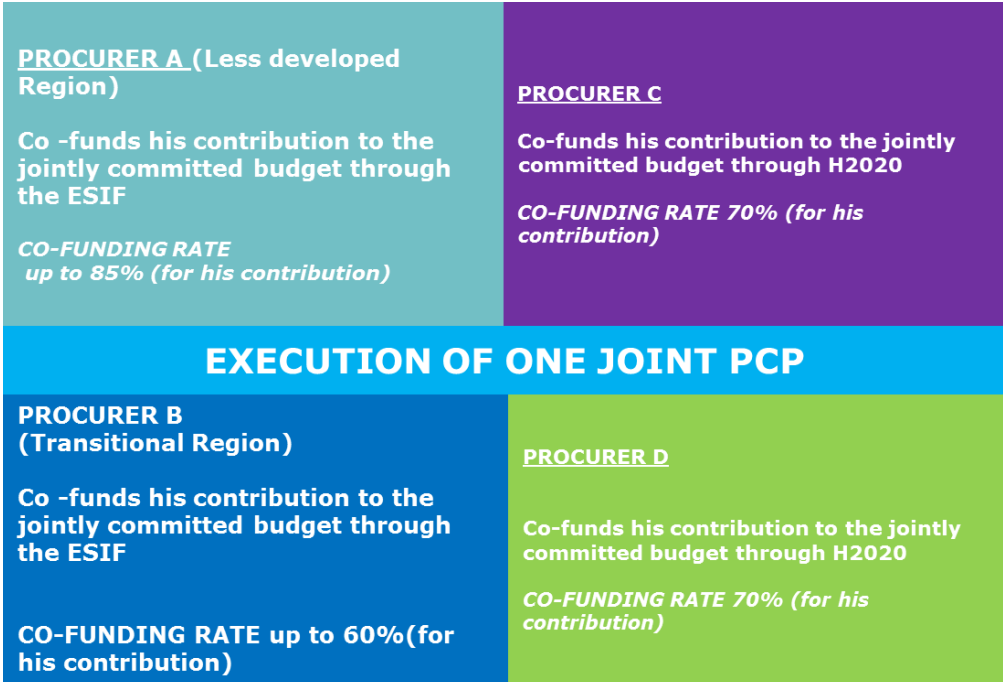


Figure 23 Cumulative use of ESIF and Horizon 2020 in the same PCP

A buyers group consisting of procurers A, B, C and D decides to co-finance the execution of the PCP through a combination of ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding. In this case the buyers group should apply for a PCP co-fund action under Horizon 2020 to purchase together RDI services via a joint PCP call for tender.

A buyers group consisting of procurers A and B may prefer to co-finance the execution of the PCP by ESIF without combined funding from Horizon 2020 while procurers C and D use Horizon 2020 funds.

Cumulating of funding from ESIF and Horizon 2020 means that some participants of the consortium of the buyers group may receive co-funding from the ESIF and others from Horizon 2020 for their contribution to the total jointly committed procurement budget. The cumulation of ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding requires that there is a clear identification of which ESIF programme is used for which expenditure and where the procured service or object will materialise its benefits (will generate the targeted quality/efficiency improvements in public services) and who is the owner of the expenditures co-funded by Horizon 2020.

NOTA BENE: Condition for success: synchronization between the ESIF calls and the Horizon 2020 PCP co-fund action calls.

MA could then use ESIF separately for a potential follow-up PPI to procure solutions according to the performance levels that have been identified as achievable in the PCP action.

PCP can deliver territorial benefits for regions by:

- getting solutions developed that realise concrete quality and efficiency improvements to public service provisioning in the region;
- strengthen the local innovation ecosystem as stronger local public sector demand for innovative solutions attracts additional investments into the region and helps to prevent relocation of innovative companies to other parts of the world;
- enhancing the technical know-how about the pros and cons of competing solutions on the market and the access to RDI results for procurers in the region.
 - Procurers can define in the PCP tender specifications the *tangible results* they want to obtain as a result from the PCP. This typically includes company reports on achieved RDI results, a copy of the solution design, as well as the prototype and test specifications. If needed, procurers can also acquire as part of the PCP a limited set of prototypes and test products developed during the PCP (for max 50% of the contract value).
 - Regarding the *intangible results* generated by participating RDI providers during the PCP, Horizon 2020 foresees that, while RDI providers remain IPR owners, the procurers enjoy royalty-free access rights to the RDI results, the right to license - or to require RDI providers to license - IPRs generated by RDI providers during the PCP to third parties, the right to transfer IPR ownership generated by RDI providers during the PCP to the procurer in case IPRs are abused against the public interest or not commercialised within a time limit specified in the PCP contract and the right to publish the key RDI results. Procurers also obtain (via lower PCP grants compared to ordinary procurement of R&D services) a financial compensation for leaving the ownership rights of IPRs generated by RDI providers during the PCP with the RDI providers. For example the region of Lombardy requests this financial compensation in the form of royalties on future sales realised by RDI providers and reinvests these royalties into a fund for financing future PCP and PPIs by the region.

