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PART 1/2

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

**Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020
and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes**

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1 Introduction

The European Commission and the Member States are mandated by the regulations that lay down the rules for the European Structural and Investment Funds¹ (ESIF), Horizon 2020, and other EU programmes directly managed by the Commission in the areas of **research, innovation and competitiveness** - in particular COSME, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI")² and the digital services part of the Connecting Europe Facility³ - to ensure coordination, synergies and complementarities⁴.

Although there has been a substantial increase in the budget of Horizon 2020 (almost EUR 80 billion) compared to the previous research framework programmes and although there has been a steep increase of the innovation and competitiveness-related budgets under cohesion policy over the past decade⁵, it is of utmost importance to ensure optimal synergies between the funds to face the ever increasing competitive pressure from global markets and maximise impact and efficiency of public funding⁶. The European Parliament and Council made it clear that this approach is no more a "nice to have" but a "need to implement". This political will needs to permeate all layers of stakeholders, at Member State level as well as Commission services level, including intermediaries and facilitators' networks.

To achieve this, it is crucial to align strategies and implementation modalities and complement existing and future roadmaps. However, translating this new reality will be a learning process, given that ESIF implementation is under Member States' shared management rules while Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus +, etc. support is allocated at EU level (directly or indirectly by the Commission). A first effort lies in making strategic choices and planning on the side of the regions and Member States, i.e. to foster excellence in the smart specialisation areas. On the Horizon 2020 side, it consists of implementing the programmes in a synergies-friendly manner in terms of raising awareness, providing information, engaging in communication campaigns, and connecting National Contact Points (NCP) as much as possible to national and regional ESIF policy makers and managing authorities.

This staff working document is thus a guide geared at (but not limited to) staff and organisations involved in the strategy development – in particular smart specialisation

¹ ESIF refers to: ERDF – European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, ESF - European Social Fund, EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and EMFF – European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

² See also guide to social innovation: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides>

³ The broadband part of digital CEF is addressed in a separate guide on broadband investments to be published here: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda>

⁴ Regulation 1303/2013 laying down common provisions of the ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF; Regulation 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the support from the ERDF; Regulation 1300/2013 on the Cohesion Fund; Regulation 1304/2013 on the ESF and Regulation 1302/2013 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC).

⁵ From some 6% of the funds in the 2000-06 period to around 25% in the 2007-13 period with a further increase in the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy programmes. Already in 2008 around 9% of the public spending on R&I in the EU came from the EU budget, roughly half and half from the 7th Framework Programme and the European Structural Funds. See Innovation Union Competitiveness report 2011.

⁶ The thematic concentration of ERDF on research, innovation, ICT, SME competitiveness, energy efficiency and renewables is expected to result in EUR109.5 billion (current prices) ERDF investments into these competitiveness drivers.

strategies (RIS3)⁷, design of ESIF programmes and work programmes or work plans, design of the implementation modalities, making choices in terms of support tools, project formats, reporting requirements, audit systems and the drafting and interpretation of ESIF, Horizon 2020, COSME, ERASMUS+, Creative Europe and other regulations, rules for participation, delegated acts, etc. It targets public authorities at EU, national and/or regional levels, including agencies in charge of payments, control and audit; members of programme and monitoring committees, managing authorities in charge of designing and implementing ESIF programmes; institutions involved in the implementation of policy instruments for research, innovation and competitiveness at EU, national and regional levels; intermediaries that facilitate access to funding, such as NCPs for Horizon 2020, the Enterprise Europe Network, National Agencies for Erasmus +, etc.

The guide contains explanations on the basic rules and principles for obtaining synergies and combining the different funds, and contains recommendations to the relevant actors, as well as Commission support to facilitate synergies. It is accompanied by explanations on each programme (Annex 1) and guidance to a set of scenarios to inspire programme designers and implementers regarding project formats and potential and non-exhaustive combination schemes (Annex 2).

The guide is complemented by separate guidance on financial instruments⁸ and by guidance for potential beneficiaries of R&I and competitiveness related EU programmes⁹.

2 Basic principles and concepts for synergies

Basic principles for combined funding and synergies

Combined funding of ESIF programmes and Horizon 2020:

- NO substitution of national/regional or private co-funding to EU projects/programmes under direct Commission management by ESIF money (and vice versa).
- NO double financing: in no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by any budget.
- **Synergies among programmes:** Synergies mean joint or coordinated efforts to achieve greater impact and efficiency, not only combining ESIF and Horizon 2020 money in the same project!

