

**OVERVIEW REPORT OF FUNDING
INSTRUMENTS/PROGRAMMES
AVAILABLE IN WESTERN BALKAN
REGION, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR WB6**

FINAL REPORT FOR WP4-1_DEL-2

EU 4 Green Recovery:

Support the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

IPA/2021/429-949

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADAPT	Climate Adaptation Investment Advisory Platform
AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)
ALB	Albania
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CE	Circular Economy
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
COSME	Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EFSE	European Fund for Southeast Europe
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIP	Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans 2021-2027
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GAWB	Green Agenda for the Western Balkans
GGF	Green for Growth Fund
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation GmbH
Green ASSIST	Green Advisory Service for Sustainable Investment Support
IFIs	International Financing Institutions
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession (of the EU)
IPARD	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development
JASPERS	Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Credit Institute for Reconstruction, Germany)
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MKD	North Macedonia
MNE	Montenegro
MSS	Member State(s) (of the EU)
NIPAC	National IPA Coordinator
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
REEP	Regional Energy Efficiency Programme
SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goals

SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SRB	Serbia
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (of the EU)
UBA	Umweltbundesamt GmbH
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB6	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia
WB EDIF	Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility
WB CIF	Western Balkans Chamber Investment Forum
WBG	World Bank Group
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Framework
WP	Work package
XKX	Kosovo*

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

1. DESCRIPTION

The EU supports the EU candidates in the Western Balkans with significant investments via WBIF, bilateral IPA, and provides access to the EU programmes (hereinafter – the ‘Union programmes’). The support through the Union programmes shall facilitate the integration of the IPA beneficiaries into the EU. The Union programmes cover a wide range of policies, including environmental protection. Participation in the Union programmes provides IPA beneficiaries with the opportunity to gain experience, know-how for accelerating the sector reforms and EU accession.

As a part of WP 4-1, the following questions were explored by the EU4Green Outcome 4, focusing on Green Finance:

- Which EU programmes /instruments are available in the WB6;
- How to increase utilization under the existing funding programmes /instruments;
- How to engage more financial institutions and applicants;
- What is the awareness level about the financing opportunities available for implementation of the GAWB and how to enhance it.

The methodology employed:

- Desk research and analysis of the publicly available information;
- Interviews with green finance technical coordinators in WB6, NIPACs and EUDs;
- Meetings with other relevant stakeholders.

Purpose of the overview:

- (1) To share this analysis with the green finance coordinators, NIPAC offices and EUDs in the WB6 (based on feedback received, this overview was adjusted respectively);
- (2) To use it in the course of developing the EU funding programmes webinar implemented in EU4Green, aimed at **raising awareness of the wider audience (both public and private sector) on the financial support from the EU with focus on financing the environmental measures;**
- (3) This overview can be used by the beneficiaries as a **guidance for informing and raising awareness on the upcoming MFF programmes (2028-2034)** as recommendations and observations are relevant not only for the MFF 2021-2027 cycle – best practice examples are included in the overview.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1. Overview of EU programmes available in the Western Balkans

The EU has made EU programmes available to the WB6 upon payment of the respective entry tickets. IPA funds can be used for contribution to the entry ticket payments. The NIPAC offices are the responsible counterparties in the region for the EU programmes. Each programme has its responsible institution and a designated contact person to support the applicants in the economy.

The objective of making EU programmes available to the WB6 is to prepare the Western Balkan economies for full membership upon accession, ensuring a closer integration with the EU, accelerating integration and 'phasing in' as part of the accession process.

As a result of the desk-research and interviews with NIPAC offices in WB6, the following table, summarizing the Union programmes, which are made available to the Western Balkans according to the public sources, was composed:

Table 1: EU programmes in WB6

No	EU funding programme	ALB			BIH				MKD				MNE				SRB					XKX			
		1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
	<i>Sources of information</i>																								
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis																								
2	Customs 2020 / Customs																								
3	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme																								
4	Erasmus+																								
5	Creative Europe																								
6	Europe for Citizens																								
7	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe																								
8	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)																								
9	Justice Programme																								
10	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health																								
11	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)																								
12	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)																								
13	European Solidarity Corps																								
14	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)																								
15	LIFE																								
16	EU Antifraud programme																								
17	Digital Europe Programme																								

Column 1: Commission Implementing Decision C (2024) 1351 of 28.02.2024 – on the financing of the multi-country annual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024. Annex 5

Column 2: Annual beneficiary report for 2024 published at the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) website

Column 3: WeBalkans.eu portal

Column 4 & 5: local official websites

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria) research and analysis, October 2024, updated July 2025

- The Union programmes relevant for environmental projects are marked green.
- Yellow color marks the programmes, which are available in an economy at the date of this document (reckoning on the comments to this document from the WB6); however, publicly available information is lacking.

- Several columns per economy represent different public sources of information as described in the Annex 1 and 2.

Detailed information on the sources analyzed is provided in the Annex 1.

2.2. Observations and recommendations

2.2.1. Albania

No	EU funding programme	ALB		
		1	2	3
	Sources of information			
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis			
2	Customs 2020 / Customs			
3	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme			
4	Erasmus+			
5	Creative Europe			
6	Europe for Citizens			
7	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe			
8	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)			
9	Justice Programme			
10	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health			
11	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)			
12	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)			
13	European Solidarity Corps			
14	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)			
15	LIFE			
16	EU Antifraud programme			
17	Digital Europe Programme			

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria) research and analysis, October 2024, update July 2025

According to the Annex 5 ALB has access to nine EU funding programmes. The Beneficiary Report mentions ten programmes. The WeBalkans.eu portal displays eight of those programmes. Additionally IPA and IPARD are mentioned. Albania has recently joined CERV and Digital Europe programmes; however, this information is not found on official websites.

Searching for official public resource with information on eligibility and availability of EU funding programmes in the economy led to a **map¹ with EU projects**, implemented in ALB. Albeit the website provides comprehensive information on the specifics of the projects financed by the EU and visualizes the projects allocation in the economy, the general overview of the EU funding programmes is currently lacking. From this local website it is not clear how

many EU programmes exist and which of them are available in the economy, for which purposes they can be utilized, and how to access them.

Recommendation: to develop a user-friendly information platform with all relevant information on EU funding programmes for ALB (see an example of BIH brochure).

2.2.2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

According to the Annex 5 and the Beneficiary Report, BIH has access to eight EU funding programmes. The WeBalkans.eu portal displays eight programmes (one programme is neither on the list from the Annex 5 nor the Beneficiary Report) and IPA.

The BIH has located the information about EU funding programmes at the Directorate for European Integration website². The local website refers to twelve EU programmes available in BIH (several EU programmes have been added in 2024). In a well-structured manner the website provides the summary of the purpose of the EU programmes, the process of joining the programmes, accessing the funding, and listing the EU programmes in which BIH

¹ <https://www.euprojects.al/>, accessed in July 2025

² DEI | The EU Programmes, accessed in October 2024

participated in 2014-2020 as well as the current period of 2021-2027. Furthermore, the website lists the **responsible public institutions** and **useful references for more detailed information** on the programmes from the EC as well as **relevant local links**.

With the support of GIZ, the Directorate for European Integration has **published a brochure with information on EU programmes 2021-2027³**, which is accessible at the website and page, described above. The brochure proves comprehensive **information on EU funding programmes in general, their objectives, all EU funding programmes and those which are made available for the EU candidates** (see also **section 2.4** below), a historical overview of the relationship of BIH and EU in respect of financing. The brochure lists more EU programmes available in the economy. This **brochure serves as a guidance for possible applicants** to the relevant EU funding programmes, which are described in detail in the brochure, having indicated the respective local contacts, as well as providing mapping for the target applicants.

