

EU FUNDING PROGRAMME

Lessons learnt from the
Covenant of Mayors Community



Covenant of Mayors
for Climate & Energy
EUROPE



How are cities accessing funds?

Many of the signatories to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy use European funding programmes and grants to co-finance part of their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP) development or implementation.

About 80% of EU funding is granted through programmes managed in the EU countries themselves through structural funds. However, some funds are directly handled by the European Commissions or dedicated agencies and secretariat, through calls for proposals which are part of dedicated funding programmes.

The managing authorities or the National Contact Point at national level can help you get familiar with each of these funds and understand how to apply. You can also check the funding page of the Covenant of Mayors to get to know better each of these funds.

The **first section** of this booklet presents some useful tips and tricks on how to apply for centralised funding programmes. The **second part** goes more in detail of some funding programmes and projects with a view of getting ready for the next funding period 2021-2027.

<https://www.eumayors.eu/support/funding.html>



WHAT KINDS OF EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE AND WHO CAN APPLY?

European funds are divided into two categories: European Structural and Investment Funds and European Funding Programmes.

European structural and investment funds

These funds, which are almost 76% of overall EU funds, are handled directly at regional or national level through managing authorities. Their priorities are defined through operational programmes.

The funds are divided into five programmes:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- Cohesion Fund (CF)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)



Before applying for a grant, you should contact your managing authority for more information on who can apply and what type of projects can be financed or check the European operational programmes in your area.

You will have to follow the application procedures of the relevant managing authority. Some have an ongoing procedure; others accept applications at certain times only. See the website of your managing authority for details.



MORE INFO

- Website of the European Commission for regional policy
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/
- Projects financed under structural funds
<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>
- Getting in contact with your managing authority
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/managing-authorities/
- Guidance for beneficiaries
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/synergy/synergies_beneficiaries.pdf

HOW TO APPLY FOR EUROPEAN FUNDING PROGRAMMES



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The application for these funds is at European level and is often in English. Most of these funds also require an international partnership to apply. It is important for your project idea to demonstrate European added value when applying for these funds.

Below are described some of the fundamental steps to take into consideration when applying for EU funding programmes.

1

GETTING STARTED

To get funding for your project, you will need to identify a relevant funding programme, a call for proposals and carefully follow the specific guidelines on how to apply.

Check the priority of each funding programme

- Each of them is different and answers to specific priorities which are in line with the European Union objectives
- Each of them has a different way of applying, managing the project and can finance different types of actions

Balance your local priority with the European needs

When you apply for a European project you answer at the same time both to a local and a European need:

- Fit your local/project priorities into the programme objectives
- Define objectives and joint activities needed at European level

Check for internal resources

- Most European projects will require a source of co-financing
- Preparing a proposal is a time-consuming process! Make sure you have enough staff resources to prepare your proposal

Stay informed

- Be on the mailing lists in your country or subscribe to a given programme or European Commission newsletters
- Study the annual work programme of the funding programme you are interested in

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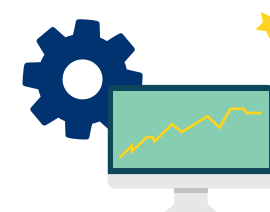
ONCE A CALL FOR PROPOSAL IS OUT

Study all the relevant documents such as the call for proposals, the Programme guide and the Applicants guide and the application form.

You can then prepare a summary with the most important information to take into consideration to develop your project proposal and a to do list. This will help you understand if you are interested in applying.

Most important elements to consider in a call for proposals

- Objectives
- Eligible actions
- Eligibility criteria: Ex: eligible countries, eligible legal entities, min and max budget, eligible activities, eligible expenditure
- Co-financing rules
- Administrative requirements
- Application form to be used
- Evaluation methodology and the selection process
- Deadline for submission





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DEVELOP THE PROJECT

Produce a first outline of your idea and write a preliminary 2-3 pages about your:

- objectives
- target group
- major steps of the project (work packages and milestones, main deliverables)
- ideal project partnership (countries, types of organisations)

Some tips to develop a good project:

- The baseline description of the situation you wish to improve thanks to EU funding should be detailed enough as it is essential for evaluating the project impacts
- The sequence of actions should be logical and clearly linked to project description
- Be clear in defining the expected results and quantitative estimations of projects' impacts
- Limit the number of actions to the ones essential to achieve the project objectives
- Be clear and precise when describing the actions the project should fund

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THE PERFECT PARTNERSHIP

A successful project partnership should ensure an active participation of the main of key stakeholders affected by the problem you wish to look at and a series of experts to help you solve the problem throughout the project.

When you think about good partners to involve in the projects ask yourself:

- Who is **affected by the problem?**
- Who will use the solutions/tools developed in the project and how can I involve them?
- Who can help me solve the problems I will be looking at?