Synergies can be achieved:

- Through bringing together Horizon 2020 and ESIF money in the **same project** (that could be a single action or a group of coordinated actions/operations, but always provided that there is no

⁷ Smart specialisation strategy means the national or regional innovation strategies which set priorities in order to build competitive advantage by developing and matching research and innovation own strengths to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts; a smart specialisation strategy may take the form of, or be included in, a national or regional research and innovation (R&I) strategic policy framework. The development of smart specialisation strategies through involving national or regional MAs and stakeholders such as universities and other higher education institution, industry and social partners in an entrepreneurial discovery process is compulsory for the regions and Member States that wish to invest ERDF into research and innovation. Smart specialisation strategies shall include up-stream and down-stream actions with Horizon 2020. See: RIS3 Guide: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3pguide>

⁸ See http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/pdf/fi_esif_2014_2020.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/index_en.cfm

⁹ An up-date of the “Practical Guide to EU funding opportunities for research and innovation”

double funding of the same expenditure item) in view of achieving greater impact and efficiency¹⁰;

- Through **successive projects** that build on each other or;
- Through **parallel projects** that complement each other.

ESIF programmes could also be designed and implemented¹¹ to take up high quality project proposals from Horizon 2020 or other centrally managed programmes, for which there is not enough budget available in the respective programmes.

2.1 Concept of Synergies

The Commission services identified synergies between the different Union funds as amplifying the research and innovation investments and their impact, combining different forms of innovation¹² and competitiveness support¹³, or carrying innovative ideas further along the innovation cycle or value chain to bring them to the market. Synergies are thus about obtaining more impacts on competitiveness, jobs and growth in the EU by combining ESIF, Horizon 2020 and other EU instruments in a strategic and also cohesion-oriented manner.

In order to achieve such synergies, the Commission services paved the way for a strategic approach with a medium to long-term perspective, starting at the stage of involvement of stakeholders ('entrepreneurial discovery process') to shape the smart specialisation strategies (RIS3 – Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation). Such RIS3 strategies set out the national or regional frameworks for investments in research and innovation not only from ESIF, but from all funding sources. Authorities directly concerned by Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes in the given territories shall thus be associated in this process¹⁴.

The Commission services strongly encourage synergies through bringing together Horizon2020 and ESIF money in the same project (possible only for Horizon 2020), or through successive projects that build on each other or parallel projects/roadmaps that complement each other (see funding options in annex 2).

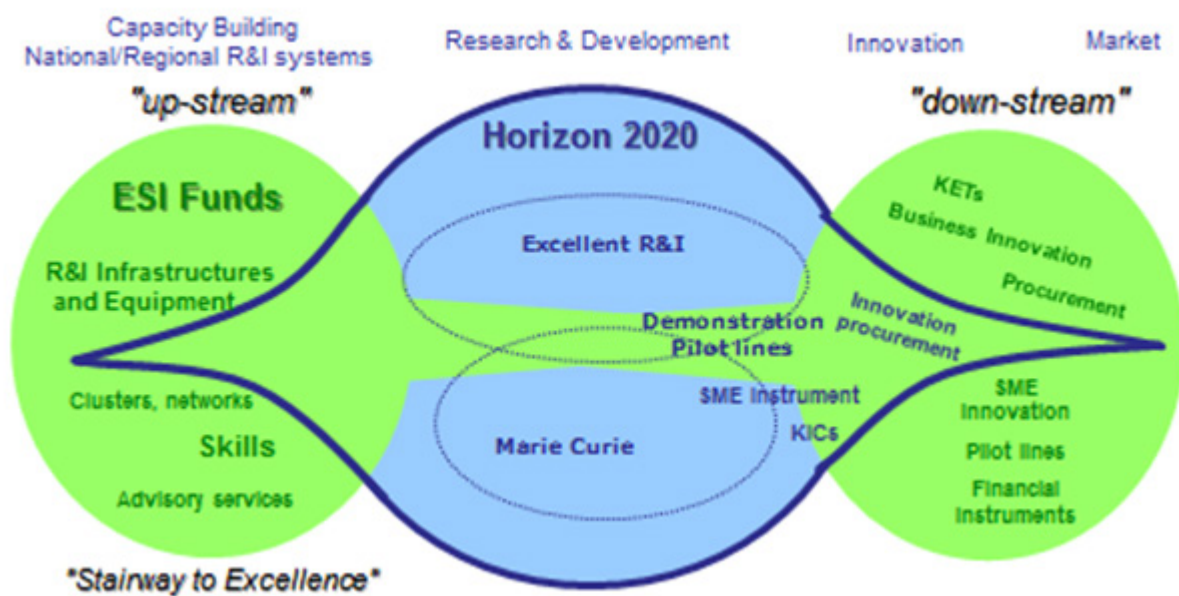
¹⁰ Nota bene that this is only possible for Horizon 2020 not other EU programmes

¹¹ Notably in compliance with Art. 125(3) of CPR as regards the selection processes and criteria for operations.