No	EU funding programme	BIH			
		1	2	3	4
	Sources of information				
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis				
2	Customs 2020 / Customs				
3	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme				
4	Erasmus+				
5	Creative Europe				
6	Europe for Citizens				
7	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe				
8	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)				
9	Justice Programme				
10	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health				
11	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)				
12	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)				
13	European Solidarity Corps				
14	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)				
15	LIFE				
16	EU Antifraud programme				
17	Digital Europe Programme				

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria) research and analysis, October 2024, update July 2025

Recommendation: Upon adoption of the MFF 2028-2034 update brochure.

2.2.3. Kosovo*

According to the Annex 5, XKX has access to six EU funding programmes. The Beneficiary Report lists nine EU programmes as available for the economy (one programme is not on the list from the Annex 5). The WeBalkans.eu portal displays six programmes (one programme is neither on the list from the Annex 5 nor the Beneficiary Report) and IPA.

The Development Cooperation Office, within the Prime Minister’s Office, highlights the signing of a framework agreement with the European Union, which gives XKX the right to participate in 17 EU funding programmes. As of now, Kosovo is actively engaged in nine of these EU programmes, either fully or within specific strands. These programmes have also been listed

No	EU funding programme	XKX			
		1	2	3	4
	Sources of information				
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis				
2	Customs 2020 / Customs				
3	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme				
4	Erasmus+				
5	Creative Europe				
6	Europe for Citizens				
7	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe				
8	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)				
9	Justice Programme				
10	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health				
11	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)				
12	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)				
13	European Solidarity Corps				
14	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)				
15	LIFE				
16	EU Antifraud programme				
17	Digital Europe Programme				

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria) research and analysis, October 2024, update July 2025

³ [eu-programi-brosura-2021-2027-bos-08-05-2023_1685627080.pdf \(dei.gov.ba\)](https://www.dei.gov.ba/.../eu-programi-brosura-2021-2027-bos-08-05-2023_1685627080.pdf), accessed in October 2024

in the Official Gazette. The Office of the Prime Minister shows information on EU funding programmes at their official website⁴. The seven EU programmes listed at the website coincide with the EU programmes stated in the Beneficiary’s Report. Information on the other two programmes (Digital Europe and Justice) can be found in the official publications⁵ ⁶. The website contains a short description of the programmes and a link to the regulations or the framework signed by the economy with the EU. However, for an applicant looking for the guidance of how to access EU funding, the information would be insufficient.

Each of these programmes is overseen by a designated institution, which appoints an officer or a team to serve as the National Contact Point (NCP). The NCPs are responsible for informing potential applicants about open calls, providing relevant information, and offering training.

Given that most of these programmes were signed in recent years, the Development Cooperation Office has provided international expert assistance to train both NCPs and potential applicants.

Recommendation: to enrich the EU funding programmes information on the official website by developing a brochure, based on BIH example.

2.2.4. Montenegro

According to the Annex 5, MNE has access to eleven EU funding programmes. The Beneficiary Report names just two EU funding programmes and IPARD III.

The WeBalkans.eu portal displays the same eleven programmes and IPA. The Government of MNE refers to the EU funds at their official website⁷; however, the information is generalized, referring only to IPA and WBIF. The official website of the Ministry of European Affairs in MNE lists ten Union programmes⁸. Relevant information on IPA is also covered on this website.

No	EU funding programme	MNE			
		1	2	3	4
	<i>Sources of information</i>				
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis				
2	Customs 2020 / Customs				
	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme				
4	Erasmus+				
5	Creative Europe				
6	Europe for Citizens				
7	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe				
8	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)				
9	Justice Programme				
10	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health				
11	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)				
12	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)				
13	European Solidarity Corps				
14	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)				
15	LIFE				
16	EU Antifraud programme				
17	Digital Europe Programme				

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria) research and analysis, October 2024, update July 2025

Recommendation: to enrich the EU funding programmes information on the official website by developing a brochure, based on BIH example.

⁴ [EU – Programmes – Integrimi Evropian \(rks.gov.net\)](https://rks.gov.net), accessed in September 2025

⁵ [LIGJI NR. 08/L-281 PËR RATIFIKIMIN E MARRËVESHJES NDËRKOMBËTARE PËR PJESËMARRJEN E KOSOVËS NË PROGRAMIN E BASHKIMIT EVROPIAN “EVROPA DIGJITALE PËR PERIU DHËN 2021-2027” NDËRMJET REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS DHE BASHKIMIT EVROPIAN](#), accessed in October 2024

⁶ [LIGJI NR. 08/L-292 PËR RATIFIKIMIN E MARRËVESHJES NDËRMJET REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS DHE BASHKIMIT EVROPIAN PËR PJESËMARRJEN E KOSOVËS NË PROGRAMIN E BASHKIMIT EVROPIAN “DREJTËSIA”, accessed in October 2024](#)

⁷ [EU funds \(www.gov.me\)](https://www.gov.me), accessed in September 2025

⁸ [Programi Unije | EUME](#), accessed in September 2025

2.2.5. North Macedonia

According to the Annex 5, MKD has access to eleven EU funding programmes. The Beneficiary Report names just Horizon Europe and IPARD III. The WeBalkans.eu portal displays the same eleven programmes and IPA. The Secretariat for European Affairs refers to the Union programmes at their official website⁹. However, the information seems to be outdated: ten EU programmes for the period 2008-2013 are mentioned on the website. The EU funding programmes available in the economy in the current period of 2021-2027 are not found on the local official website. Digital Europe is not mentioned as an available programme although MKD has joined it.

No	EU funding programme	MKD			
		1	2	3	4
	Sources of information				
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis				
2	Customs 2020 / Customs				
	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme				
3	Erasmus+				
4	Creative Europe				
5	Europe for Citizens				
6	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe				
7	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)				
8	Justice Programme				
9	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health				
10	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)				
11	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)				
12	European Solidarity Corps				
13	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)				
14	LIFE				
15	EU Antifraud programme				
16	Digital Europe Programme				
17					

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH/Environment Agency Austria research and analysis, October 2024, update July 2025

Checking official public resources with information on EU funding programmes in the economy led to a **map¹⁰ with EU projects**, implemented in MKD, per region and per sectors. The website visualizes the focus of sectors or policy areas prioritized in this or that region. This website provides information on the amounts and quantity of EU projects realized; however, no reference to the availability of EU programmes, their purposes, and how to access them.

Recommendation: to update the current websites and to enrich the EU funding programmes information on the official website by developing a brochure, based on BIH example.

2.2.6. Serbia

According to the Annex 5, SRB has access to eleven EU funding programmes. The Beneficiary Report names just eight from the list, but additionally two programmes - EUREKA and European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) - and IPARD III. The WeBalkans.eu portal displays the same eleven programmes and IPARD III. The search for information on EU funding programmes available in SRB leads to two official websites:

The Ministry of European Integration website¹¹: lists nine EU funding programmes available in SRB, explains the way the programmes are made available and how to find the tenders for applying under the programmes, provides the links to specific EU programme webpages at

⁹ [Union Programmes | Secretariat for European Affairs \(sep.gov.mk\)](#), accessed in October 2024

¹⁰ [EU Projects - EU for you](#), accessed in September 2025

¹¹ [MEI - Union Programmes](#), accessed in August 2024

the EC website. The information might need to be updated as programmes of 2020 are listed and some programmes available in SRB are missing.

No	EU funding programme	SRB				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Sources of information					
1	Fiscalis 2020 / Fiscalis					
2	Customs 2020 / Customs					
3	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Programme (COSME) / Single Market Programme					
4	Erasmus+					
5	Creative Europe					
6	Europe for Citizens					
7	Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe					
8	Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)					
9	Justice Programme					
10	Health for Growth 2014-2020 / EU4Health					
11	Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)					
12	Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA)					
13	European Solidarity Corps					
14	Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (REC)/ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)					
15	LIFE					
16	EU Antifraud programme					
17	Digital Europe Programme					

Source: Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria) research and analysis, October 2024, update July 2025

The web platform¹² created in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Delegation of the European Union, providing all available EU-funded tenders and grants at a glance as well as all information on EU projects in SRB. This web platform mentions thirteen EU funding programmes, providing the links to relevant Serbian sources, EC webpages, relevant news and tenders. Some links at the platform (e.g. an overview presentation) do not function. Some programmes mentioned are not covered by other sources reviewed and mentioned above.

