

# NAVIGATING EU FUNDING FOR GREEN INNOVATION

A guide by Danish Industry



Danish Industry

# GLOSSARY

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
EU funding	EU funding programmes are instruments designed so that specific policies may be tested, informed, developed and put into action and possibly serve to support, coordinate or supplement actions at national or regional level. EU funding contributes to the fulfilment of short- and long-term EU objectives.
EU programmes	Funding managed centrally by the EU Commission and agencies. The funding is allocated via scheduled calls for proposals that formally invite bids.
Call for proposal	Grants are distributed through competitive process, that is, calls, in which a competition will take place between European entities as to access European funds.
Criteria	Each EU funding programme has specific criteria for applicants to be able to apply for the funding.
Consortium	Formal association of entities of different natures that collaborate to take advantage of their added values and complementarities to carry out the implementation of a European project.
Co-financing	European funds are non-refundable donations in the form of a grant, but it is expected for beneficiary entities to contribute to the funding of a part of the projects: that is, co-financing, usually between 5 and 40% of the total.
Eligibility	Each call establishes a series of eligibility criteria, which the consortium or entity must fulfill as to apply to funds (for example, a minimum number of partners, admissible juridical forms, etc.)
Grants	One of the three forms that European funds can assume. Non-refundable donations distributed through calls managed by a diversity of European programmes.
National Contact Points (NCPs)	National Contact Points (NCPs) are established in all European Member States and Associated Countries. NCPs provide guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in EU funding programmes.
Proposal	A proposal is the document (known as application form) that the consortium or entity presents to a call, which includes annexes (such as the budget), the description of the project, its objectives, the activities and desired results.

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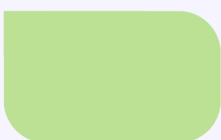
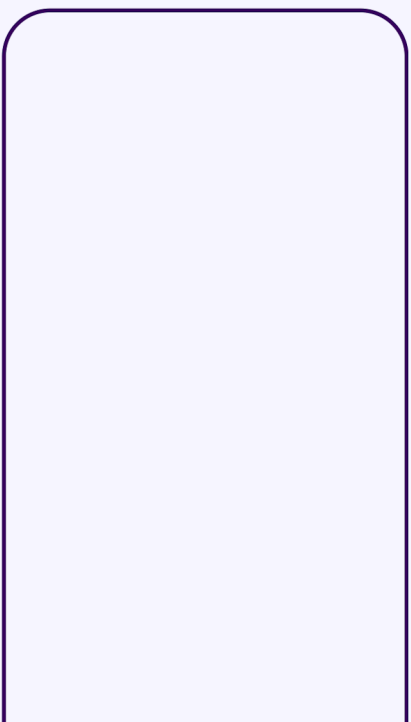
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## **Date**

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# INTRODUCTION

On the path towards a greener future, securing EU funds is instrumental for both sustainable development and maintaining competitiveness in global markets.

In the pursuit of enhancing competitiveness, numerous factors come into play, with access to finance and capital standing out as a central element. This is especially true in the context of green transition, where securing EU funds can significantly accelerate the scaling of green innovation and technologies.

The imperative to secure EU funding for green initiatives becomes apparent in a time where the European region is going through a paradigm shift in industrial policies while maintaining climate leadership. The EU is part of green industrial race on a global scale, and innovations within energy, environment, circular economy and solutions to support our green and digital transition will be the key to meet European strategic targets.

This booklet serves as a guide to selected EU funding opportunities available for green technologies. By highlighting a range of EU programmes designed to support European companies, it aims to equip Danish companies with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the landscape of EU financing.

Together, let us bridge the gap between our funding demand and the European funding supply to propel Danish businesses into a future where competitiveness, innovation and green transition can go hand in hand.