¹² This concerns all forms of innovation, including social innovation, service innovation, design, creativity, process innovation, work place innovation, user-driven innovation, public sector innovation, etc.

¹³ E.g. by fostering SME internationalisation, the development of innovation and specialised business support services and improved policy making and analysis

¹⁴ The same goes for the digital growth strategies as regards ICT-based innovation



2.2 Regulatory scope for synergies

The Regulations of 2014-2020 EU programmes contain a number of novelties that enlarge the possibilities for synergetic use of the EU funds.

2.2.1 Synergy-enabling rules in the ESIF regulations

The Regulation laying down common provisions (CPR) for ESIF sets out the following:

Article 15(1)b(i): Partnership Agreements (PAs) are to contain arrangements, in line with the institutional framework of the Member States that ensure coordination between ESIF and other EU and national funding instruments and with the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Article 65(11) provides for a possibility of cumulating grants from different EU funding instruments (or from one or more ESI Fund through one or more programmes and other Union instruments) for the same beneficiary or the same project, provided that the same expenditure/cost item does not receive support also from another EU fund (from the same Fund under different programmes, from another Fund or from other Union instruments).

Article 67(5)b and 68(1)c allows for an alignment of cost models (scales of unit costs, lump sums and flat rates) for corresponding costs and similar types of operations and beneficiaries in Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes.

Article 70(2) stipulates a possibility of up to 15% of the support from the ERDF, Cohesion Fund and EMFF at the level of the priority (up to 5% of the support from the EAFRD at the level of the programme), and up to 3% of the budget of a ESF operational programme (Article 13(3) ESF) to be allocated to operations located outside the programme area¹⁵.

Article 96(6)a: ESIF programmes are to set out the mechanisms that ensure coordination between ESIF and other EU and national funding instruments, and with the EIB, taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework (annex I to the CPR).

Article 96(3)d: programmes shall describe arrangements for interregional and transnational actions within the national and regional ESIF programmes with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State.

ANNEX I - Common Strategic Framework, sections 3 and 4, requires the Commission and Member States to foster synergies, effective coordination and complementarity between the different programmes.

¹⁵ Art. 13(3) of the ESF Regulation (Regulation (EU) N°1304/2013 of the EP and of the Council of 17/12/2013- OJ L 347/470 of 20.12.2013) allows that up to 3% of the budget of an European Social Fund (ESF) operational programme or ESF part of a multi-fund OP may be allocated to operations located outside the programme area, provided that it concerns the thematic objective 'promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility' or 'investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning', and provided that the relevant monitoring committee has given its agreement to the operation or types of operations concerned.

2.2.2 Derogation of non-cumulative principle for combination with Horizon 2020¹⁶

ESIF	Horizon2020
Art. 65(11) CPR: "An operation may receive support from one or more European Structural and Investment Funds or from one or more programmes and from other Union instruments, provided that the expenditure item included in a request for payment for reimbursement by one of the ESI Funds does not receive support from another Fund or Union instrument, or support from the same Fund under another programme."	Article 37 Rules for Participation: "Cumulative funding: An action for which a grant from the Union budget has been awarded may also give rise to the award of a grant on the basis of Regulation [Horizon 2020] provided that the grants do not cover the same cost items ."

Regulation EU No 1290/2013 laying down the Horizon 2020 rules for participation (Article 37) and the Common Provisions Regulation on the ESIF (Article 65(11)) allow for the funding of the same project (action/operation) through several grants from different EU instruments, including from different ESIF funds and programmes, subject to the absence of double funding.

To ensure the latter, Horizon 2020 and ESIF funding shall not cover the same cost / expenditure item.

The right to combine ESIF and Horizon 2020 does not waive the obligation for the beneficiaries to provide national/regional/private co-funding, if required by the grant agreement.