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COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION, EXPLOITATION

Communication, dissemination and exploitation are crucial horizontal activities which must be taken up in EU-funded projects. It is not only about informing about and promoting the project and its results, but to ensure that other entities can make concrete use of those projects results and learn from success and/or mistakes.

A good strategy to share and invite other entities to exploit the results of the projects will be key added value in your project proposal.

COMMUNICATION

"Communication on projects is a strategically planned process that starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its entire lifetime, aimed at promoting the action and its results. It requires strategic and targeted measures for communicating about (i) the action and (ii) its results to a multitude of audiences, including the media and the public and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange."

DISSEMINATION

"The public disclosure of the results by any appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any medium."

EXPLOITATION

"The utilisation of results in further research activities other than those covered by the action concerned, or in developing, creating and marketing a product or process, or in creating and providing a service, or in standardisation activities."

More information

https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/EU-IPR-Brochure-Boosting-Impact-C-D-E_0.pdf

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ENABLING SYNERGIES BETWEEN FUNDS

Some European funding can be combined as they often look at achieving similar objectives. Combining funding can be a good way to boost projects' results.

However, it is important to avoid double financing: using two different EU funding sources to fund the same activity.



MORE INFO

- **Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related European Union programmes**
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/synergy/synergies_en.pdf
- **European Structural and Investment Funds and European Fund for Strategic Investments complementarities: Ensuring coordination, synergies and complementarity**
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/thefunds/fin_inst/pdf/efsi_esif_compl_en.pdf

FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Below is a selection of funding programmes of interest for cities with relevant projects. For the full overview and update on the calls for proposal you can visit the Covenant of Mayors website funding page.

HORIZON 2020/ HORIZON EUROPE

Horizon Europe is the follow up programme of Horizon 2020, dedicated to research and innovation. With a budget of around €100 billion, cities are invited to test innovative solutions on their territory in collaboration with business, research centres and citizens.

Calls for proposals are published annually and are part of different 'clusters':

- Health
- Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry and Space
- Climate, Energy and Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

A mission on reaching '100 climate neutral cities by 2030 by and for the citizens'.

A novelty of Horizon Europe is the missions, the ambition to focus the European budget to deliver innovative solutions to some of the greatest challenges facing our world. One of the 5 mission is dedicated to cities and their role in reaching the EU climate neutrality ambitions, by supporting 100 or more cities in becoming climate neutral by 2030.

The mission assumes that supporting cities in such transformative process during the next ten years will make this possible. So, the idea is to offer cities financial means to achieve the mission goals through both EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, the European Structural and Investment funds, the Just Transition Fund, Invest EU and others, and national and regional resources. Ways for the private sector to invest in the same mission will also need to be identified. All the funding would be channelled through a 'Climate City Contract', signed by the city authority, the European Commission and the regional/national competent authorities. All the relevant stakeholders would be mobilised at the city level to work and invest together towards achieving the mission for their city.



WHICH CITIES ALREADY USE IT?

Many cities in Europe and beyond are involved in Horizon 2020 funded projects on a variety of topics from air quality, to sustainable mobility, circular economy and smart solutions for citizen engagement.

- The smart cities and community lighthouse projects bring together 46 lighthouse cities and 76 fellow cities (or learning cities) to collaborate on secure, affordable and clean energy, smart electro mobility and smart tools and services.
<https://smartcities-infosystem.eu/scc-lighthouse-projects>
- Cities are also collaborating on developing innovative nature-based solutions to fight pollution and climate change. You can find more on the www.think-nature.eu platform.



MORE INFO

- **Horizon 2020:** <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>
- **Innovating cities, the role of research and innovation and cities:**
https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=future_cities
- **List of Horizon projects:** <https://cordis.europa.eu/>



JPI URBAN EUROPE

Joint Programme Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe was created in 2010 to address the global urban challenges of today with the ambition to develop a European research and innovation hub on urban matters and create European solutions by means of coordinated research.



WHICH CITIES ALREADY USE IT?

Projects are usually led by universities, but the innovative results aim at benefiting all cities in Europe.

The Smart Urban Isle project aims to develop an innovative concept for city planning, where cities are arranged and grow through small integrated areas. The project will probe a Smart Urban Isle as an innovative basic energy unit in the smart city. Municipalities such as Amsterdam, Winterthur, Zurich, Limassol, Iasi, Granada, Güssing (through ecoEnergyLand) and Santa Cruz de Tenerife have shown their interest in working hand in hand implementing the outcomes.

Electricity and electric mobility are getting closer together on a local level. me2 (mobility + electricity = synergy) is a project that connects citizens of local communities, helping them to be more aware of their energy consumption, incentivising changes in their individual and collective behaviour and helping them to save electricity costs while being engaged with a local community. The me2 platform, which will be piloted and demonstrated in Lisbon and Amsterdam, can be employed by various actors, such as utilities, EV fleet operators or municipalities, enabling them to control user behaviour in order to make the electric grid more efficient and reliable.