Recommendation: to enrich the EU funding programmes information on the official website

by developing a brochure, based on BIH example.

2.2.7. General observations and recommendations:

- **Inconsistency** between different public sources (namely: the reviewed Annex 5, Beneficiaries' Reports, WeBalkans.eu portal, and local official websites) – throughout all economies (comprehensiveness, updates).
- The **level of information** in the economies differs. The good practice examples in the region are BIH and SRB, whereas it is easy to find information on the available EU funding programmes as well as how to access the funding (easy to understand, programme contacts provided). The granularity of information depends also on the language chosen at the website: in local language more information is available (hence, current overview from English language perspective might have some limitations).
- Except for BIH and SRB, **insufficient information** and from a possible applicant point of view the information is not user-friendly, no clear answer on how to apply for financing can be easily obtained (easy to understand, programme contacts, comprehensiveness).
- A practical solution for keeping the data updated is to **add useful links**, which would lead applicants to relevant EC webpages (this is already implemented at some official websites and at the WeBalkans.eu website).

¹² EU Za tebe, accessed in August 2025

- The common approach is developed by all economies in respect of **mentioning IPA and WBIF** separately and additionally to the EU funding programmes.
- The role of the EU in the region is mentioned at local websites occasionally (public visibility).
- The following **applicant-useful links can be added** to the websites:
 - Calls for funding by topic: [Find calls for funding - by topic \(europa.eu\)](#)
 - EU funding for climate action: [EU funding for climate action - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
 - EU funding for beginners: creating the common language [Before you apply: EU funding for beginners - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
 - Funding, tenders: [Funding, Tenders - EU as the largest donor European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
 - Useful links from the guide “Find Your EU Funding Programme for the Environment” published by the EC in 2022 for the programs active in 2021-2027. See Annex 2 & 3 with an overview.
 - **Links to financial organizations – WBIF partners** – active in the region, to the local contact websites of the World Bank Group / IFC, EIF, EBRD, EIB, AFD, KfW, CEB. Given the role and expertise of the WBIF partners, as multilateral development banks, in financing environmental projects, it is recommendable to reach out to them for consultation on possible financing.
 - Enhance the information on the EU funding programmes through indicating **National Contact Point (NCP)** per programme (like this info is included in the BIH brochure).

The above analysis is visualized according to the following criteria of presenting the information at the official public websites (local official websites of public authorities): up to date (Y/N); detailed information on projects financed (Y/N); contact details or responsible institution per programme (Y/N); easy to understand how to apply and where to find more information (Y/N); public visibility or an overview of all Union programmes, available in the economy (Y/N); comprehensiveness of the coverage by the displayed information at the websites (Y/N):

Table 2: Analysis of EU funding programmes representation in WB6

	ALB	BIH	MKD	MNE	SRB	XKX
Comprehensiveness	No	Yes	Partially	Partially	Yes	Partially
Public visibility	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Easy to understand	No	Yes	No	Partially	Yes	Partially
Programme contacts	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Detailed information on projects	Yes	Partially	No	No	Partially	No
Up to date	No	Yes	No	Partially	Partially	Partially

Source: own compilation.

2.3. EU funding programmes under MFF

Currently the EU is in the elaboration and approval process of the multiannual financial framework for 2028-2034.

The mapping of EU funding programmes, currently in implementation under the 2021-2027 MFF, according to the purpose and availability in the WB6 is provided in Annex 5 to this report. The programmes relevant for environment projects are marked green.

2.4. Programmes for financing environmental needs

During the Green Finance interventions at EU4Green workshops, programmes relevant for environment projects financing are emphasized and shared. This raises awareness among experts dealing with environmental measures on the EU support for accelerating the GAWB as well as informs them about possibilities to close the financial gap. The guide “**Find Your EU Funding Programme for the Environment**”¹³ published by the EC in 2022 for programmes active in 2021-2027, provides a comprehensive description of the following programmes, which can be joined by the WB6 (see previous chapters 2.2. and 2.3.): Horizon Europe, LIFE, European Social Fund Plus (ESF+, the strand Employment and Social Innovation for WB6). The relevant excerpts with the detailed description are included in Annex 4. We assume that the CPM is not included in the guide, as it serves for expert and in kind emergency support, not eligible for direct financing. All programmes are available for different following types of applicants: businesses, public authorities, NGOs/CSOs, research institutions.

The EU funding programmes for environment, available in the WB6, can be mapped per the EU policies, alignment with which is required for EU accession:

Table 3: EU funding programmes for environment in WB6 with policy reference

¹³ [Find your EU funding programme for the environment - Publications Office of the EU](#), accessed in August 2024

	ESF+	LIFE	Horizon Europe	Erasmus+
Circular Economy Action Plan	x	x	x	
Hydrogen Strategy	(x)		x	
Renovation Wave	x	x	x	
Biodiversity Strategy	(x)	x	x	
Farm to Fork			x	
CRMs Action Plan			x	
Methane Emissions Strategy			x	
Chemicals Strategy		x	x	
Offshore Renewable Energy	(x)		x	
Sustainable Mobility	(x)			
Adaptation Strategy	(x)	x	x	x
Organic Production AP			x	
Blue Economy	x		x	x
Zero Pollution Action Plan	(x)		x	x
Fit For 55	x		x	x
Forest Strategy	x	x	x	
Soil Strategy	(x)	x	x	
Sust. Carbon Cycles	(x)	x	x	
Sust. & Circular Textiles		x	x	
Solar Strategy	x		x	x
Save Energy	(x)	x	x	
RepowerEU	(x)			x
Energy transition - fisheries	x		x	x
Sust. Fisheries Action Plan	x	x	x	x
Sust. Use of natural resources		x	x	
Offshore renewable energy			x	x
Wind power action plan			x	x
Industrial CO2 Man. Strategy			x	
Europe's 2040 target	(x)		x	

Source: UBA compilation based on the ETC EC report: [ETC CE Report 2024/8 Investment needs and gaps for the sustainability transition in Europe: Rethinking the European Green Deal as an EU industrial strategy — Eionet Portal](#).

- It is recommendable to use this guide and add similar detailed programme descriptions to the information materials for applicants in WB6, as BIH has done in their brochure¹⁴. Also the mapping of funding programmes and policies is of use for possible applicants.

2.5. Additional EU funding

Whereas the applicants under the EU funding programmes range from NGOs and SMEs to academia and state entities, the largest part of funding from the EU as the key donor for the region is planned strategically at the state and the EU levels. The largest part of EU financing to the Western Balkans is routed through the following **financing platforms and instruments**:

- **IPA**: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance IPA (I, II, III) aimed at supporting
 - economic convergence with the EU
 - competitiveness and inclusive growth
 - sustainable connectivity

¹⁴ [eu-programi-brosura-2021-2027-bos-08-05-2023_1685627080.pdf \(dei.gov.ba\)](#), accessed in August 2024

- twin green and digital transition
- **WBIF:** Western Balkans Investment Framework is the main vehicle for routing EU financing to bring the WB6 closer to the EU accession and to ensure the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.
 - WBIF serves for allocating the following EU Funding:
 - IPA (IPA III will also promote, when relevant, beneficiaries' participation in Agencies, Facilities and Union Programmes, such as, but not limited to, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, InvestEU Fund, Creative Europe¹⁵.)
 - Western Balkans Guarantee Facility
 - COVID-19 support package
 - Growth Plan for the Western Balkans
 - WBIF instruments:
 - WB EDIF: Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility, aimed at improving access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises in the WB6. Technical assistance is available.
 - REEP: Regional Energy Efficiency Programme, promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency
 - EFSE: European Fund for Southeast Europe, aimed at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises alongside improving living conditions for private households
 - GGF: Green for Growth Fund, mitigating climate change and promoting sustainable economic growth, primarily by investing in measures that reduce energy consumption, resource use and CO₂ emissions. Technical assistance is available.
 - EFSD+: Through the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus 24 new guarantee programmes are made available to support investments in the EU neighbourhood and enlargement countries. Partially the guarantee cover will be directed to support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Economic and Investment Plan. Guarantees can cover different financing instruments (loans, equity investments, green bonds, etc.). IFIs act as implementing partners for guarantees, financial instruments, most of grants and technical assistance.
- **Reform and Growth Facility:** the economies can benefit from financing, allocated according to the beneficiaries' Reform Agendas. The Reform Agendas cover key reforms in five policy areas: governance, public administration reform and public financial management; green and digital transition; private-sector development and business environment; human capital development; and fundamentals / rule of law.