The non-cumulative principle set out in Article 129 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹⁷ applies only to grants. Hence, the derogation can only apply to grants and must be authorised in the relevant basic acts.

There is no derogation from the non-cumulative principle in the regulations on Erasmus+, Creative Europe, CEF and COSME¹⁸, meaning that for these programmes a combination of funds within the same project is not possible.

Eligible costs/expenditures are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant and which meet the criteria of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

What exactly can be an eligible cost (including indirect cost, and depreciation costs, etc.) and thus a cost/expenditure item differs under Horizon 2020 depending on the project formats with their different grant agreement types (e.g. Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, standard collaborative R&I actions with at least three legal entities from three different countries, EIT-KIC funding, grants for pre-commercial public procurement or public procurement of

¹⁶ Nota Bene: this section applies exclusively to the cumulation of ESIF and Horizon 2020 funding. The interpretation of the rules for cumulation of ESIF with other EU instruments or the cumulation of funding from different ESIF programmes may differ.

¹⁷ [Regulation \(EU, EURATOM\) No 966/2012 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union](#) (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1)

¹⁸ Note however that Art. 10(2) COSME regulation allows the following: "The Enterprise Europe Network may also be used to deliver services on behalf of other Union programmes such as Horizon 2020. This may include dedicated advisory services encouraging SME participation in other Union programmes". Some services directly delivered to SMEs by the Enterprise Europe Network partners might also be covered by objectives of OPs and could therefore possibly be separated and supported by ESIF grants and at ESIF conditions.

innovative solutions, ERA Chairs, etc. – see Annex 2). Details regarding the required (minimum) number of participants, type of participant and geographical spread, funding rates, lump sums or scale of unit costs that can be used for an action, or exceptionally, beneficiaries that are identified for grants without a call for proposals, can be found in the work programmes (and “work plans” for Article 185 and 187 initiatives) of Horizon 2020¹⁹ and in the general annexes²⁰.

What is a cost / expenditure item?

Taking into account the objective of reference to a cost / expenditure item (i.e. the absence of double financing by the Union budget) a cost item can be defined as follows:

A cost / expenditure item is the amount declared as eligible for Union funding under a budget category.

Depending on the budgeting approach, the budget category may be defined per activity (e.g. costs of training activities, work package), per nature (e.g. personnel costs, costs for durable equipment or for consumables, etc.) or by a combination of the nature and activity (e.g. costs of personnel assigned to the training activities).

The amount declared as eligible corresponds to the costs complying with the eligibility conditions set out in the corresponding basic act. Since only costs incurred in relation to the action funded by the grant are eligible, **a cost /expenditure item is limited to the costs of the resources consumed for the action** (for example the personnel costs for the hours actually worked on the action or the depreciation costs of equipment corresponding to the duration of the action and the rate of actual use for the action).

¹⁹ See first calls under H2020: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html>

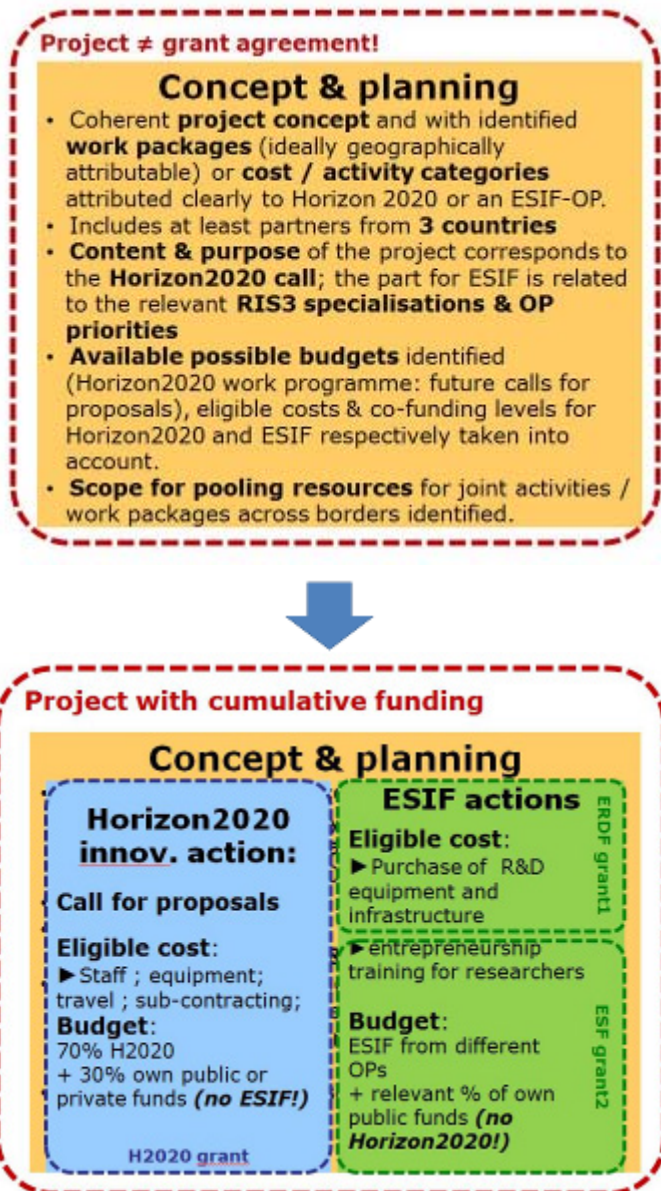
²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-ga_en.pdf