# HOW TO EU FUND?

Does your green innovation, technology or project require public support and funding?  
Follow these steps:



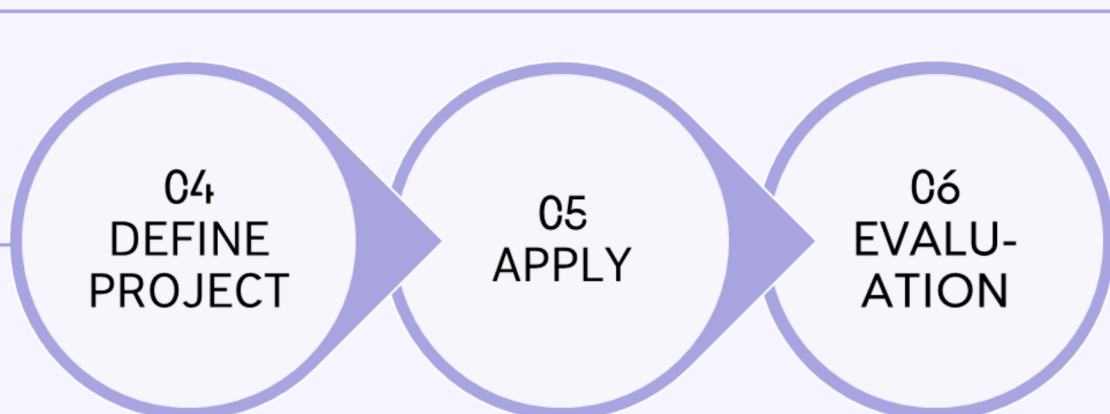
Identify relevant EU funding programme based on your Technology Readiness Level:

- Eurostars
- Horizon Europe
- EU Innovation Fund
- LIFE Programme
- Digital Europe Programme
- Other: InvestEU, European Investment Bank, etc.

Scope your project with your network and experts. Get help from:

- Internally
- Industry network actors
- Relevant innovation cluster
- Regional office in your area
- National Contact Point
- European Commission Desk Officer

- Does the EU support programme require partners in the application process?
- Do you need to acquire expertise externally?



- Are you eligible for the funding?
- Definition of activities, objective and expected results
- Partner identification and description
- Budget and co-financing plan
- Time plan and duration

- Be aware of deadlines for specific calls
- Add all required documentation

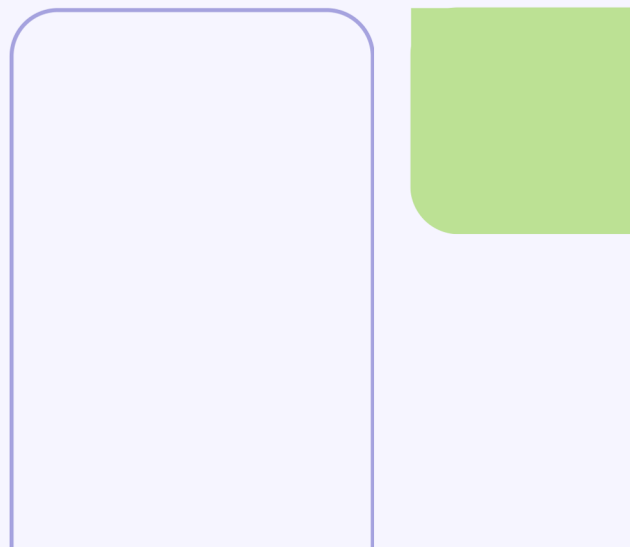
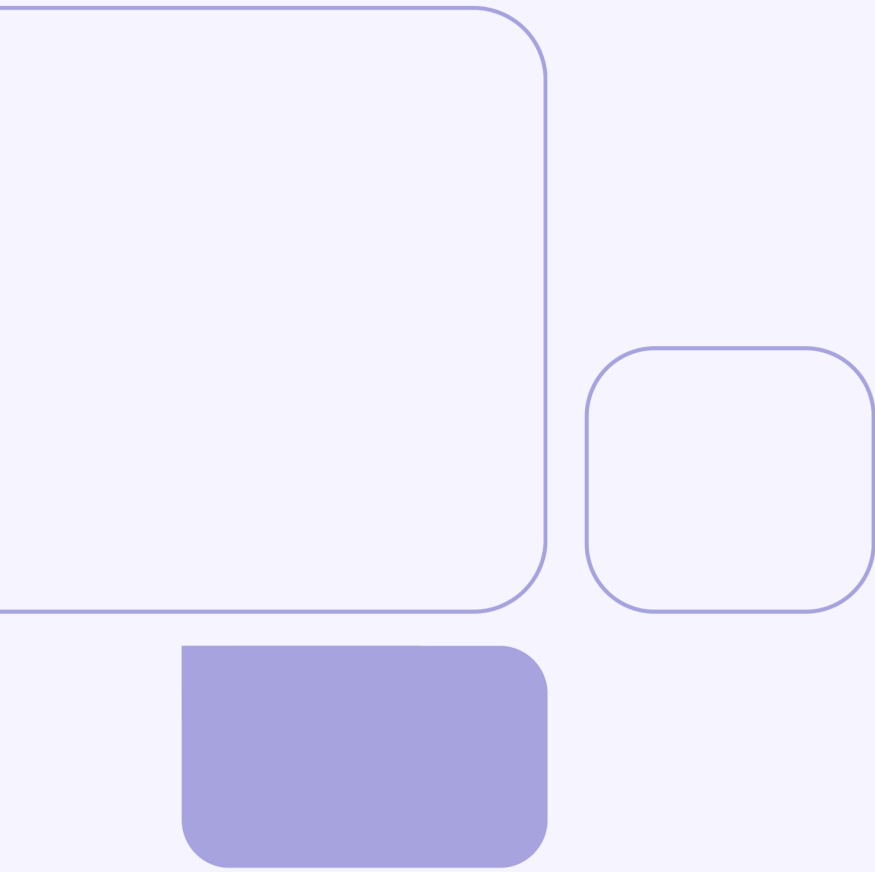
- Based on evaluation, feedback and further documentation
- Hopefully, success, after which project begins