¹⁵ Source: [IPA III programming framework \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu) p.8, accessed in August 2024

The Reform Agendas provide for disbursement of support against compliance with the preconditions and delivery on reforms.

2.6. Reporting utilization of the EU funding programmes in the Western Balkans

The investments into the Western Balkans region can be tracked per economy and per EU funding programme. The public resources available are as follows:

1. The comprehensive information on EU Funded projects by country is available at the EU Funding & Tenders Portal: [EU Funded projects | EU Funding & Tenders Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eu-funding-tenders-portal/)
2. Explanations on where to find EU Funded projects information: [Results by project - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eu-funding-tenders-portal/)
3. Additional resources from the EU programme websites:

No	Name	Link to project database
1	Erasmus+	Projects lists for download - Erasmus+ (europa.eu) (download excel and analyze per country)
2	Horizon Europe	CINEA Project Portfolio - Overview Arbeitsblatt - Qlik Sense (europa.eu)
3	Creative Europe	Projects lists - Culture and Creativity (europa.eu)
4	Customs	For further information, please contact the national programme coordinator located in each Member State's national customs administration. DG TAXUD contact person: TAXUD-CUSTOMS-PROGRAMME@ec.europa.eu
5	LIFE, Programme for the Environment and Climate Action	LIFE 3.0 - LIFE Project Public Page (europa.eu) (advanced projects search allows to find information per country)
6	EU Anti-fraud programme	Contact at EC : OLAF-FMB-HERCULE@ec.europa.eu

4. Dashboard with the projects of the following programmes, covering the information on total EU financing and providing a possibility to check per country: [CINEA Project Portfolio - Overview | Arbeitsblatt - Qlik Sense \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eu-funding-tenders-portal/)
 - ✓ LIFE
 - ✓ Horizon
 - ✓ Innovation Fund
 - ✓ Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)
 - ✓ European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund Maritime (EMFF & EMFAF)
5. The WBIF maintains a detailed investment database: [Investments \(wbif.eu\)](https://wbif.eu/).

2.7. Financing possibilities per some environment topics (after green finance interventions in the Outcome 1 workshops)

The following useful sources per environmental topics have been identified and shared at respective Outcome 1 workshops or EU4Green Green Finance webinars:

2.7.1. WATER:

- [Finance and investment for water | OECD](#)
- [Watered down? Investigating the financial materiality of water-related risks in the financial system | OECD](#)
- [Assessing the enabling conditions for investment in water security | OECD](#)
- [Financing a Water Secure Future | OECD](#)
- [Water investment planning and financing | OECD](#)
- [Cost recovery for water services under the Water Framework Directive | OECD](#)
- [The implementation of the Polluter Pays principle in the context of the Water Framework Directive | OECD](#)
- [National Public Development Banks \(PDBs\): Key Actors Financing Water and Sanitation | AFD - Agence Française de Développement](#)
- USAID Water and Development Technical Series, Technical Brief 9. (2021). “Financing Water and Sanitation Services”. [USAID FINANCING WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES Technical Brief 9 \(globalwaters.org\)](#)
- The World Bank Group. (2023). *Scaling Up Finance for Water: a World Bank Strategic Framework and Roadmap for Action*. [Scaling Up Finance for Water: A World Bank Strategic Framework and Roadmap for Action](#)
- OECD. (2022). *The challenge of Financing Water-Related Investments*. [2. The Challenge of Financing Water-related Investments | Financing a Water Secure Future | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)
- Alearts (2019). "Financing for Water—Water for Financing: A Global Review of Policy and Practice"
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330907078_Financing_for_Water-Water_for_Financing_A_Global_Review_of_Policy_and_Practice
- IAWD and World Bank Capacity Development Programme: [VoD - Access to Financing \(iawd.at\)](#)

2.7.2. BIODIVERSITY:

- [Finance and investment for biodiversity | OECD](#)
- [Assessing biodiversity-related financial risks | OECD](#)
- [A supervisory framework for assessing nature-related financial risks : Identifying and navigating biodiversity risks | OECD Business and Finance Policy Papers | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)
- Biodiversity and the core business of financial companies (Green Finance Alliance Austria): [Publications](#)

2.7.3. CIRCULAR ECONOMY:

- EIB Circular Economy Guide: [The EIB circular economy guide](#)
- IFC Harmonized Circular Economy Guidelines: [Harmonized Circular Economy Finance Guidelines](#)
- ABN Amro, ING, Rabobank, EBRD: [Circular Economy Finance Guidelines](#)
- Circular STEP. Accelerating the Transition Towards a Circular Economy in the UNECE Region: Mobilizing Financing. [CIRCULAR-STEP Mobilizing Financing- 4.28.2023 0.pdf](#)

2.7.4. AIR QUALITY:

- The European Investment Bank Advisory Hub & AMAT. (2018). *Financing Air Quality Plans*.
https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/190325_financing_air_quality_plans.pdf

2.7.5. DEPOLLUTION SOIL:

- [Green Finance Approaches to Soil Remediation: International examples | International Institute for Sustainable Development](#)
- [Financing remediation of contaminated sites](#)

3. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Sources of information for Table 1

The following sources of information were utilized:

- (1) Commission Implementing Decision C (2024) 1351 of 28.02.2024 – on the financing of the multi-country annual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024. Annex 5 – Support for the participation of the Western Balkans in Union programmes – entry tickets 2023¹⁶ [hereinafter: “Annex 5”].
 - a. This document summarizes 13 EU funding programmes, which are offered for being made available to the WB6, the progress of joining the programmes and IPA funding availability for payment of entry tickets.
 - b. The EU funding programmes mentioned in this document are given in the **column 1** per each economy.
- (2) Annual beneficiary report for 2024 published at the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) website¹⁷ [hereinafter: “Beneficiary Report”].
 - a. The reports have a chapter on relations between the EU and the economy, covering the information about the EU funding programmes available and utilized by the economy.
 - b. Some reports do not list programmes (MNE, MKD).
 - c. The EU funding programmes mentioned in these reports are given in the **column 2** per each economy.
- (3) The WeBalkans.eu portal which is a part of the EU Regional Communication Programme for the Western Balkans and raises awareness on the cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans, including funding opportunities and related information¹⁸.
 - a. The portal contains information on some of the main EU initiatives and funding programmes in the Western Balkans, with the eligible economies listed.
 - b. The EU funding programmes mentioned on this portal are given in the **column 3** per each economy.
- (4) Local official websites with the information on EU funding programmes (links per economy are referred to below).
 - a. The EU funding programmes mentioned in the local websites are given in the **column 4** for those economies, which display this information.
 - b. In case of SRB there are two websites; thus, an additional column 5 is introduced.