Project ≠ grant agreement:

A project can have different active grant agreements.

A project is a temporary endeavour designed to produce predefined results with a defined beginning and end, and has an identified and qualified project manager, as well as identified related project costs.²¹

In the context of synergies, projects are to be understood as operations²² that can consist of different actions, contracts, or groups of projects that are managed in a coherent manner. A project combining ESIF with Horizon 2020 funding will thus contain (several) separate grant agreements (e.g. one for Horizon 2020 and one per involved programme for the ESIF-funded components – see illustration).



²¹ See also R&D&I State Aid framework: "A R&D project may consist of several work packages, activities or services, and includes clear objectives, activities to be carried out to achieve those objectives (including their expected costs), and concrete deliverables to identify the outcomes of those activities and compare them with the relevant objectives. When two or more R&D projects are not clearly separable from each other and in particular when they do not have independent probabilities of technological success, they are considered as a single project." http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/modernisation/index_en.html

²² Operation is under ESIF a "project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the MAs of the programmes concerned, or under their responsibility, that contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities" of the operational programme from which it is funded. (Art.2(9)CPR)

3 Recommendations for next steps

3.1 Synergies need preparation and efforts at all stages of programming and implementation and by all actors involved

To achieve synergies all levels and stages of the programming and implementation need to be addressed, i.e.

- ✓ Starting at the strategic level with awareness and understanding of the opportunities offered by different EU programmes, the development of smart specialisation strategies and EU level strategies and plans,
- ✓ The development of work programmes and work plans in the framework of Horizon 2020, and the preparation of the Partnership Agreements and of ESIF programmes (including the choice of priorities, specific objectives, types of actions and beneficiaries, on the basis of an analysis of the needs – 'intervention logic' - see Annex 1) in the ESIF framework,
- ✓ And finally the set-up of the implementation mechanisms, project selection processes, information services, guidance to potential beneficiaries, monitoring of the implementation, etc.

At Strategic Level, the Commission made the development of coherent and comprehensive policy strategies and implementation plans an obligation if Member States and regions wish to invest ESIF into related policy areas.

The Commission's own strategy building efforts started with the adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy and its seven flagship initiatives that chart out a coherent jobs and growth agenda. Besides the Innovation Union flagship, in particular the Digital Agenda for Europe, the industrial policy for the globalisation era and the agenda for new skills and jobs are particularly relevant for research, innovation and competitiveness.

The commitment of the Innovation Union regarding improvement of national and regional policy-making for more innovation impact of its Cohesion Policy and ensuring that all regions participate in the Innovation Union materialised on the one hand in the focus of ERDF resources for research and innovation (thematic concentration) and in the introduction of smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) as ex-ante conditionality for ERDF investment priorities (see Annex 1). On the other hand Horizon 2020 pays increased attention to widening the participation and spreading excellence. It also materialised in the acknowledgement of the importance of regional policy actors in EU initiatives and translated into the opening up of certain initiatives to policy actors from regional level, e.g. to participate in programme coordination actions like ERA-Nets and joint programming, like the public-public partnerships (P2Ps) under Article 185 TFEU.