# WHAT IS TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL (TRL)?

As indicated in the guide on “How to EU Fund?”, the first step includes identifying a relevant EU funding programme based on the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of your technology. TRL is a method used to estimate the maturity of technologies based on a scale from 1 to 9 with 9 being the most mature technology. Several of the EU funding programmes make use of the TRL scale to indicate which type of projects can receive funding based on a proposed TRL level given in call descriptions.

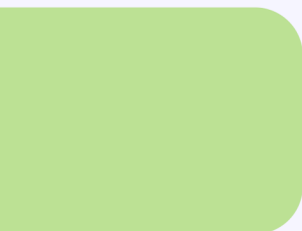
Ready-to-market	9	<b>Actual system proven in operational environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology proven fully operational and ready for commercialisation</li> <li>• Full production chains in place and all materials are available</li> </ul>
	8	<b>System complete and qualified</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology experimented and proven its functioning in deployment conditions</li> <li>• Manufacturing process is stable enough for entering low-rate production</li> </ul>
	7	<b>System prototype demonstration in operational environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full scale pre-commercial system is demonstrated in operational environment</li> <li>• Compliance with relevant conditions, authorisations and standards is guaranteed</li> </ul>
Development	6	<b>Technology pilot demonstrated in relevant environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration in relevant environment fine-tuned to operating conditions</li> <li>• The process is reliable and the performances match the expectations</li> </ul>
	5	<b>Technology validated in relevant environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of components with supporting elements in large-scale prototype</li> <li>• Robustness is proven in the (simulated) relevant working environment</li> </ul>
	4	<b>Technology validated in lab</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced scale prototype developed and integrated with complementing sub-systems at laboratory level</li> </ul>
Research	3	<b>Experimental proof of concept</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First laboratory scale prototype (proof-of-concept) or numerical model realised</li> <li>• Testing of innovative technological element but not the whole integrated system</li> </ul>
	2	<b>Technology concept formulated</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced knowledge of technologies, materials and interfaces is acquired</li> <li>• Definition of prototyping approach and preliminary technical specifications</li> </ul>
	1	<b>Basic principles observed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of new concept, expected barriers, applications, and materials and technologies based on theoretical fundamentals/literature</li> <li>• Preliminary evaluation of potential benefits of the concept over existing ones</li> </ul>





# GUIDE TO SELECTED EU PROGRAMMES

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# Eurostars

## Overview

### What is Eurostars?

Eurostars is part of the European Partnership on Innovative Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which is co-funded by the EU through Horizon Europe. Eurostars is the largest international funding programme for SMEs wishing to collaborate on R&D projects that create innovative products, processes or services for commercialisation.