¹⁶ [26045f15-9ef0-41d7-9cbb-e66cee727e1a_en \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.europa.eu/26045f15-9ef0-41d7-9cbb-e66cee727e1a_en), accessed in August 2024

¹⁷ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2024_en, ALB Report 2024, accessed in July 2025
https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/bosnia-and-herzegovina-report-2024_en, BIH Report 2024, accessed in July 2025
https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/kosovo-report-2024_en, Kosovo Report 2024 - European Commission, XKX Report 2024, accessed in July 2025
https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/montenegro-report-2024_en, MNE Report 2024, accessed in July 2025
https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/north-macedonia-report-2024_en, MKD Report 2024, accessed in July 2025
https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/serbia-report-2024_en, SRB Report 2024, accessed in July 2025

¹⁸ [Funding programmes Western Balkans and other EU projects | WeBalkans](https://webalkans.eu/funding-programmes-western-balkans-and-other-eu-projects/), accessed in July 2025

Annex 2: Information portals

A selection of general information portals, which can be of major assistance in finding appropriate entry points, knowledge, and advice. Source: EC publication *Find Your EU Funding Programme for the Environment, 2022*¹⁹

Portal / communication tool	Purpose	Significant characteristics	Website or web page(s)
Overview of all EU funding opportunities	Information on EU funding and tenders	Funding 101 - the basics and fundamentals on EU funding and tender opportunities	https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en
EU Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal and its online manual	Single entry point for applicants, contractors and experts in funding programmes and procurements directly managed by the EU	Includes all necessary reference documents related to the relevant funding programme, an online manual to guide you through the preparation and submission process, a glossary, helpdesk information and more	https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/manuals
Tenders Electronic Daily (TED)	Online version of the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union, dedicated to European public procurement	Publishes all procurement opportunities from the EU, the European Economic Area and beyond	https://ted.europa.eu/TED/browse/browseByMap.do
European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)	All information related to CINEA as an executive agency and major management partner for implementing key programmes: the Connecting Europe Facility (transport and energy), Horizon Europe (cluster 5), the Innovation Fund, LIFE, the EU renewable energy financing mechanism, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, the Public Sector Loan Facility under the Just Transition Mechanism, and the Green Advisory Service for Sustainable Investment Support (Green ASSIST)	Find all of the information necessary for project application and delivery under the programmes mentioned (calls for proposals and related tenders, manuals, how-to guides, etc.), as well as on Green ASSIST	https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/index_en
fi-compass	Platform for advisory services on financial instruments under EU funds under shared management	General information, practical tools and learning opportunities that guide you step-by-step through the life cycle of European Structural and Investment Funds financial instruments. Specific advice is also offered on the use of financial instruments under each of the European Structural and Investment Funds	https://www.fi-compass.eu/
Enterprise Europe Network	Provides expert advice to small businesses on how to access EU public funds and grants for research and development, innovation, investment, employment and training.	Includes the local contact points of the network partners at city level in each Member State and provides a tool for finding international partners for expanding business and to apply for funds	https://een.ec.europa.eu/
Directorate-General for Environment Funding Opportunities	Provides information on grants and procurements issued by the Directorate-General for Environment	List of funding opportunities provided by the Directorate-General for Environment (grants and procurements)	https://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm
Contact the European Union	Provides contact information for getting first-hand information from the Commission	Contact information for telephone, email or in-person meetings with the EU centres in the Member States	https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu_en

¹⁹ [Find your EU funding programme for the environment - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#), accessed in August 2024

Annex 3: Technical assistance (TA)

The most significant technical assistance initiatives, offering support and advisory services, aimed at enabling the applicants to create quality applications according to the EU requirements. Source: EC publication *Find Your EU Funding Programme for the Environment, 2022*²⁰. Note that additional sources for TA can be found in the programmes' description (see the following Annex 3).

Name	Who	What	Relevance / Area	How
JASPERS	EC, EIB, EBRD	Strengthen the project planning and preparation skills, the knowledge on climate and environmental proofing of investments, as well as the project's compliance with EU legislation. Support in preparing the project from its design to implementation.	Cohesion policy funds (the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the CF or the Just Transition Fund (JTF)), under the EMFAF or under the CEF (transport); the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)	https://jaspers.eib.org/index.htm
InvestEU Advisory Hub	EC, EIB	TA support for investment projects across the EU, dealing with centrally managed EU investment funds. The hub will review project applications before submission for funding and will help in planning and implementing investment operations. Notably, the InvestEU Advisory Hub also provides advice on environmental and/or social sustainability structuring and impact assessments of investments.	Limited to the EU members or cross-border projects with participation of an EU member	https://advisory.eib.org/
Green ASSIST	EC, funded from LIFE Programme	Aims to build a pipeline for green investment projects and to ensure the integration of environmental requirements into projects in other sectors with a high impact on the green economy.	These projects target sectors of the natural capital and CE, as well as support the greening of investments in non-environmental sectors (e.g. energy, transport, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, resource management and communications), with a view to significantly improving the environmental performance and reducing the footprint of such investments.	https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life/green-advisory-service-sustainable-investments-support-green-assist_en?prefLang=sv
ADAPT**	EIB, EC	Advice on climate risk and vulnerability assessments and on climate-proofing of infrastructure projects; Advice on climate risks in Public-Private-Partnership (PPPs); Support to analysis of climate risks in value and supply chains; Support in financial structuring to improve access to adaptation finance; Advice on nature-based solution (NbS).	Aims at facilitating the deployment of technical and financial expertise to address specific investment and market needs and to accelerating the financing of climate adaptation investments that have the potential to strengthen the resilience of cities, infrastructure networks, coastal areas, river basins, food systems, forests and ecosystems and other activities vulnerable to climate change.	https://advisory.eib.org/about/adapt.htm#:~:text=The%20Climate%20Adaptation%20Investment%20Advisory%20Platform%20%28ADAPT%29%20is%20to%20the%20objectives%20of%20the%20EU%20Adaptation%20Strategy.
TSI** (Technical Support Instrument)	EC	TA in designing reforms for the green transition. Support in preparation, implementation and revision of RFPs.	Green transition includes the environment, the circular economy, climate action and the energy transition.	https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en
TAIEX	EC	Support is provided through workshops, expert missions and study visits, and beneficiary authorities can also rely on specific expertise provided by officially recognised TAIEX experts.	Focus on enhancing the implementation of EU legislation and on sharing EU best practices. Driven by demand and covers all policy areas. Support could be provided for the implementation of a specific EU funding programme. Policy fields (among others): agriculture and food safety; environment, energy, transport and telecommunications.	https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/taix_en

** for EU MSs only

²⁰ Find your EU funding programme for the environment - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu), accessed in August 2024

Annex 4: EU funding programmes for environment²¹

Programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE)

The EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation, climate action and sustainable energy projects throughout the EU and non-EU countries associated with the LIFE programme

Key areas	Objective(s) and scope	Components
Circular economy and waste, air quality and pollution prevention and control, nature and biodiversity protection, conservation and restoration, sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation, clean energy and environmental and climate governance, energy efficiency.	The general objective is to contribute to the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy- efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and resilient EU economy, in order to protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, including the air, water and soil, and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to tackle the degradation of ecosystems, including by supporting the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network, thereby contributing to sustainable development. The LIFE programme is also intended to support the implementation of the EU's general action programmes on the environment.	The LIFE programme is made up of four subprogrammes: 1. nature and biodiversity 2. circular economy and quality of life 3. climate change mitigation and adaptation 4. clean energy transition.
		Volume of funding EUR 5.4 billion

Type of management	Types of funding
LIFE is a directly managed fund through calls for proposals/tenders. The programme is managed by the European Commission and the bulk of grants are delegated to CINEA.	The predominant form of funding used by the LIFE programme is grants, broadly constituting about 85 % of the total budget. Grants can co-finance up to 95 % of project costs, as outlined below, depending on the type of projects. Other forms of funding include procurement contracts, prizes and technical assistance for investment operations.

Targeted beneficiaries

Eligible beneficiaries fall within one of the following categories:

- a public or private legal entity registered in the EU or an overseas country or territory linked to it
- a non-EU country associated with the LIFE programme
- a legal entity created under EU law or any international organisation.

