

# HOW CAN THE COHESION POLICY BE USED TO FINANCE PROJECTS IN THE MOUNTAINS?

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### WHAT IS IT?

The Cohesion Policy is the European Union's largest investment policy. It offers funding to reduce socio-economic and territorial disparities across the European Member States and regions. In article 174 of the European Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, this policy recognises that particular attention has to be paid to mountain areas.

### WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

Over the 2021–2027 period, the Cohesion Policy will deliver on five objectives:



#### Smarter Europe

innovation, digitalisation, economic transformation and support to SMEs



#### Greener Europe

carbon-free, green energy, climate change adaptation



#### More connected Europe

strategic transport, digital networks, connectivity



#### More Social Europe

quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare



#### Europe closer to citizens

locally-led strategy, sustainable urban and rural development

### HOW MUCH DOES IT AMOUNT TO?

In total, €392 billion – almost a third of the total EU budget – has been set aside for the Cohesion Policy over the 2021–2027 period. Funds are channelled through four main funds:

- 1 The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- 2 The Cohesion Fund (CF)
- 3 The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)
- 4 The Just Transition Fund (JTF)



The European Union has launched Next Generation EU, a programme to support recovery with an additional €776.5 billion through the Cohesion Policy over the 2021–2027 period.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every 7 years, the European Union adopts a set of principles and priorities for the Cohesion Policy at European level. National and regional authorities in each Member State are then responsible for defining and implementing their own Operational Programme(s), alongside the European Union. These Programmes describe the specific priorities and actions that can be financed locally through the Cohesion Policy. In addition to these programmes, the Cohesion Policy is implemented through the Interreg programmes, which fund cooperation projects between regions from different countries.



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# HOW WILL THE COHESION POLICY HELP TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE IN MOUNTAIN AREAS?

Climate change is a major concern in mountain areas. It impacts mountainous areas more rapidly than lowlands and its consequences, such as the **rise in temperature**, are disrupting the environment, leading to increased risks of **natural hazards** and impacting a number of local economic sectors.

The Cohesion Policy can help mountain territories face the challenges arising from climate change. In the 2021–2027 period, about **30% of the ERDF, 37% of the Cohesion Fund and 100% of the JTF** is devoted to achieving climate-related targets. Under its Objective 2 “A Greener Europe”, in particular, the Cohesion Policy supports actions geared towards **adaptation to climate change**, better management of natural risks, and the energy transition. For example, actions related to low-carbon transport, **energy efficiency**, or adaptation of winter tourism can be financed. In addition, Objective 5 “A Europe Closer to Citizens” promotes local and bottom-up initiatives fostering the sustainable development of rural and mountainous areas.

**What is this factsheet for?** This factsheet aims to give you some **practical examples** of how the Cohesion Policy will be used to finance the fight against climate change across Europe’s mountain regions between 2021 and 2027.

## GET INSPIRED!

### **INTERREG BAVARIA – CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Relevant objective:** To proactively deal with climate change and promote adaptation measures.

**How are mountain areas taken into consideration?**

Mountain areas are depicted as highly sensitive and risk prone. Therefore, specific actions in these territories are listed as a way to achieve the objective.

**What type of actions can be financed?**

- Forest conversion with stress-resistant and native tree species, renaturation of river courses
- Preservation of natural ecosystems, such as mountain forests or mountain hay meadows
- Cross-border information and warning systems
- Disaster management measures via joint planning and coordinated deployment strategies, especially in mountainous areas and along rivers



**Examples of beneficiaries:** Businesses involved in agriculture and forestry, nature conservation, tourism and settlement development, associations, tourism institutions.

More information: <https://www.by-cz.eu/cz/2021-2027/>  
Contact: Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs  
[info-by-cz@stmwi.bayern.de](mailto:info-by-cz@stmwi.bayern.de)



Check out the list of eligible areas  
in Bavaria and Czech Republic



## INTERREG FRANCE-SWITZERLAND

**Relevant objective:** To support initiatives for climate change adaptation in mountains.

**How are mountain areas taken into consideration?** Rural and mountain areas are one of the two territorial priorities for this Operational Programme. In addition, many of the challenges identified apply to mountain areas, such as reduced winter snow cover, melting glaciers and changing landscapes.

**What type of projects can be financed?**

- Supporting the transition towards a year-round tourism offer
- Developing cooperation projects to address the reduction of winter snow cover, melting glaciers and mountain stability

**Examples of beneficiaries:** Public authorities (at local, regional and national level), in particular their sectoral agencies, SMEs, business support organisations, universities, NGOs.



**More information:** <https://www.interreg-francesuisse.eu>  
**Contact:** Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region  
[interreg@bourgognefranchecomte.fr](mailto:interreg@bourgognefranchecomte.fr)  
Interreg regional coordination  
[france-suisse@interreg.ch](mailto:france-suisse@interreg.ch)



Check out the list of eligible areas in France and Switzerland



## INTERREG EURO-MED

**Relevant objective:** To support climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention and resilience by adopting ecosystem-based approaches.

**How are mountain areas taken into consideration?**

This programme makes specific reference to mountain territories as the most impacted by climate change, including with regard to increased natural hazards that endanger local populations and infrastructures.

**What type of projects can be financed?**

- Integrated planning and financing schemes for climate change adaptation, resilience and energy transition
- Forest protection to reduce the incidence and extent of forest fires and to increase carbon absorption
- Schemes to support the forests' ability to restore ecosystem services
- Schemes to better manage the anticipated impact of climate change
- Investment in sustainable infrastructure



**Examples of beneficiaries:** Public authorities (at local, regional and national level), in particular their sectoral agencies, SMEs, business support organisations, universities, NGOs.

**More information:** <https://interreg-med.eu>  
**Contact:** Interreg MED Managing Authority  
[programme\\_med@maregionsud.fr](mailto:programme_med@maregionsud.fr)



Check out the list of eligible areas in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia Portugal, Slovenia, Spain



## INTERREG SPAIN-PORTUGAL

**Relevant objective:** To promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



**How are mountain areas taken into consideration?** The programme underlines how rural areas can develop new sustainable energy systems that can be used to foster the development of these territories.



### What type of projects can be financed?

- Diversification of energy resources
- Support for energy efficiency in SMEs, micro-SMEs and public infrastructure
- Renovation of equipment to improve energy efficiency in the housing stock and other non-residential buildings
- Development of smart grids

More information: <https://www.poctep.eu>  
Contact: Joint Secretariat POCTEP  
programa@poctep.eu



Check out the list of eligible areas in Spain and Portugal



## WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THESE FUNDS?

Public and private organisations can receive funding under the Cohesion Policy, as long as they bring added value to the implementation of projects. These organisations may participate as project partners but may also contribute as observers or external experts. Private individuals are not generally accepted as project partners in territorial programmes but can benefit from funds under the FSE+. The Operational Programmes above provide a non-extensive list of potential beneficiaries.

This document was prepared in early 2022 and it is based on the draft version of the Operational Programmes. Therefore, part of its content might be subject to change. The final text of the Operational Programmes financed through the 2021–2027 Cohesion Policy will be available at the following QR code:



## WHAT IS MONTANA174?

Montana174 is a communication campaign to inform you – mountain citizen - on the many opportunities offered by the Cohesion Policy in mountain areas. In mountains, the Cohesion Policy gives funds to reinforce digital and social innovation, accelerate climate mitigation and adaptation, support tourism, foster youth employment and enhance mobility.

[www.montana174.org](http://www.montana174.org)



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