### Scope

Eurostars funds projects within the following categories in Denmark:

- Green research, technological development and innovation
- Life science, health and welfare technology
- Research and innovation within new technologies



### Criteria

To apply, the following seven criteria must be fulfilled:

- The project consortium is led by an innovative SME from a Eurostars country
- The project consortium is composed of at least two entities that are independent from one another
- The project consortium is composed of at least two entities that are independent from one another
- The budget of the SMEs from the participating countries (excluding any subcontracting) is 50% or more of the total project cost
- No single participant or country is responsible for more than 70% of the budget of the project
- The project duration is 36 months or less
- The project has an exclusive focus on civil applications

# Eurostars

## Overview



### Grant size

In Denmark, the Eurostars programme is funded through Innovation Fund Denmark. For SMEs, the maximum funding amount is €300,000 per participant. If the project has more than one Danish participant, the maximum funding amount is €500,000 for all Danish participants. Projects without a participating Danish SME will not be eligible for funding from Innovation Fund Denmark.



### Contact points

In Denmark, the Eurostars programme is managed by Innovation Fund Denmark.

#### **National contact point in Denmark**

Innovation Fund Denmark

Website: [www.innovationsfonden.dk](http://www.innovationsfonden.dk)

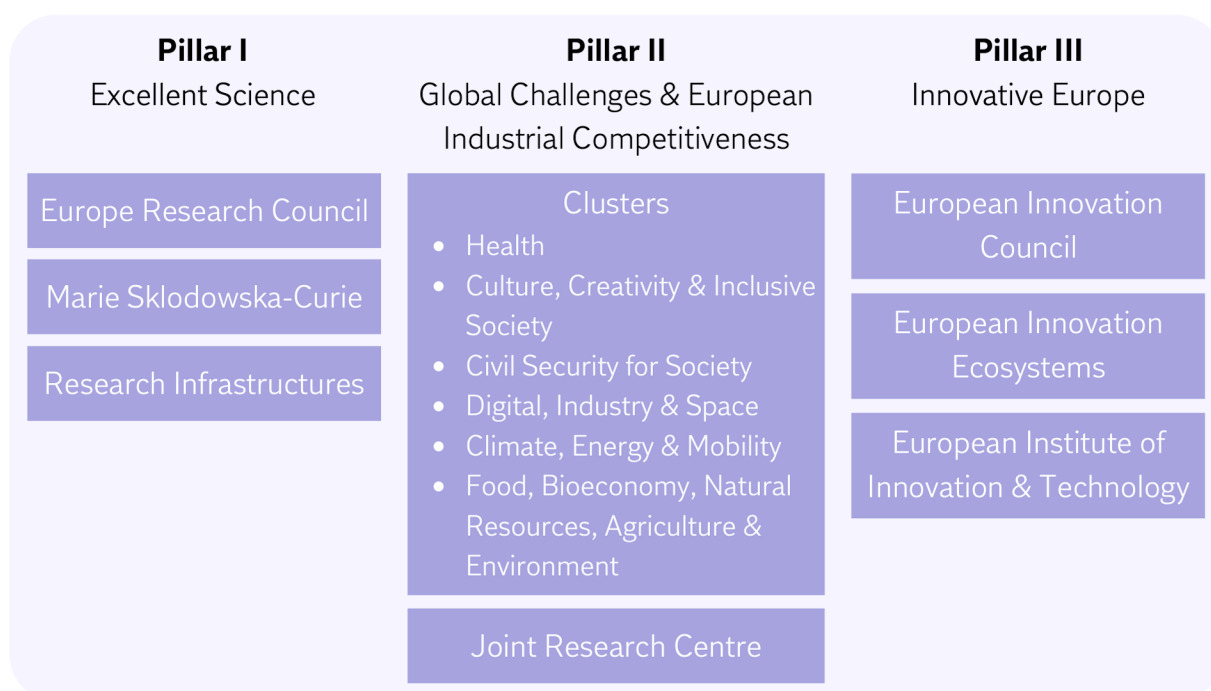
# Horizon Europe

## Overview

### What is Horizon Europe?

Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. Furthermore, it supports creating and better dispersing of excellent knowledge and technologies.