Scenarios for executing a PPI:

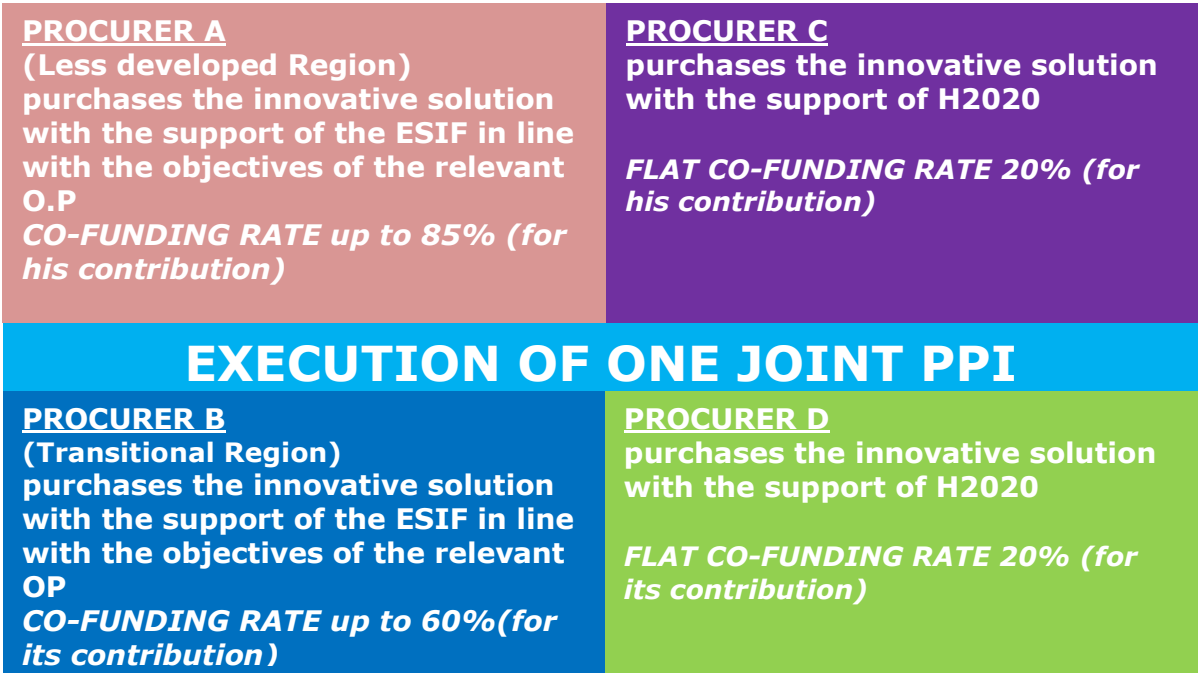


Figure 24 Execution of a PPI using combined funding of ESFI and Horizon 2020

A buyers group consisting of procurers A, B, C and D can prefer to co-finance the execution of the PPI through a combination of ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding. In this case the buyers group should apply for a PPI co-fund action under Horizon 2020 to purchase together innovative solutions via a joint PPI call for tender.

A buyers group consisting of procurers A and B may prefer to co-finance the execution of the PPI by ESIF without combined funding from Horizon 2020 while procurers C and D use Horizon 2020 funds.

Framework contracts/agreements with lots can be used, with specific contracts for procuring the specific quantities of innovative solutions for each procurer individually.

Cumulation of funding from ESIF and Horizon 2020 means that some participants of the consortium of the buyers group may receive co-funding from the ESIF and others from Horizon 2020. The cumulation of ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding requires that there is a clear identification of which ESIF programme is used for which expenditure and where the procured service or object will materialise its benefits (will generate the targeted quality/efficiency improvements in public services) and who is the owner of expenditures co-funded by Horizon 2020. This is for instance possible by asking suppliers to issue separate invoices per procurer for the innovative solutions procured by each procurer.

To achieve innovation goals in their territory, by using ESI Funds procurers – in particular from less developed regions - could receive higher co-funding rates to participate in a PPI that is implemented in the framework of Horizon 2020 together with procurers from more advanced Regions.

NOTA BENE: Condition for success: synchronization between the ESIF calls and the Horizon 2020 PPI cofund action calls.

1.11 Horizon 2020 Innovation in SMEs and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- The model of the Horizon 2020 SME instrument with its different phases, starting from a small lump-sum based feasibility action, could be adopted in ESIF programmes. This could improve the SME innovation support.
- If the cost model in an ESIF programme is fully aligned to the SME instrument grant conditions¹⁰⁰, it would even become possible to take up excellent project proposals that come out of the Horizon 2020 evaluation process, but for which not enough Horizon 2020 budget is available.
- The results of the first or 2nd phase of the SME instrument could be carried further towards the market via ESIF support

Innovation in SMEs facts:

Definition: Horizon 2020 supports innovation in SMEs via the SME instrument and diverse SME support actions that are complementary. Collaboration with COSME and ESIF is (partially) foreseen and encouraged.

The **SME instrument** shall provide staged and seamless support covering the whole innovation cycle. It shall be provided for all types of innovation, including service, non-technological and social innovations, provided that each activity has a clear European added-value. The aim is to develop and capitalise on the innovation potential of SMEs by filling the gap in funding for early stage high risk research and innovation, stimulating innovations and increasing private-sector commercialisation of research results.

It will be implemented via a continuously open call within all societal challenges and Leading and Enabling Industrial Technologies areas under specified bottom-up topics.

[Innovation in SME WP 2014/15](#) that refers explicitly to ESIF: "ESIF can help deploying innovative solutions for a better SME support emanating from Horizon2020 in the regions [...]".

FUNDING: Within Horizon 2020, embedded in the enabling and industrial technologies parts of Horizon 2020.

- Phase 1: Lump sum EUR 50.000 for feasibility study= 6 months

¹⁰⁰ See: model grant agreements for the SME instrument Phase 1 and phase 2 both for mono-beneficiary grants and multi-beneficiary grants: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html

- Phase 2: Innovation (pilot) projects with 70% funding, 1-2 years
- Phase 3: Commercialisation: no direct Horizon 2020 funding, but possible support from Financial Instruments, the COSME programme or ESIF

COST ITEMS: Eligible costs in one project – ESIF can come in for costs non-eligible under the SME instrument or alternative funding.