MORE INFO

- **About JPI urban Europe:**
<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/>
- **List of projects:**
<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/projects/>



LIFE

LIFE is the EU funding programme dedicated to the development and implementation of EU environment and climate action policy. It is one of the main funding programmes where local authorities can receive technical support and funding to develop their SECAP.

LIFE calls for proposals for the next programming period will be around four areas of action:

1. Nature and biodiversity
2. Circular economy and quality of life
3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation
4. Clean energy transition

Projects can either be 'traditional project' to develop, demonstrate and exchange innovative methods for meeting environmental and climate objectives, implement best practice in relation to nature and biodiversity and contribute to better environmental governance or 'Integrated Projects' a support tool for catalysing implementation of key environmental plans over large areas.

LIFE also supports the use of financial instruments through collaboration with the European Investment Bank.



WHICH CITIES ALREADY USE IT?

Many European cities are using LIFE funding to develop or improve their SECAP. Among the many funded projects:

- The city of Radom is involved in the project **LIFERADOKLIMA PL**. The overall objective is to make the city more resilient to climate change by building demonstration 'green/blue infrastructure' for managing extreme storm water flows and controlling local flood risks.
- The **Life Sec Adapt** project involves four EU member states (Italy, Croatia, Spain, Greece). The project aims to increase the climate resilience capacity of European urban areas. A high number of municipalities received technical assistance to move from a sustainable energy action plan (SEAP) to a SECAP.
- The **LIFE-MICACC** project's main goal is to improve the climate resilience of vulnerable municipalities in Hungary by reducing their risks stemming from climate change. To this end, it will introduce and foster the integration of sustainable ecosystem-based water management approaches into local governments' natural resources management strategies and land-use planning practice. The project also aims to strengthen the coordination role of local municipalities in climate change adaptation planning and recognition of risks.



MORE INFO

- **About LIFE:**
<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>
- **LIFE project database:**
<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm>



URBACT

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URBACT is one of the EU funding programmes solely dedicated to cities. The main goal of the programme is to increase the capacity of cities and support the exploitation of good practices thanks to the use of city to city cooperation and networks. URBACT co-finance the collaboration among cities from different areas and different sizes.

URBACT supports all areas of action for local authorities, for example carbon neutrality, circular economy, climate adaptation, energy efficiency, but also effective urban planning, citizen's participation, and urban-rural linkages.



WHICH CITIES ALREADY USE IT?

The programme has supported many cities in improving their local policies in a wide variety of topics.

The Zero Carbon Cities project will support Manchester, Frankfurt, Tartu, Zadar, Bistrita, Modena and Vilvoorde to establish science-based carbon reduction targets, policies and action plans, including governance and capacity building to enable them to contribute to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement and the EU's strategic vision for carbon neutrality by 2050.

The **RESOURCEFUL CITIES** project seeks to develop the next generation of urban resource centres in the cities of The Hague, Mechelen, Patras, Ciudad Real, Zagreb, Oslo, Vila Nova de Famalicao, Bucharest, Cáceres and Opole. These centres serve as catalysts of the local circular economy and use a participative and integrated approach. The network facilitates waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling. The centres also work as connection points for citizens, new businesses, researchers and the public sector to co-create new ways to close resource loops at the local level.



MORE INFO

- **About URBACT:**
<https://urbact.eu/>
- **Catalogue of best practice:**
<https://urbact.eu/good-practices/home>



URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTION



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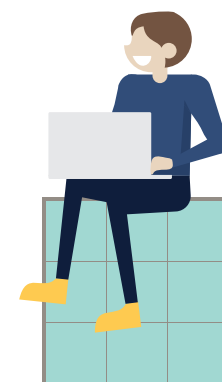
WHICH CITIES ALREADY USE IT?

- **The Fossil Free Energy District (FED)** project aimed to drastically decrease the use of fossil based energy and increase the security of supply for the city of Gothenburg. FED creates cost effective energy improvement solutions, thus avoiding higher bills for economically disadvantaged citizens.
- The **Vilawatt** project is aiming to develop in the city of Viladecans (Spain) an Innovative Public-Private-Citizen Governance Partnership at local level (PPCP). Such a platform will integrate all local efforts in energy transition. The project also aims to create a new energy currency linked to energy savings that will incentive citizens to invest in local energy solutions.
- The **Antwerp Circular South** is using innovative ways to engage the local community in circular economy through new online and offline solutions. The project is aiming at achieving a 10% reduction in tap water use, a 25% reduction in residual household waste, a 10% absolute (kWh) and relative (%) reduction of yearly electricity consumption and 25% less use of peak power.



MORE INFO

- **About UIA**
<https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en>
- **List of project**
<https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities>





This book is part of a series of four, aimed to support Covenant signatories to finance their SECAP.

You can find the other booklets at

<https://www.eumayors.eu/support/funding.html>

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