As illustrated in the figure below, Horizon Europe is divided into three pillars, which seek to tackle different challenges within the EU.



The following pages provide an overview of selected funding opportunities under Horizon Europe's Pillar II and Pillar III, which are deemed most relevant for Danish companies. However, if you want to explore the remaining funding opportunities under Horizon Europe, you can find more information on the European Commission's official website.



# Horizon Europe

## Pillar II - Clusters

With a budget of €53.5 billion for 2021-2027, Pillar II of Horizon Europe has been allocated the largest share of funding among the programme's three pillars. The main objective of Pillar II is to support the development of new technologies to combat global challenges and strengthen the EU's industrial competitiveness.

As illustrated in the figure, actions under Horizon Europe's Pillar II are divided into six clusters. Under the six clusters, specific calls are usually divided into Research and Innovation Action (RIA) calls and Innovation Action Calls (IA). The two different types of calls are catered towards different Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), with RIA targeting TRL 2-6 and IA targeting TRL 6-8.



### Scope

Research and Innovation Actions (RIA) consist of activities aiming to establish knowledge and/or to explore feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. Innovation Actions (IA) consist of activities directly aiming at close-to-market projects ready for commercialisation soon after the project.

### Criteria

For most calls for proposals, you must apply as a consortia of at least three partner organisations from three different EU or associated countries.

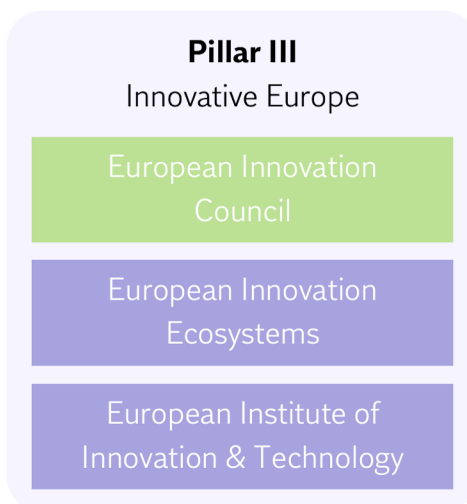
### Grant size

The grant size depends on the specific call for proposal, typically between €4 to €15 billion.

# Horizon Europe

## Pillar III - European Innovation Council

With a budget of €10 billion, Horizon Europe's Pillar III aims at stimulating market-creating breakthroughs and ecosystems conducive to innovation improving growth in the Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) segment and the EU innovation landscape. Pillar III is divided into three different funding initiatives, of which the calls for proposals under the European Innovation Council (EIC) are of highest relevance to companies. The EIC focuses on market-creating innovation, supporting disruptive innovators (i.e., start-ups, SMEs, etc.) with high-risk ideas that have the potential to scale-up internationally.



### Scope

Three different programmes have been established under the European Innovation Council: EIC Pathfinder; EIC Transition; and EIC Accelerator. The EIC Pathfinder (TRL 1-2) funds projects with the aim to achieve proof-of-concept and validate the scientific basis of breakthrough technology. The EIC Transition (TRL 3-4) focuses on validation and demonstration of technology in application-relevant environments and development of market readiness. It supports both the maturation and validation of novel technologies in the lab and in relevant application environments as well as the development of a business case and business model towards the innovation's future commercialisation. Lastly, the EIC Accelerator (TRL 5-6) supports the later stages of technology development as well as scale-up of technological breakthroughs.

### Criteria

The EIC Pathfinder requires applicants to form consortia. However, single applicants (i.e., start-ups, SMEs, etc.) can apply for the EIC Transition and EIC Accelerator.

### Grant size

The grant size depends on the specific call for proposal and programme under the EIC, typically €2 to €4 million.

# Horizon Europe

## Contact points



### Contact points

In Denmark, Horizon Europe assistance is anchored within the Danish Agency for Higher Science and Education.

#### **National contact point in Denmark**

Danish Agency for Higher Science and Education

Website: [www.ufm.dk](http://www.ufm.dk)

On the website, you can find specific guides to applications, counselling and project management under Horizon Europe.

#### **EU-DK Support**

The EU-DK Support is a network of Danish publicly funded advisers offering free counseling for EU funding opportunities.