NOTA BENE: The SME instrument type of grants is only possible where foreseen in the [WP \(see pp.4-6\)](#).

Other **SME Support Actions** with relevance to ESIF:

“Cluster animated projects for new industrial value chains” plan to develop new cross-sectoral industrial value chains across Europe, by building upon the innovation potential of SMEs. The draft work programme mentions “Synergies with Cohesion Policy funds that may further support such large-scale demonstration projects will also be actively encouraged, notably through the engaged SME intermediaries.” This is meant to support the roll-out of a staged process of experimentation and implementation with accompanying support that reaches out to groups of mutually reinforcing SMEs.

Combined funding options: Cumulative funding (for non-eligible costs under Horizon 2020); alternative funding, sequential funding

Scenario SME 1: alternative funding

Alternative funding SME Instrument:

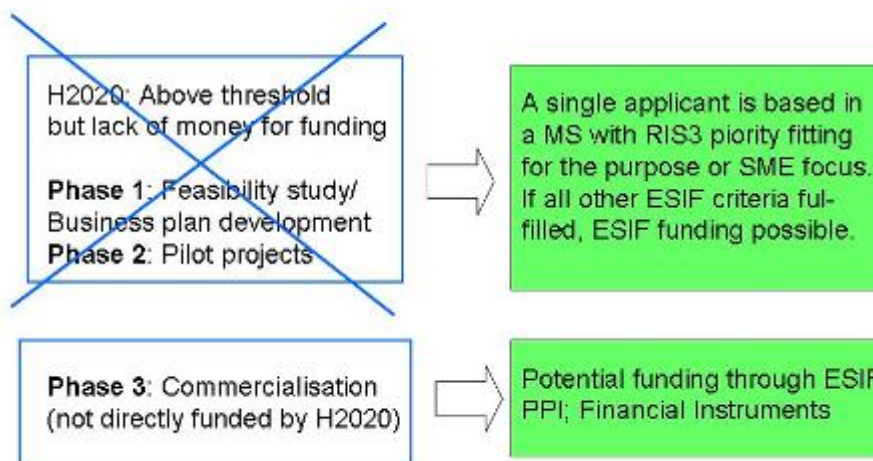


Figure 25 Alternative funding SME Instrument/sequential funding

Support in Phase 1 and 2 of the SME instrument:

If the MS ESIF programme allows funding small grants for the type of business plan development and if the substance of the proposed idea fits with the RIS3

specialisation fields, MAs can fund SME proposals that were evaluated positively in Horizon 2020, but for which there is not enough Horizon 2020 budget. Such proposals might be awarded a 'Seal of Excellence' to easier communicate the positive evaluation to programme managers of the national / regional action¹⁰¹. Passing on such information will always require the previous approval of the project participant(s).

The proposal can be reoriented towards ESIF and funding could be granted either under TO1 (R&I within the RIS3 priorities) or TO3 (competitiveness of SME which does not demand RIS3 priorities).

SMEs can also take own initiatives and contact the relevant regional or national Managing Authority of European Structural and Investment Funds to explore whether they could provide similar support in line with the relevant ESIF programmes' rules and priorities.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/indexes/in_your_country_en.cfm

Given that the SME instrument allows for single SME application, the reorientation towards an ESIF support appears easier than with standard, multi-partner Innovation projects (The ESIF funding of such multi-beneficiary SME projects might be possible, if the rules of Article 70(2) CPR are respected).

Support in Phase 3 of the SME instrument: ESIF sequential funding in the SME instrument

ESIF can support regional SMEs for phase 3 commercialisation, including possibly through financial instruments or public procurement, when all ESIF criteria are fulfilled.

NOTA BENE: ESIF cannot substitute the co-funding principle, e.g. in a "phase 2" 70% funded project, ESIF cannot be used for the remaining 30%.

¹⁰¹ Upon approval of the participants, information on positively evaluated European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska-Curie, teaming actions, phase-2 SME instrument or collaborative project proposals that have been evaluated above threshold according to the Horizon 2020 criteria but could not be funded for lack of Horizon 2020 budget, can be shared with the responsible authorities in the MS and regions. See Commission declaration following GRI meeting of 12 July 2013 [SI(2013)366/2]

2. COSME – the programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs - and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- The COSME Enterprise Europe Network is located in many regions all over the EU and even beyond. It offers direct access to international business or innovation partners for SMEs.
- The Enterprise Europe Network offers advanced high-quality advisory services that could give a model to be replicated within an ESIF programme's territory with ESIF funded business and innovation service provision (e.g. brokerage events).
- The Enterprise Europe Network trans-national support may also be amplified via coordinated ESIF funded SME support services, in particular under ERDF investment priorities 3(b) *new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation*, 3(d) *supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes*.
- The impact of Enterprise Europe Network support might also be enhanced if the hosting MS or region ensures coordination with other ESIF supported SME support, e.g. voucher schemes, financial instruments, incubation services, etc.

COSME facts:

Definition: SME-specific support programme, follow-up of CIP-Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme.

