

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

SLOVENIA

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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COHESION POLICY IN SLOVENIA

2021-2027

For the period 2021–2027, Slovenia has been allocated €3.2 billion via the Cohesion Policy, subdivided as follows:

ESF+

€706 million

(of which €537 million for the East and €169 million for the West Cohesion Region)

ERDF

€1,537 million

(of which €1,169 million for the East and €368 million for the West Cohesion Region)

Cohesion Fund

€718 million

for the whole country

JTF

€258 million

for the Zasavje and Savinjsko-Šaleška region

In addition, Slovenia will receive €2.5 billion from the “Next Generation EU” to support its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and foster its green and digital transition. It will consist of €1.8 billion in grants and €705 million in loans.

A SINGLE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME IN SLOVENIA

This Operational Programme defines the allocation of resources from the ERDF, ESF+ and Cohesion Fund in the country. All Slovenian regions are eligible for support. The allocation of East Slovenia* is higher due to its lower per-capita GDP compared to the European Union average in 2018.

DEVELOPMENT OF SLOVENIAN CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

From the territorial point of view and getting closer to its citizens (“Objective 5”), the funds will be allocated for “Sustainable Urban Development” in 12 Slovenian City Municipalities (Ljubljana, Maribor, Kranj, Koper, Celje, Novo mesto, Velenje, Nova Gorica, Krško, Ptuj, Murska Sobota and Slovenj Gradec) as well as for “community-led local development”.

Who can benefit from these funds?

Beneficiaries are physical and legal persons. These could be small and medium-sized companies, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, youth researchers, farmers and their rural businesses, cities, regions and other public-sector-led institutions.

How to access these funds?

The funds are distributed through public calls. Different types of funding are available, including financial support in the form of grants, subsidies, credits, loans, microcredits, guarantees, venture capital, vouchers, and other special incentives. Non-financial support is available in the form of training, counselling and advice.

* Podravje, Pomurje, Koroška, Savinjska, Zasavska, Posavska, JV Slovenija in Primorsko-notranjska region.

MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES THAT AFFECT MOUNTAIN AREAS IN SLOVENIA

Macroregional strategies provide important input into the Cohesion Policy. Slovenia is part of three macro-regional strategies:

EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

This includes 7 Alpine countries. This area is one of the most dynamic and economically developed areas in Europe.

The Alpine strategy focuses on competitiveness and innovation, sustainable mobility and energy resources, natural and cultural resources, and horizontal priority governance.

EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionic Region

This includes 9 countries of the Adriatic and Ionian region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and North Macedonia). The strategy was drawn up in 2014 and is the most recent among the four macro-regional strategies.

The strategy focuses on 4 thematic pillars that include transport and connectivity, energy, blue growth, the environment, green growth, and sustainable tourism.

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

This macro-region is home to 115 million inhabitants and stretches from the Black Forest in Germany to the Black Sea coasts of Romania, Ukraine, and Moldova. Its underlying principles are the right to live in a clean and preserved environment, to have good living standards and to live in security.

The strategy builds on 4 thematic pillars: Connecting the Region, Protecting the Environment, Building Prosperity and Strengthening the Region.

What are the funding opportunities for public and private actors in the Slovenian mountains?

The European Union promotes cooperation between regions and countries to help their economic and social development and tackle the obstacle of borders. Next to the five Cohesion Policy objectives, the Interreg VI in the period 2021–2027 has two specific objectives:

- **Improved cooperation governance** with the aim of enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities, resolving legal and administrative obstacles in border regions, promoting sustainable democracy and strengthening mutual trust among citizens, and
- **A safer and more secure Europe** with action in the areas of border control, mobility and migration management, including the protection and economic and social integration of third-country nationals, and supporting employment and labour market measures such as improving access to employment, encouraging life-long learning, promoting gender equality and fostering equal opportunities.

All Slovenian regions are eligible to participate under multiple **Interreg programmes**:

4 Cross-border programmes

- Interreg Slovenia-Austria
- Interreg Slovenia-Hungary
- Interreg Slovenia-Croatia
- Interreg Italy-Slovenia

5 Transnational programmes

- Interreg Alpine Space
- Interreg Central Europe
- Interreg Mediterranean
- Interreg Danube
- Interreg Adrion

1 Interregional programme

- Interreg Europe

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN INTERREG PROGRAMMES?

Interreg programmes welcome the participation of organisations from both the public and private sector that bring added value to the implementation of projects. These organisations may participate as project partners but may also contribute as observers or external experts. However, private individuals are not generally accepted as project partners. In some programmes such as Interreg Slovenia – Hungary, the participants have to be public bodies.

HOW TO CREATE A PARTNERSHIP FOR AN INTERREG PROJECT?

The profiles of partners involved in a project proposal should be relevant and complementary. In addition, partners need to have the financial and human resources capacity to implement the project. The themes they select for cooperation shall be part of their legal responsibilities and/or strategic priorities. The budget in most projects exceeds €2 million and is distributed among the partners based on the scope of their roles and responsibilities in the project. Slovenian partners must contribute 20% of their own resources to their budgets, the other 80% is co-financed by the ERDF and the State.

WHAT ARE THE DIRECT BENEFITS OF COOPERATION?

Organisations can learn and exchange knowledge and good practices, set out joint visions and explore ways of achieving their goals. They can design projects that will have a direct impact on the pillars of sustainable development and include local people at every stage – from developing the project to its implementation, evaluation and harnessing the project's benefits.

MORE INFO ABOUT THE COHESION POLICY AND TERRITORIAL COOPERATION:

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<https://eu-skladi.si> - <https://evropskasredstva.si/>

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



This document was prepared in early 2022 and 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:



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