Website: [www.eusupport.dk](http://www.eusupport.dk)

Contact: [eurocenter@ufm.dk](mailto:eurocenter@ufm.dk)

# EU Innovation Fund

## Overview

### What is the EU Innovation Fund?

The EU Innovation Fund is one of the world's largest funding programmes for the demonstration of innovative low-carbon technologies. It focuses on highly innovative clean technologies and big flagship projects with European added value that can bring significant emission and greenhouse gas reductions.

The EU Innovation Fund is financed by EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) revenues, and has a budget of €40 billion from 2020-2030 (based on a carbon price of €75/tonne).



#### Scope

The Innovation Fund covers a wide range of projects focusing on innovative technologies in areas such as energy-intensive industries, renewables, energy storage, net-zero mobility, buildings, hydrogen, and carbon capture, use and storage. It aims to finance a varied project pipeline achieving an optimal balance of a wide range of innovative technologies in all eligible sectors in EU Member States, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein. At the same time, the projects need to be sufficiently mature in terms of planning, business model, and financial and legal structure. The calls typically target TRL 8-9.



#### Criteria: Project

Projects will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Effectiveness of greenhouse gas emissions avoidance
- Degree of innovation
- Project maturity
- Replicability
- Cost efficiency

The detailed scoring and ranking methodology are set in each call for proposals.

# EU Innovation Fund

## Overview



### Criteria: Applicant

A single legal entity (i.e., start-ups, SMEs, large companies etc.), as well as a consortium of legal entities, can apply for funding under the EU Innovation Fund.



### Grant size

The EU Innovation Fund distinguishes between small-scale projects and large-scale projects. In the latest call for proposals opened in 2023, the grant size for small-scale project applications was €2.5-7.5 million, while the grant size for large-scale projects was +€100 million.

The EU Innovation Fund supports up to 60% of the relevant costs calculated according to the methodology indicated in each call for proposals. The grants are being disbursed in a flexible way based on project financing needs, considering the milestones achieved during the project lifetime. For regular grants, up to 40% of the grant can be given based on pre-defined milestones before the whole project is fully up and running.



### Contact points

The overall management of the EU Innovation Fund is handled by the European Commission, which has delegated specific tasks to the implementing body European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA).

EU Innovation Fund support is available to projects located in all EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, where national contact points can provide further information on the Fund and in particular its interactions with national funding instruments and other EU programmes.

#### **National contact point in Denmark**

Danish Energy Agency

Website: [www.ens.dk](http://www.ens.dk)