Please note that the COSME basic act does **not** include derogation from the non-cumulative principle. Hence, all combined funding must be either sequential or parallel or alternative. However, Article 10(2) of the COSME Regulation ("*the [Enterprise Europe] Network may also be used to deliver services on behalf of other Union programmes*") opens the path towards additional services that must be considered different actions (which all implies like tracking and allocation of costs to these services) observing the rules of the respective Union programme (e.g. Horizon 2020 or ESIF). An additional service "Enhancing the innovation management capacity of SMEs" is already foreseen to be funded from H2020. The [COSME WP 2014](#) mentions explicitly ESIF for the benefits of SMEs and entrepreneurs (p.2).

EUR 2.3 billion are available for:

- facilitating access to finance for SMEs;
- supporting entrepreneurs;
- more favourable conditions for business creation and growth;
- access to markets.

[COSME website](#) for more information on the programme.

European Enterprise Network: covers the entire EU territory (and beyond); run by consortia bringing together national / regional business support providers (no trans-nationality); goal: provide business support services that strengthen competitiveness to European SMEs that seek to explore opportunities in the Single Market and in third countries. The service shall integrate and complement the services already available in the region. Some flexibility to emphasise (or reduce) services within the total service package exists.

Goals: Support to SMEs in general, not designed as a specific support for RDI: there is no specific "innovation" criterion.

Expected Results:

- easier access to finance for entrepreneurs and small businesses
- more prominent role for self-employment and business development as important sources of growth and job creation
- more competitive industry, more entrepreneurs and higher employment rates
- increase of SME growth
- increase of share of Union citizens who wish to be self-employed
- increase of share of SMEs exporting within or outside the Union
- reduction of unnecessary and administrative regulatory burden on SME
- improved performance of SMEs as regards sustainability

FUNDING: Grants (to consortia implementing the EEN project for COSME and Horizon 2020 services)

COST ITEM: For EEN, the support of the EEN and services delivered by the EEN network for COSME/Horizon 2020 are considered cost items.

Combined funding options: parallel funding

Scenario COSME – Parallel funding - EEN

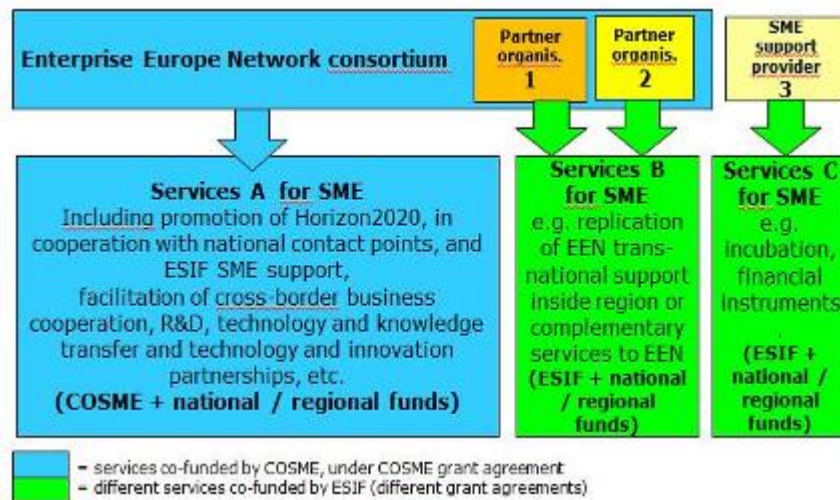


Figure 26 COSME and ESIF

EEN network in Region 1 is supported by COSME/Horizon 2020 for a defined set of services to SMEs that provide some flexibility with respect to advisory services¹⁰². The ESIF programme of the same region foresees services to SMEs (that can be services also eligible for COSME/Horizon 2020 or different ones). The services to be carried out under the ESIF programme and therefore, co-financed by ESIF *must not* be the same as those supported by the grants from COSME/Horizon2020 programmes in the regional EEN project. The same is valid for Horizon 2020 SME services: if submitted for co-financing under Horizon 2020, they *must be* different to the two other types of services.

Example:

EEN partner X in MS/region 1 receives COSME funding for coaching and mentoring schemes with regard to SMEs' access to finance, to facilitate cross-border business cooperation, and 'provides access to services to enhance material efficiency of SME'. The material efficiency services in region are however weakly developed. Partner X uses 50% of its staff for the European Enterprise Network services.

Partner X knows that the ESIF programme of its region wants to support SMEs in the area of energy efficiency with new and deeper services. Their staff is competent in this area and the EEN 'technology partnering service is a suitable mechanisms to source technologies enhancing material efficiency'. It applies for

¹⁰² See call documents: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7229&lang=en&title=COSME-Enterprise-Europe-Network-2015%2F2020

ESIF and gets a grant contract that covers another 25% of its staff for these specific services under the ESIF programme.

In its book-keeping system and the time records of staff Partner X must clearly distinguish the EEN-project and the ESIF project. To avoid the risk of possible double funding, Partner X must define – for example – that the analytical phase for material efficiency is covered by the ESIF project (and resources in the EEN project redeployed), while the search for technological solutions is done in the EEN project and excluded from the ESIF supported actions.

NOTA BENE: EEN centres can act as valuable regional intermediaries to raise awareness of combined funding options. They should be key targets for the guide.

3. ERASMUS+ and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- It allows improving the skills levels in a region and preventing or reversing brain-drain by attracting students to a region.
- It allows experimenting with new forms of cooperation between education centres and businesses – also with a view to better targeting the education offer to the skills needs of enterprises, which can be crucial for the success of a RIS3.
- Erasmus+ support for policy learning reforms could be scaled up through ESF investments under the thematic objective 10 on “investing in education, training and for vocational training for skills and lifelong learning”, in particular priority 1(d)(ii) capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning and training policies.
- There may also be potential for synergies between Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ thanks to the prestige of an ERA Chair holder (see above 1.2.) who makes institutes more attractive for foreign students.