Natural persons are not eligible to apply.

Legal entities established in a non-EU country that is not associated with the LIFE programme may exceptionally be eligible to participate when this is necessary for the achievement of the objectives of a given action to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the EU. However, those legal entities must, in principle, bear the cost of their participation.

Types of projects

The LIFE programme funds **environment-specific and environment-integrated projects in the form of grants, prizes and procurement**. It may also finance technical assistance for investment operations. As examples, environment-specific projects can be financed through standard action projects, whereas strategic nature projects (SNAPs) and strategic integrated projects (SIPs) have the aim of supporting the implementation of a plan or strategy required by environmental and climate legislation or policies. LIFE also finances projects to improve governance in support of its environmental/climate objectives.

The LIFE programme sets out funding streams for projects aimed at assisting in the preparation of SNAPs or SIPs.

The LIFE programme can furthermore support the functioning of non-profit entities active in the field of environment and climate action (including energy transition). Grants may, under certain conditions, also finance activities in overseas countries or territories of Member States or support international agreements to which the EU is a party.

Eligibility Criteria

The LIFE regulation lays down the basic rules for the fund, including its main eligibility criteria. One important criterion is the need to co-finance projects. The co-finance rates are as follows³⁸:

- obligatory for LIFE projects, the co-finance rate can be at most 60 % for SNAPs, SIPs and standard action projects;
- for standard action projects under the nature and biodiversity subprogramme, the co-finance rate can be up to 75 %;
- for non-profit entities, the co-finance rate can be up to 70 %;
- other actions financed under the clean energy transition subprogramme can be co-financed up to 95 %.

³⁸ All rates and conditions are explained on the European Commission's website (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/wp-call/2021-2024/wp_life-2021-2024_en.pdf).



Visibility Requirements

It is important to know that visibility / CI requirements deviate for the LIFE programme from the approach of other funds and financing programmes. In particular, Article 21 of the LIFE regulation requires the use of the LIFE logo for recipients of LIFE funding.

Opportunities for directly targeting the environment

LIFE is the environmental funding instrument of the EU and targets environmental projects and projects with an environmental dimension. This is true for all four subprogrammes, and most directly for the nature and biodiversity and the circular economy and quality of life subprogrammes. The projects under these two pillars will directly target the sustainable use and protection of marine and water resources, biodiversity and ecosystem restoration, the transition to the circular economy, air quality, and pollution prevention and control.

Opportunities for environmental integration

The LIFE programme was designed to maximise its own environmental integration dimension. With its revision as part of the previous MFF period, a special mainstreaming tool was introduced for LIFE integrated projects³⁹. One of the unique features of such projects is that they help Member States to make use of other EU funding sources (e.g. structural, agricultural or regional funds). With the latest revision, these projects were expanded to allow wider use, also for nature.

Projects funded under the LIFE programme are required to not undermine any of its general and specific objectives, which include its climate and energy dimensions incorporated through the climate change mitigation and adaptation and the clean energy transition subprogrammes. Environmental integration can be achieved in projects falling under these domains, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, adapting cities and regions to climate change, climate proofing and resilience of infrastructure, or capacity building for the clean energy transition. The LIFE programme also specifies that projects that achieve synergies and co-benefits between the four subprogrammes receive a bonus in their evaluation.

Furthermore, there are more cross-cutting areas that can equally benefit from an environmental integration focus, such as innovative clean technologies and solutions, sustainable finance, behavioural change and awareness-raising activities, and digitalisation.

³⁹ More information on LIFE integrated projects can be found on CINEA's website (https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/publications/life-integrated-projects_en).

Options for technical assistance

LIFE technical assistance for the preparation of SIPs/SNAPs: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/wp-call/2021-2024/call-fiche_life-2021-ta-pp_en.pdf

Useful links and resources

- Legal basis for the fund: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0783>
- Information about the programme on the EU Commission's website: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en
- CINEA guide for applicants: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life/life-support-applicants_en
- CINEA information days: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/events_en
- LIFE in European countries and national contact points: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life/life-european-countries_en

²¹ Source: [Find your EU funding programme for the environment - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/wp-call/2021-2024/wp_life-2021-2024_en.pdf), accessed in August 2024

Horizon Europe

The largest transnational programme ever supporting research and innovation

Key areas

Horizon Europe tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports the development and improves the sharing of knowledge and technologies.

It creates jobs, fully engages the EU's talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes industrial competitiveness and optimises investment impact within a strengthened European research area.

Volume of funding

Horizon Europe has a budget of EUR 95.5 billion for 2021–2027. This includes EUR 5.4 billion from NextGenerationEU plus an additional reinforcement of EUR 4.5 billion. Of this budget, 35 % will contribute to climate change objectives.

Type of management

The programme is implemented through direct management or indirect management by the funding bodies. Funding under the programme is provided by means of indirect actions in any of the forms laid down in the financial regulation⁴⁰; however, grants are the main form of support under the programme. The programme also supports investments in European partnerships that involve collaborations with Member States or industry. A significant part of Pillar II of Horizon Europe will be implemented through institutionalised partnerships, particularly in the areas of mobility, energy, the digital sector and the bio-based economy, which will also have separate work programmes.

⁴⁰ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

Type of funding

Horizon Europe offers grants as the main funding model, complemented with dedicated financial instruments, when appropriate.

Objective(s) and scope

The first strategic plan set out the key strategic aims for the targeting of investments in the programme's first 4 years:

- promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital, enabling and emerging technologies, sectors and value chains to accelerate and steer the digital and green transitions through human-centred technologies and innovations;

- restoring Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity, and sustainably managing natural resources to ensure food security and a clean and healthy environment;

- making Europe the first digitally enabled circular, climate-neutral and sustainable economy through the transformation of its mobility, energy, construction and production systems;

- creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society that is prepared for and responsive to threats and disasters, addressing inequalities and providing high-quality healthcare, and empowering all citizens to act in the green and digital transitions.

Targeted beneficiaries

Any legal entity, regardless of its place of establishment, including legal entities from non-associated non-EU countries or international organisations (including international European research organisations), is eligible to participate (whether it is eligible for funding or not), provided that the conditions laid down in the Horizon Europe regulation⁴¹ have been met, along with any other conditions laid down in the specific call topic. To be eligible for funding, applicants must be established in the EU, associated countries or low- or middle-income countries. The associated countries are Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey, and association negotiations are currently being processed with Albania, the Faroe Islands, Morocco, Tunisia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

⁴¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013, OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 1.

Components

The programme consists of three pillars and one part, which correspond to its main priorities.

Pillar I: excellent science. This pillar aims to increase the EU's global scientific competitiveness. It supports frontier research projects defined and driven by top researchers through the European Research Council. It also funds fellowships for postdoctoral researchers, doctoral training networks and exchanges for researchers through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme and invests in world-class research infrastructures.

Pillar II: global challenges and European industrial competitiveness. This pillar supports research relating to societal challenges and reinforces technological and industrial capacities through clusters. It sets EU missions, with ambitious goals tackling some of our greatest problems. It also includes activities pursued by the Joint Research Centre, which supports EU and national policymakers by providing independent scientific evidence and technical support. This pillar is broken down into six clusters, each of which is made up of individual expected impacts linked by overarching themes. The six clusters are:

1. health
2. culture, creativity and inclusive society
3. civil security for society
4. digital, industry and space
5. climate, energy and mobility
6. food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment

Further to this, the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme has now introduced EU missions for 2021–2027 (including the ocean mission). These missions represent commitments to solving some of the greatest challenges facing our world. Each mission operates as a portfolio of actions – such as research projects, policy measures or even legislative initiatives – to achieve a measurable goal that could not be achieved through individual actions.

These missions contribute to the goals of the European Green Deal, Europe's beating cancer plan and the sustainable development goals. The five EU missions are:

1. adaptation to climate change – supporting at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030;
2. cancer – working with Europe's beating cancer plan to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention, cure and solutions to live longer and better;
3. restoring our ocean and waters by 2030;
4. 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030;
5. a soil deal for Europe – 100 living laboratories and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.