# LIFE Programme

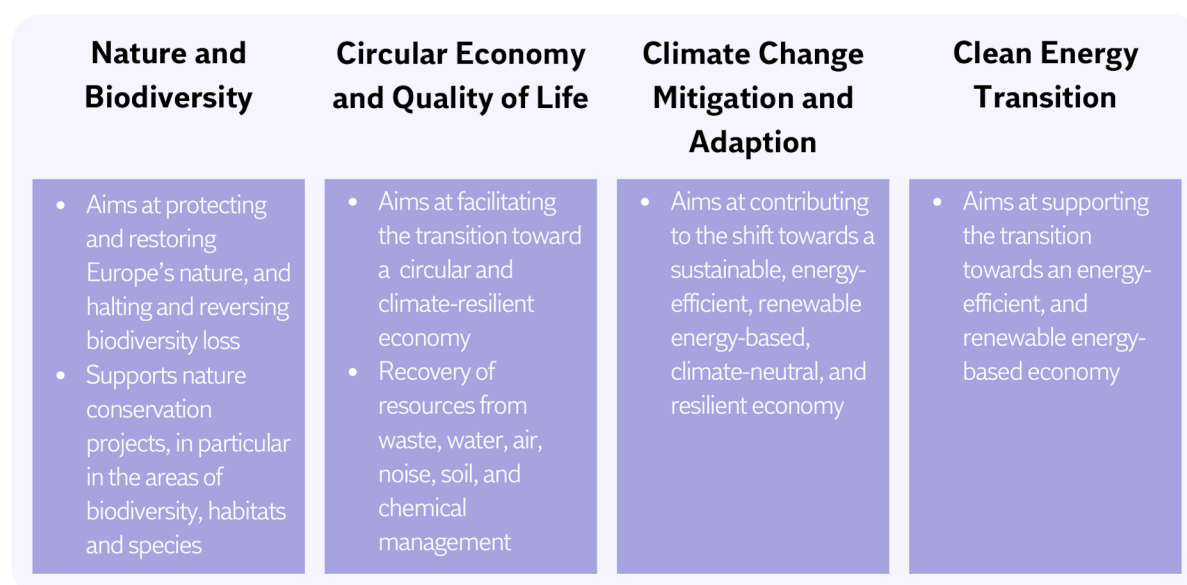
## Overview

### What is the LIFE Programme?

The LIFE programme is an EU funding programme exclusively dedicated to environmental, climate and energy objectives. LIFE has a total financial envelope of €5.43 billion for the period 2021-2027, and to date, it has co-financed more than 5,000 projects. It aims to contribute to the shift towards a clean, circular, energy efficient, climate-neutral and climate-resilient economy, including through the transition to clean energy, to protect and improve the quality of the environment.

In terms of specific objectives, the LIFE Programme seeks to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches to reach EU environmental and climate goals. It also supports the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy, including by improving governance at all levels.

As illustrated in the figure below, the LIFE Programme is divided into four sub-programmes with specific thematic scopes:



The following pages provide an overview of all four programmes under the LIFE Programme.

# LIFE Programme

## Overview



### Criteria

Projects are selected based on the following criteria:

- Contribute to the shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, including through the transition to clean energy
- Protect and improve the quality of the environment
- Halt and reverse biodiversity loss, thereby contributing to sustainable development

The detailed scoring and ranking methodology are set in each call for proposals.

Any public or private organisation legally registered in the EU and countries associated to the LIFE Programme. The programme is relevant for companies as it supports commercialization of green products, technologies and services in close-to-market conditions, and with elevated TRL.



### Grant size

The grant size depends on the specific call for proposal, typically between €500,000 to €5 million.



### Contact points

LIFE Programme support is available to projects located in all EU Member States where national contact points can provide further information on the Programme and in particular its interactions with national funding instruments and other EU programmes.

#### **National contact point Denmark**

(Nature & Biodiversity, Climate Change, Circular Economy)  
Danish Environmental Protection Agency  
Website: [www.mst.dk](http://www.mst.dk)

#### **National contact point Denmark**

(Clean Energy Transition)  
Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities  
Website: [www.kefm.dk](http://www.kefm.dk)

# LIFE Programme

## Sub-programmes



### Scope

Scope of each of the four sub-programme's under the LIFE Programme:

#### Nature and Biodiversity

The sub-programme's goal is to protect and restore European natural spaces as well as halting and reversing biodiversity loss.

##### Areas:

- Nature conservation, specially in the areas of biodiversity, habitats and species.
- Development and management of the 'Natura2000' network and the 'IAS Regulation'
- Contributing to the achievement of the European Union's biodiversity strategy for 2030, as a part of the European Green Deal

#### Circular Economy and Quality of Life

The sub-programme's goal is to facilitate the transition towards a sustainable, circular and energetically efficient economy, as well as restoring and protecting the environment's quality. Types of projects: close-to-market.

##### Areas:

- Transition towards a circular, sustainable, non-toxic and energetically efficient economy that is resilient in the face of climate change
- Protection, restoring and bettering of the environment's quality, particularly in the fields of: water, air, earth, acoustic pollution and waste
- Transforming waste into resources

# LIFE Programme

## Sub-programmes



### Scope

#### Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

Foster adaptation to climate change, especially towards extreme meteorological phenomena, and strengthen its mitigation in the fields of: agriculture, use of land, managing of water sides and renewable energies. Types: close-to-market.

##### Areas:

- Contributing to the transition towards a resilient and efficient economy
- Adaptation to climate change and sustainable development (urban adaptation, agricultural planning, resilience of infrastructure, sustainable management of water, flooding and coastal management, resilience in the agricultural, touristic and forest sectors
- Mitigation of climate change: reduce greenhouse gases, better management of land and sea, enhance natural carbon collectors

#### Clean Energy Transition

Support the transition towards clean energy in order to facilitate the transition towards an energetically efficient economy, based on climate neutral and renewable energies. Types of projects: Other-Actions-Grants (OAG) up to 95% grant support.