Erasmus+ facts:

Definition: [Erasmus+](#) is the EU education, training and youth and sport programme for the period 2014-2020. It brings together elements from the previous Lifelong learning (LLP) and Youth in Action (YiA) programmes and the international programmes in Higher education (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink) as well as the bilateral cooperation programmes in higher education into a single structure. It is structured around three "Key Actions" (KA): KA1: learning mobility of individuals, KA2: cooperation projects for innovation and exchange of good practices and KA3: support for policy reform. All three key actions have potential synergies with ESIF investments in general and in the field of innovation in particular. Erasmus+ also includes a specific chapter on sport with potential for such synergies.

Please note that Erasmus+ has no legal basis for cumulative funding (= combined funding in the *same* project or for the same individual beneficiary) so that all combined funding options are sequential, parallel or alternative.

Support for Mobility (KA1): Each National Agency (NA) receives a national allocation from the programme which is then allocated by the NA to individual higher education institutions (HEIs) or VET organisations based on a combination of past and expected demand (in most cases demand exceeds the resources available). HEIs/VET organisations allocate the grants to individual students and staff.

Support for Strategic Partnerships (KA2): A competitive approach exists with calls for proposals at national level. Each NA receives a national allocation from the programme and then selects projects on the basis of annual national calls for proposals. Project coordinators from the participating country submit proposals, which must include partners from at least two other countries. Projects last two or three years.

Support to Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances (KA2). Annual calls for proposals are organised at EU level by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), which selects projects level with the support of external evaluators.

For **Sector Skills Alliances**, lead organisations (coordinators) from a programme country submit proposals, which must include partners from at least two other countries. Projects last two or three years. The proposal must concern only one of the following sectors:

- sectors that have constituted a European Sector Skills Council, such as Textile/Clothing/Leather and Commerce;
- sectors with skills imbalances, to which current European Commission policies respond, such as Advanced Manufacturing, Information and Communication Technologies, Eco-Innovation (environmental technologies), or Cultural and Creative Sectors.

For **Knowledge Alliances**, lead organisations (coordinators) from a programme country submit proposals, which must include at least six partners from at least three countries. Two partners have to be higher education institutions and two partners have to be enterprises. Knowledge Alliances are open to any discipline or sector. Projects last two or three years.

The [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#) mentions explicitly ESIF at several instances, e.g. within the framework of Collaborative Partnerships (KA2) or Support to Policy Reform (KA3).

FUNDING: Funding for student and staff mobility (KA1) is in the form of a monthly grant, the level of which varies between countries.

Funding for KA2 and KA3 covers unit costs for personnel, travel, events etc.

Cost item: A cost item for mobility is the grant itself (provided as a lump sum).

As all Erasmus+ projects will be included in the Erasmus+ Dissemination Platform (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/), it can be consulted by anybody interested in project results (e.g. for results up-take at national/regional level).

KA3 supports **policy reform** through specific calls for proposals for

- Policy experimentations: field trials led by public authorities (ministry or equivalent) for assessing the effectiveness of innovative policy measures through robust evaluation methodologies. Policy experimentations results can therefore help to assess the potential scalability of such measures through ESIF
- Forward -looking cooperation projects, led by representative and highly respected stakeholders, for exploring new policy avenues that have the potential to generate systemic impacts. They can help to identify solutions to emerging issues, that can be further developed through Erasmus+ KA2 (Strategic partnerships, Knowledge Alliances, Sector Skills Alliances), or KA3 projects (Policy experimentations, Forward-looking cooperation projects) and ultimately up-scaled through ESIF.

The [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#) mentions explicitly ESIF in relation to Support to Policy Reform under KA3 with a view to exploiting synergies.

Both policy experimentations and forward-looking cooperation projects are managed centrally by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Scenario Erasmus+ 1: Parallel/complementary funding for mobility

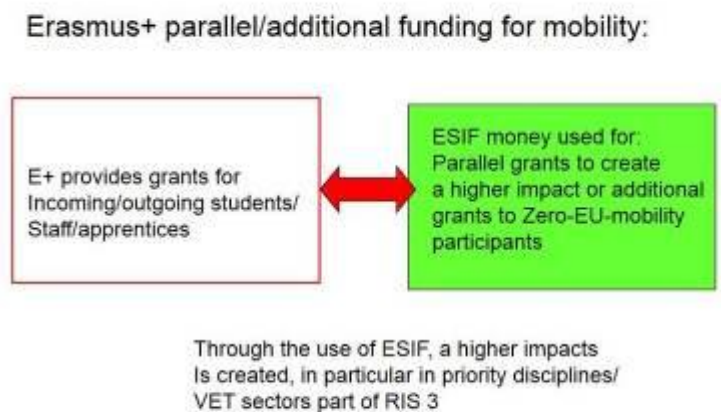


Figure 27 Funding for additional mobility grants from ESIF

ESIF (ESF) can be used to complement Erasmus+ funding for **outgoing students/trainees/apprentices** at national or regional level by providing additional grants to individuals not in receipt of Erasmus+ grants. This would be a means to promote credit mobility to other countries and thus international experience and skills development relevant to innovation and regional skills base (and could in principle be focused on "priority disciplines or VET sectors that are part of RIS3).

As double funding of the same cost items from the EU budget is not permitted and Erasmus+ grants are designed to cover a range of cost items (travel, living expenses, books and equipment), it would not be possible to use ESIF to fund "top-up" grants to individual beneficiaries *already in receipt* of Erasmus+ grants.