Pillar III: Innovative Europe. This pillar aims to make Europe a frontrunner in market-creating innovation via the European Innovation Council (EIC). It also helps to develop the overall European innovation landscape through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, which fosters the integration of the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation.

The EIC aims to identify and support breakthrough technologies and game-changing innovations with the potential to scale up internationally and become market leaders. It supports all stages of innovation, from research and development on the scientific underpinnings of breakthrough technologies, to the validation and demonstration of breakthrough technologies and innovations to meet real-world needs, to the development and scaling up of start-ups and SMEs. All EIC awardees, as well as selected applicants, have access to a range of EIC business acceleration services providing access to leading expertise, corporate entities, investors and ecosystem actors. The EIC also undertakes additional activities, such as the giving of prizes.

Part: widening participation and strengthening the European research area. This part of Horizon Europe increases support for EU Member States in their efforts to make the most of their national research and innovation potential.

Types of projects

The following activities are generally eligible for grants under Horizon Europe.

- **Research and innovation actions.** These are activities that aim primarily to establish new knowledge or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. This may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing, or demonstration and validation of a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment.
- **Innovation actions.** These are activities that aim to produce plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. These activities may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication.
- **Coordination and support actions.** These are activities that contribute to the objectives of Horizon Europe.
- **Programme co-fund actions.** This is a programme of activities established or implemented by legal entities managing or funding research and innovation programmes, other than EU funding bodies. Such a programme of activities may support networking and coordination, research, innovation, pilot actions, innovation and market deployment, training and mobility, awareness raising and communication, and dissemination and exploitation. It may also provide any relevant financial support, such as grants, prizes and/or procurement. The actions may be implemented by the beneficiaries directly or by providing financial support to third parties.
- **Innovation and market deployment actions.** These are activities that embed an innovation action and other activities that are necessary to deploy an innovation action on the market. This includes the scaling up of companies and Horizon Europe blended finance.
- **Training and mobility actions.** These are activities that aim to improve the skills, knowledge and career prospects of researchers, based on mobility between countries and, if relevant, between sectors or disciplines.

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility to participate. Any legal entity, regardless of its place of establishment, including legal entities from non-associated non-EU countries or international organisations (including international European research organisations), is eligible to participate (whether it is eligible for funding or not), provided that the conditions laid down in the Horizon Europe regulation have been met, along with any other conditions laid down in the specific call topic.

Eligibility for funding. To be eligible for funding, applicants must be established in the EU, associated countries or low- or middle-income countries. Specific cases are set out in Annex A of the Horizon work programme⁴². Beneficiaries must register in the participant register before submitting applications. Legal entities forming a consortium are eligible to participate if the consortium includes at least one independent entity established in a Member State and at least two other independent legal entities established in different Member States or associated countries.

Projects must comply with ethical principles and applicants must complete an ethics self-assessment.

Projects involving classified and/or sensitive information must go through a security appraisal to authorise funding⁴³.

Legal entities from Member States and associated countries that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments (including private research organisations and higher education establishments) must have a gender equality plan to be eligible.

⁴² European Commission, Horizon Europe work programme 2021-2022: 13. General annexes, Brussels, 2022 (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf).

⁴³ European Commission, Horizon Europe work programme 2021-2022: 13. General annexes, Brussels, 2022 (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf).

Visibility requirements

Horizon Europe strengthens open access rights and obligations for beneficiaries. It requires immediate open access to all scientific publications and responsible research data management so that data are findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. Open science practices are considered in the evaluation criteria for proposals.

Opportunities for directly targeting the environment

Europe's economic and social prosperity and its quality of life, jobs and the environment depend on its ability to create knowledge and to innovate. Horizon Europe is expected to have a significant social and environmental impact. This impact will be created by disseminating, exploiting and taking up scientific results and translating them into new products, services and processes, which in turn will help successfully deliver on political objectives, as well as social and eco-innovation.

Opportunities for environmental integration

Horizon Europe directly supports the environment and supports environmental integration in a cross-cutting manner. Several of the clusters are not environment focused but have the capacity to support environmental integration, in particular digital, industry and space (cluster 4), energy and mobility (cluster 5), and food, bioeconomy, natural resources and agriculture (cluster 6 excluding the environment aspect).

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Options for technical assistance

The Horizon Europe programme guide and work programme annexes contain information on eligibility, the application procedure and award criteria:

- https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf

European Commission's Horizon Europe page: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

European Commission's research enquiry service: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/contact/research-enquiry-service_en

Useful links and resources

Horizon Europe programme for 2021–2027 presentation: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation_strategy_on_research_and_innovation/presentations/horizon_europe/ec_rtd_he-investing-to-shape-our-future.pdf

Project examples

A database of the funded projects is available at <https://cordis.europa.eu/projects/en>

Ocean Sentinel

Duration: January 2018 to 30 June 2019

Beneficiary coordinator: Centre National de la recherche Scientifique (CNRS, France)

Total budget: EUR 150 000
EU contribution: EUR 150 000

This project concerns threatened marine species including albatrosses, sharks and sea turtles, and thus is protecting the ecosystem. The project comprises an innovative technology to detect illegal fishing activity and gathers information for authorities, regional fishing and conservation agreements, and NGOs that are fighting to preserve the ocean and its inhabitants. The results are used as a basis for discussions in international fishing and conservation agreements.

The project developed a logger called CENTURION that coupled with an XGPS platform detecting and locating radar emissions, with a satellite transmission system (Argos) that would (1) instantaneously send the location of vessels to a receiving site, (2) deploy the logger on a wide range of animals used as platforms and (3) make immediately available the information obtained from the CENTURION logger through a website. The concept was tested in the southern Indian Ocean from the Crozet and Kerguelen Islands, where valuable and extensive fisheries operate in exclusive economic zones and over oceanic waters.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/commission-announces-winners-horizon-impact-award-2020-2020-sep-23_en
Project website: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/780058>

European Social Fund Plus

National, sectoral or regional programmes to support the improvement of employment and social inclusion

Key areas	Objective(s) and scope
Labour market access, skilled workforce, vocational training, disadvantaged groups and social inclusion.	The ESF+ is one of the EU cohesion policy funds, which also include the ERDF, the CF, Interreg (European territorial cooperation) and the JTF. The main goal of the ESF+ is the creation of more and better jobs, as well as to support a socially inclusive society. Through the ESF+, the aim is for Member States to achieve high employment levels, social protection and a skilled and resilient workforce and, ultimately, eradicate poverty. The fund supports projects in the fields of equal opportunities, equal access to the labour market, fair and high-quality working conditions, social protection and inclusion, quality and inclusive education and training, lifelong learning, investment in children and young people, and access to basic services. Therefore, if your intended project aligns with any of those fields, you might be eligible, depending on your Member State's or region's programme.
Components	
In the area of employment and labour mobility, the fund supports measures improving access to the job market, modernising labour market institutions, promoting gender-balanced labour market participation and promoting the adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change. For the improvement of education levels and labour mobility, the fund supports improvements in the quality, effectiveness and labour market relevance of education and training systems, promoting equal access to inclusive education and training and to lifelong learning. The fund focuses particularly on measures focused on disadvantaged groups and young persons. To address the topic of social inclusion and poverty eradication, the fund in particular supports active inclusion and equal opportunity measures; socioeconomic integration of non-EU nationals and marginalised communities; general access to services such as housing, healthcare and social protection; the social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion; and the provision of food and material assistance as a means of addressing material deprivation.	The ESF+ focuses on support in the policy areas of employment and labour mobility, education and social inclusion, including poverty eradication, and therefore contributes to one of the policy objectives of the cohesion policy for 2021–2027, namely 'a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights' (PO 4).
Volume of funding	Type of funding
EUR 99 billion	Member States can use the contribution from the ESF+ to provide support to beneficiaries in the form of grants, financial instruments or prizes, or a combination thereof. Financial instrument products may include loans, guarantees, equity or quasi-equity. Moreover, MAs can tailor financial products according to their needs and capabilities or structure the financial instrument based on terms and conditions provided by the European Commission for 'off-the-shelf' instruments.
Type of management	
Management of the ESF+ is shared between the European Commission and national and regional authorities in each EU Member State. The Member States' authorities in charge of the administration of the ESF+ choose which projects are to be supported (through grants and/or via financial instruments, e.g. a loan or a guarantee).	