##### Areas:

- Creation of a national, regional and local political framework that supports the transition towards clean energies
- Accelerate the development of technology, digitalisation, new services and business models, and the bettering of medical competences
- Attract private funding for sustainable energy
- Engage citizens in the energy transition
- Support regional and local investment projects

# Digital Europe Programme

## Overview

### What is the Digital Europe Programme?

The Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) is a new EU funding programme focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens, and public administrations. It aims to bridge the gap between digital technology research and market deployment, and supports the EU's twin objectives of a green transition and digital transformation while strengthening the Union's resilience and digital sovereignty.

The Digital Europe Programme has a planned budget of €7.59 billion from 2021-2027.



The Digital Europe Programme will support projects in five key capacity areas:

#### Supercomputing

- Deployment of world-class exascale and post-exascale supercomputing capacities

#### Artificial Intelligence

- Setting up EU-wide sectoral data spaces based on a cloud-to-edge federated infrastructure and promotion of testing and adoption of AI-based solutions

#### Cybersecurity

- Building up advanced cybersecurity capabilities, promoting the sharing of best practices and ensuring wide deployment of cybersecurity solutions

#### Advanced Technical Skills

- Increasing the education offer and training in key digital technologies and support collaboration between higher education institutions and the private sector

#### Deployment and Best Use of Digital Capacity and Interoperability

- Establishment of a network of European Digital Innovations Hubs supporting the digital transformation of European public and private organisations and deployment of several high-impact projects such as blockchain capacities or the digital transformation of public administration and services



# Digital Europe Programme

## Overview



### Criteria

The award criteria for grants under the Digital Europe Programme are set out in the work programmes and individual calls for proposals. However, they will include as a minimum the following elements:

- The maturity of the action in the project development
- The soundness of the implementation plan proposed
- The need to overcome financial obstacles such as a lack of market finance

A single legal entity (i.e., start-ups, SMEs, etc.), as well as a consortium of legal entities, can apply for funding under the Digital Europe Programme.



### Grant size

The grant size depends on the specific call for proposal, and may cover up to 100% of the eligible costs.



### Contact points

Digital Europe Programme support is available to projects located in all EU Member States, where national contact points can provide further information on the Programme and in particular its interactions with national funding instruments and other EU programmes.

#### **National contact point in Denmark**

Danish Agency for Digital Government

Website: [www.digst.dk](http://www.digst.dk)

# Other EU funding opportunities for companies

There is a vast range of EU funding opportunities available for companies to support technology and market development beyond those presented in this guide. We recommend taking a look at some of the selected opportunities below, if you want to learn more.

## **InvestEU Fund**

What: The InvestEU Fund supports sustainable investment, innovation, and employability through the financial guarantee of public and private investments. Offers loans/warrants or participation in capital/risk capital.

Total budget: Mobilises €372 billion through EU budget guarantee of €26.2 billion

Learn more: [investeu.europa.eu](https://investeu.europa.eu)

## **European Investment Bank (EIB)**

What: The European Investment Bank is the biggest multilateral financial institution in the world and one of the largest providers of climate finance. Offers loans, guarantees, equity investments and advisory services.

Total budget: €65.15 billion of financing in 2022

Learn more: [eib.org](https://eib.org)

## **Connecting Europe Facility**

What: The Connecting Europe Facility supports the development of high performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy and digital services.

Total budget: €33.25 billion

Learn more: [cinea.ec.europa.eu](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu)

## **Interreg Europe**

What: The Interreg Europe programme supports transnational, transregional and interregional cooperation projects within a number of themes, including environment and sustainability.

Total budget: €379 million

Learn more: [www.interregeurope.eu](https://www.interregeurope.eu)

### Resources and more information on EU funding:

- [CINEA](#): The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) manages European Commission programmes contributing to decarbonisation and sustainable growth.
- [CINEA Dashboard](#): Public dashboard with information on grants and projects awarded EU funding.
- [EU-DK Support](#): Free counseling on EU funding through a nationwide network of public advisers and regional offices.
- [Danish Industry](#): Work within EU funding includes providing general support and advice, advocating for business interests, and facilitating networking.