In the higher education sector, the [E+ Programme Guide](#) provides for "Zero-EU Mobility" participants, i.e. students and staff that do not claim travel and subsistence costs but benefit from all other Erasmus+ mobility scheme advantages. The Guide mentions that "Students and staff may receive, on top of the EU grant, or in replacement of the EU grant (zero-EU grant mobile participants) regional, national or any other type of grant, managed by another organisation than the National Agency (e.g. Ministry or regional authorities). These types of grant provided by other sources of funding than the EU budget are not subject to the amounts and min/max ranges set in this document"¹⁰³ (emphasis added).

Given the contribution to travel and subsistence costs (between EUR 150 and 500/month, depending on the country of origin and host country), additional funding for individual Erasmus+ grant recipients may be an option to increase the effectiveness of the mobility scheme. However, to avoid double-funding, these will need to come from national sources. However, ESF can be used to fund grants for the so-called "Zero-EU-mobility" participants in Erasmus+, who do not receive Erasmus+ grants but go to Erasmus+ participating institutions and for whom institutions receive management funds.

Example 1.1 HE: *Higher education institutions (HE)* a region X has comparatively low levels of out-going mobility, which limits the international exposure and skills development of students. To address this, ESIF is used to provide additional grants to students who are not in receipt of an Erasmus+ grant to undertake a mobility period within the overall cooperation and quality framework of Erasmus+. If a region has a smart specialisation in a particular sector (e.g. aeronautics or viticulture) this type of support could be targeted at students in related study programmes undertaking mobility to follow related programmes/ undertake related work placements in another country. Higher ESIF-funded grants could be provided to encourage mobility in specific priority fields and thus maximise the added value of ESIF.

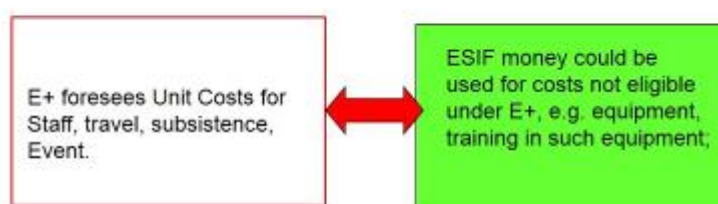
In the same way, ESIF (ESF) can be used for additional mobility of outgoing academic staff to promote skills and innovation capacity. Such additional support could be directed to specific "priority" disciplines/VET sectors.

¹⁰³ pp. 42/43 of the Programme Guide

Example 1.2 VET: This example for VET is comparable to example 1.1 for Higher Education: ESIF is used to provide additional funds to increase the number of apprentices benefiting from transnational mobility of apprentices and the on-the-job mobility of initial VET students in sectors identified by a given region/MS within Smart Specialisation Strategy. Moreover, since a successful implementation of apprenticeship systems is only possible with qualified staff, ESIF may also provide additional funds to scale-up transnational mobility for in-company trainers and other VET professionals to develop specific skills in sectors identified in Smart Specialisation Strategy.

Scenario Erasmus+ 2: Parallel/complementary funding for Multilateral Cooperation Projects

ESIF additional funding for E+ multilateral projects:



Through the use of ESIF, the geographical spread Can be widened to partners not originally in the E+ Project.

Figure 2815 E+ additional funding for KA2

ESIF could potentially be used to fund preparatory, complementary or directly related activities within partner institutions participating in Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships/ Knowledge Alliances /Sector Skills Alliances in order to enhance the contribution of the partner or improve dissemination or use of results.

Example 2.1: A regional university is a partner in a successful Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance. The project aims to enhance teaching and learning in the field of advanced manufacturing in the participating HEIs, drawing on expertise from participating businesses and involving improved methods for teaching and learning in an advanced factory environment. ESIF provides investment for laboratory equipment (or any other not eligible costs in E+) in the regional university to strengthen training capacity and contribute to the overall results of the project.

Recommendation: Given the highly competitive nature of E+ projects, the most likely scenario would be for partners to submit proposals for ESIF funding after securing the E+ project (so that parallel funding was in place for year 2 or 3 of the E+ project). Another option would be enlarging the geographical spread through ESIF in other MS/AS not partner in the E+ project.

Scenario Erasmus+ 3: Downstream sequential funding for Multilateral Cooperation Projects

E+ Downstream sequential funding:

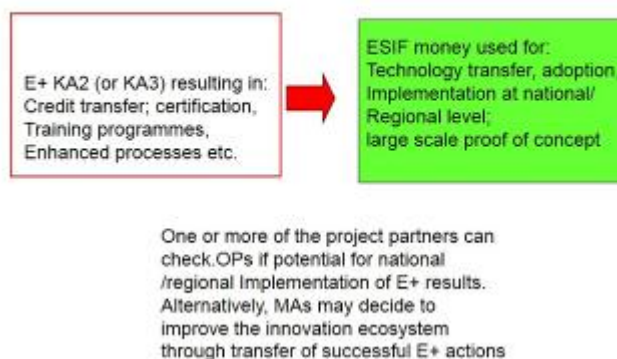


Figure 29 E+ Downstream sequential funding

Strategic Partnerships and Knowledge Alliances are multilateral activities of Erasmus+ Key Action 2: Transnational cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices to improve quality and relevance of teaching and curricula in higher education. Knowledge Alliances and Strategic Partnerships could have a similar set-up, i.e. involving Higher Education Institutions and companies as core partners in the project (however, whereas this is a main requirement for the Knowledge Alliances, it is encouraged for Strategic Partnerships). Such cooperation has proven particularly effective for capacity building and raising innovation and entrepreneurial potential. As such, regional or national cooperation projects on the same model could be supported by ESIF, thus building on the experience gained from transnational partnerships or vice versa.

Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliances work on occupational profiles, competence standards and related training programmes at European sector level. ESIF financed projects could integrate these results into national qualification frameworks and national training standards. Knowledge Alliances work on trans-regional or transnational university-business cooperation and are open to participation of public authorities.

Downstream combined funding can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the outcomes of KA 3: *Forward-looking cooperation projects* in innovative areas may include specific elements that are immediately usable and can be integrated in programmes/projects funded through ESIF (ESF). Furthermore, the implementation of innovative policies successfully tested on a small scale through *policy experimentations* can be *scaled up* at regional or national level through combined funding with the support of ESIF (ESF).

Example 3.1: In an Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliance European stakeholders from the automotive sector have agreed and defined required skills, competences and qualifications standards for the profession of mechatronics. These European- and sector-wide results will be translated at national level through the ESIF (ESF) by financing projects that establish nationally recognised/certified innovative, learning outcome-oriented training programmes which are based on quality

assurance mechanisms (e.g. EQAVET) and foresee credit transfers through ECVET.

Example 3.2: A new and innovative model for training students in the field of sustainable energy technologies developed as part of an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance has proved particularly interesting and effective. ESIF (ESF) funds are used to help establish similar training programmes (staff training, materials, cooperation links etc.) in other regional or national HEIs in order to strengthen educational capacity in the field.

Example 3.3: A regional university of applied science has cooperated effectively with a local television production company to develop a new curriculum for a broadcast media course as part of a much wider, international cooperation project under Erasmus+. Following the project, student placements within the production company and on-going cooperation on innovative production techniques between the business and university are supported through an ESIF innovation project at regional level.

Example 3.4: Results of Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships used to test implementation of *quality assurance systems in VET based on the EQAVET*. Recommendations are mainstreamed and scaled up through ESIF into an implementation of a national quality assurance system in vocational education and training system.

Example 3.5: Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership projects develop innovative curricula aimed to *match VET provision with the needs to labour market*. A region, in line with its focus defined in Smart Specialisation Strategy, is using the results and the partner/s involved in Erasmus+ projects to help to solve the problem of skills shortages of vocational skilled workers. With the use of ESIF, it establishes *VET excellence centres and promotes investments in equipment of VET schools to provide VET students with up-to date skills*. These centres then play a major role in technology diffusion, for instance in making the case regarding benefits of green technologies for business. VET excellence centres are supported with ESIF to enter in new forms of partnerships:

- Opening up facilities and infrastructures of VET schools in a form of basic business services
- Co-location partnerships with creation of joint facilities shared by VET schools and companies
- Functioning of VET schools as technology diffusion and (virtual) demonstration technology centres for technology suppliers
- VET schools assisting companies in incubation – support to product-service development.

Scenario Erasmus+ 4: Upstream sequential funding for Multilateral Cooperation Projects

Erasmus+ Upstream sequential funding:

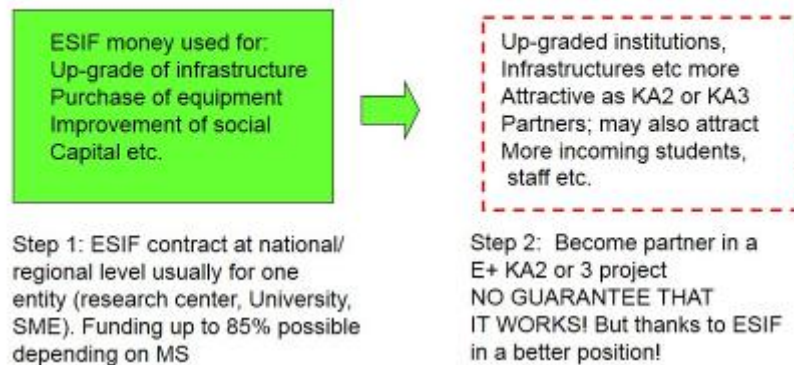


Figure 30 E+ Upstream sequential funding

Similar to scenario Horizon 2020 up-stream sequential funding, ESIF can be used to improve research and education infrastructures in national/regional universities or research institutes. This would improve the RDI capacity and make the institutions more attractive for Erasmus+ projects. However, there is no guarantee that "follow-up projects" will happen.

NOTA BENE: The scenarios above present the most likely combination possibilities for achieving synergies between Erasmus+ and ESIF (ESF) funds in the field of innovation. However, other scenarios could be possible. In particular, it could also be possible for specific elements of an ESIF innovation project to be developed further at grass-root level through an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership or Knowledge Alliance.

4. Creative Europe and ESIF

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- Technology is often not enough to be a successful innovator. Besides entrepreneurial skills, also creative thinking, design related activities and the use of new media can be crucial for innovations to succeed.
- The results of CreativeEurope projects can thus be amplified and carried forward via ESIF investments to achieve a durable impact on competitiveness, innovation and growth.
- Initial ESIF support for creative and cultural industry SMEs or other small organisations (including as part of social integration projects under ESF or rural development projects under the EAFRD) could be carried further via the CreativeEurope Loan Guarantee Facility (available as of 2016).
- Cultural heritage initiatives might also consider the sequential use of Horizon 2020 support for research in the field of cultural heritage preservation and digitisation and CreativeEurope support.