Targeted beneficiaries

The decision on whether you are eligible as a beneficiary to receive ESF+ support is made by the country's or region's MA. For example, if your organisation is an SME, a large enterprise, a research organisation, a public authority, an NGO or a civil society organisation, you might potentially be eligible as a beneficiary.

Visibility requirements

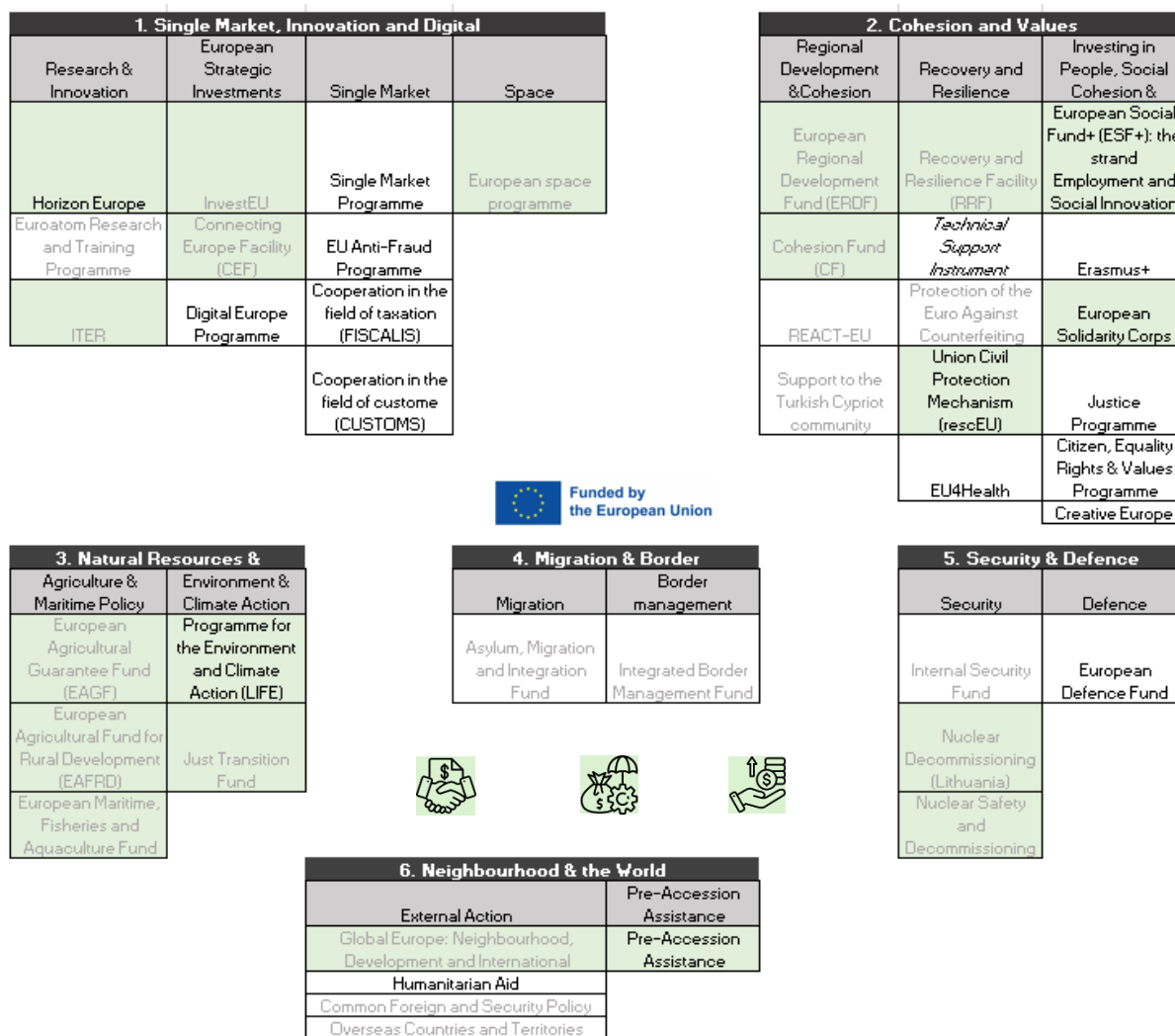
The beneficiaries of the funds have to ensure the visibility of the EU funding, in particular when promoting the funded action and the results. Concrete requirements depend on the individual programmes and national rules (see Article 36 of the ESF+ regulation⁴⁷).

⁴⁷ Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 21.

Types of projects	Eligibility criteria
<p>The specific types of projects funded through the ESF+ are defined in each country's or region's programme. Generally, support from the ESF+ covers the following types of investments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education programmes and initiatives • adult workforce reskilling • initiatives for young people, in particular labour market access • labour market access for disadvantaged or marginalised groups • access to services, in particular for disadvantaged groups • material support • studies • networking, cooperation and the exchange of experiences. <p>MAs must ensure that programme interventions respect the DNSH principle and fulfil the enabling conditions as prescribed in the common provisions regulation. As such, the projects then selected by the MA will be aligned with these requirements. The type of projects supported, the assessment and the selection criteria also all depend on the individual programme. Moreover, your project will have to comply with the relevant environmental legislations (regional, national and European).</p>	<p>In general, eligibility criteria are defined on the basis of national rules, with some general rules stemming from the overall legal framework. Each programme can define eligibility criteria, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time period – there are limits on the period during which operations and expenditure can take place; • scope of intervention – there are restrictions on the types of activities that can be co-financed; • cost categories – certain cost categories are excluded; • geographical location of operations – only certain locations are eligible; • durability of operations – investments may have to be maintained for a minimum period after the operation is completed; • types of beneficiaries – only certain enterprises, bodies or economic actors are eligible for support.
<h3>Opportunities for directly targeting the environment</h3>	
<p>Not applicable</p>	
<h3>Opportunities for environmental integration</h3>	
<p>Environmental issues are not a key focus area of the ESF+. However, ESF+ programmes' interventions are linked to and must contribute to the green transition and green economy. Therefore, by supporting labour market reintegration projects or educational programmes linked to the circular economy, energy efficiency and other aspects of the green economy, the ESF+ can support the development of new skills needed to adapt to climate change and help enterprises evolve in that direction.</p>	
<h3>Options for technical assistance</h3>	
<p>Support for potential beneficiaries is typically provided by the MA or an intermediary. Concrete support differs from programme to programme and can include guidance documents on how to develop a project idea, hand in an application or fill out application forms; seminars and workshops showcasing procedures; or targeted support for potential beneficiaries as an on-demand service.</p>	
<h3>Useful links and resources</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission web page on the ESF+: https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en • ESF+ transnational cooperation platform: https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/transnational-cooperation-platform • ESF financial instruments: https://www.fi-compass.eu/video/esf-financial-instruments-action-impact-and-success-stories 	

Annex 5. EU funding programmes 2021-2027

Below is the mapping of EU funding programmes listed at the EC website, implemented through the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF), divided by six headings and fifteen clusters²². The programmes in black font are available for the WB6; in italics – for observer status only. The programs in grey font will be made available after the accession to the EU. The programmes relevant for environment projects are marked green.



Source: Picture created by Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Environment Agency Austria), based on EC website :

https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes_en , accessed in August 2024

²² Source: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes_en, accessed in August 2024

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Date / Signature: 11.12.2025