Creative Europe facts:

Definition: Creative Europe brings together 3 existing programmes - Culture, MEDIA, MEDIA Mundus – and is divided into 2 sub-programmes: Culture and Media and one cross sectoral strand consisting mainly of a Loan Guarantee Facility. The Guarantee Facility, to be launched in 2016, is designed to facilitate access to finance for micro, small, and medium sized organisations in the sector, as well as to improve the risk-assessment capacities of participating financial intermediaries.

EUR 1.46 billion are available in total. This programme is geared at the cultural and creative sectors.

It is important to note that the *non-cumulative principle* is explicitly mentioned in the Guidelines of all CE sub-strains (Art. 9/3): “[...] *To ensure this, applicants must give details in their application form of any other grant requests related to the same project which they have submitted or intend to submit to the EU stating in each case the budgetary year, the budget heading, the Union Programme and the amount requested*”.

[Creative Europe website](#)

[Creative Europe national desks](#)

FUNDING: For grants, between 50 and 80% depending on the action. Eligible costs are costs incurred for implementing the project.

Cultural and Creative Sectors *Loan Guarantee Facility*: capped guarantee instrument offering up to 70% on the first losses (with a cap of 25% on a loan portfolio, bundled with the Capacity Building Scheme targeted towards financial intermediaries).

Combined funding options: Given the emphasis of non-cumulative funding in the Creative Europe guidelines, only sequential funding appears to be feasible.

Scenario Creative Europe: sequential funding

CE Downstream sequential funding:



Figure 31 Sequential funding Creative Europe

Innovation in the cultural and creative sectors, for example like funding of incubation facilities for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI), provided this is covered by the ESIF programme priorities for SME competitiveness, or the cooperation between technology / manufacturing oriented firms with CCI firms can boost innovation performance.

(See Handbook on CCIs in the RIS 3 context: [http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/0/120420%20CCI%20Policy%20Handbook%20\(FINAL\).pdf](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/0/120420%20CCI%20Policy%20Handbook%20(FINAL).pdf))

ESIF could fund additional capacity building in the region of some of the project partners (as clearly separated ESIF projects) or in regions not being part of the project but that might benefit from Creative Europe project results. Examples of potential investments in CCI could include investments in research, innovation, SME competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

Example Creative Europe: CE supports a collaboration project among SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors with the view to providing them with new skills or competences for new ways to access content and new business models based on ICT. Two of the partners are in regions that support ICT capacity building among SMEs. After the successful end of the CE project they inform their MA about the project results and receive ESIF (ESF) for training creative SMEs in their respective regions, based on the results from the CE project.

5. Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) - Digital Services

Why is this interesting for Managing Authorities and national & regional policy designers?

- Investments into e-government solutions under ERDF investment priority 2.c or ESF investments in thematic objective 11 (institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations) can gain in quality and efficiency if they are designed to be interoperable with the solutions in other EU countries or at EU level via aligning with the CEF digital services platforms.

Connecting Europe Facility:

Definition: The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is the funding instrument for the trans-European networks and will roll-out high-performing, sustainable and joined-up trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy, and telecom (broadband & digital services).

A large part of the Digital Services builds on the [CIP ICT-PSP](#) projects and Large Scale Pilots for cross border online public services, to promote the trans-European interconnection and interoperability of public online services as well as access to such networks in order to facilitate the mobility of businesses and citizens and facilitate cooperation among public services.

The [CEF digital service infrastructures \(DSI\)](#) are composed of *core service platforms* and *generic services*. The core service platforms¹⁰⁴ shall be implemented primarily by the Union while generic services shall be implemented by the parties connecting to the relevant core service platform. This opens scope for *synergies with ESI Funds* investments but needs a coordination of local/national/regional programmes and initiatives with CEF to reach a critical mass.

Building blocks for Digital Services Infrastructures (DSI) are components reusable at EU and national level. The following priorities for such DSI have been identified in the work programme 2014:

- Electronic identification and authentication — eIdentification and eSignature
- Electronic delivery of documents — eDelivery
- Electronic Invoicing – eInvoicing
- Europeana - single access point to Europe's digital culture
- Safer Internet - Creating a Better Internet for Kids

¹⁰⁴ See COM(2013) 329

- Open Data- facilitate access to public sector information, e.g. geographical information, statistics, weather data, data from publicly funded research projects, and digitised books from libraries
- Automated Translation - make online content available in every European language.
- Cyber security

Two funding mechanisms

- Procurement (mostly for core service platforms)
- Grants (mostly for generic services)

Regarding synergies with CEF broadband support see up-dated broadband guide¹⁰⁵

Scenario CEF Digital Services

Combined Funding CEF:



MS can combined ESIF to link to the CEF platforms with national/ Regional projects complementing the CEF platform. ERDF can be used for equipment, applications etc. ESF for training and capacity building of staff and citizens.

Figure 32 CEF combined funding

ESIF can complement CEF investment through national/regional projects linked to CEF platforms. ERDF can provide the equipment necessary (in particular, its interoperability with the CEF platform) and ESF can train staff and other involved persons.

Example: CEF funds the development of an interoperable cross border e-Health services platform, which enables the interaction between citizens/patients and health care providers, institution-to-institution and organization-to-organization transmission of data, or peer-to-peer communication between citizens/patients and/or health professionals and institutions. The services comprise cross border

¹⁰⁵ See: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

access to electronic health records and electronic prescription services as well as remote health/assisted living tele-services, etc.

ESIF invests through ERDF in the development of local e-Health applications and ensures inter-operability with the CEF funded platform. The ESF funds the upskilling of medical personnel and patients to be able to handle the e-Health tools.