RIS3 strategies are required to prioritise fields, identified through the involvement of stakeholders ('entrepreneurial discovery process'), in which they have genuine and distinctive competitive advantages or the potential to develop competitive advantages. This process is crucial to orientate research and innovation activities towards the needs of the industries/public sector in the territory, stimulate private RDI investment, facilitate the

information flows and achieve practical synergies. In this context, it is important to note that RIS3 is not only about science and technology-driven innovation, but should consider, as a focus area or as part of the policy mix, other forms of innovation as well, such as public sector innovation, social innovation, organisational innovation, service innovation, user-centred innovation, demand stimulation for innovations, etc.²³

RIS3 strategies shall set out the national or regional frameworks for investments in research and innovation not only from ESIF, but from all funding sources.

At Programme design level, the Commission services in charge of ESIF and in charge of the directly managed programmes ensure regular consultation among them, including on the draft ESIF programmes prepared by Member States and work programmes, initiatives under Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and ESIF programmes respectively.

At Implementation level, the Commission is in charge of the implementation of the directly managed programmes, e.g. Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, EaSI" and the Connecting Europe Facility, as well as of the innovative actions for sustainable urban development under the ERDF. The MAs of the Member States and regions are in charge of the implementation of the ESIF programmes. The role of the Commission services with regard to the ESIF management consists of ensuring that the different authorities in charge of each programme (MA, certifying authority and audit authority) fulfil their responsibilities as regards management, selection, monitoring, financial management and control of operations supported; assessing the various documents forwarded by these authorities as provided for in the ESIF Regulations; and where applicable, appraising them and endorsing major projects.²⁴ The Commission is also responsible for monitoring, disseminating information and encouraging MA to coordinate.

²³ For more information on design of RIS3 strategies see the RIS3 guide: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3pguide>

²⁴ Articles 100-103 CPR - projects in the field of research and innovation are considered as "major" when their total eligible cost exceeds EUR 50 million. This is not to be confused with "large research infrastructures" in the context of Horizon 2020 (above EUR 20 million). See: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/large_infra/h2020-hi-large-infrastructures-ass_en.pdf

3.2 Recommended Actions for National/Regional Policy-makers, Managing Authorities and intermediaries

3.2.1 How to enable synergies along programming and implementation stages

National and regional policy-makers in charge of the development of **smart specialisation strategies** are recommended to:

- Use the entrepreneurial discovery process to identify synergies: detect different stakeholders/interest groups, new innovative entrepreneurs (e.g. technology-based ICT start-ups), hidden champions among existing enterprises or persons with an entrepreneurial potential and an international outlook and capacity to create cooperation between the different groups²⁵.

This includes:

- Work together with authorities and bodies involved in designing SME and industry policy and research and innovation policies, e.g. Horizon 2020 actors²⁶.
 - Include Horizon 2020 actors in the RIS3 development process and in the ESIF partnerships for Partnership Agreement and programme development.
 - Consult international research *and* business networks (not only the players from their own region/MS).
- Evaluate as part of the smart specialisation process the needs of industry and public procurers²⁷, (e.g. hospitals, facility companies - water, waste, urban transport, etc. - and research for innovative solutions) and involve the relevant ministries.
 - Focus the preparatory work for synergies on the strategic aim of their RIS3 in terms of economic transformation and the fields that emerge as smart specialisation priorities and on what individual Member States and regions can influence, i.e.:
 - Strengthen research and innovation capacity building, including research infrastructure (e.g. in universities, competence centres, etc.), innovation infrastructure and equipment (e.g. pilot lines, LivingLabs, FabLabs, Creative Factories, advanced manufacturing capabilities, science and technology parks)

²⁵ “The authorities directly concerned by Horizon 2020 shall be closely associated with this process” (see CPR, annex 1, 4.3.2.1). See also annex III of RIS3 Guide: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3pguide>

²⁶ Members of the H2020 programme committee, participants from their territory in European Innovation Partnerships (EIP), European Technology Platforms (ETP), Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) under the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), National Contact Points of Horizon 2020 (NCP), research institutions with success in FP7 or EUREKA including consultation of National Roadmaps for research infrastructures linked to the ESFRI Roadmap; furthermore with COSME Supported entities (e.g. the Enterprise Europe Network consortia members, participants in cluster/innovation platforms and large scale demonstrator projects, in projects for pre-commercial procurement and public procurement of innovative solutions, participants in the large-scale pilot projects for interoperable e-government solutions, etc.

²⁷ See current list of contracting authorities and entities in the Annexes to Commission Decision 2008/963/EC (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/rules/current/index_en.htm#maincontentSec3)

and skills (including in creative thinking, design, e-commerce), advisory services for potential Horizon 2020 applicants to increase chances to succeed in Horizon 2020 project proposals. The new Teaming actions under Horizon 2020 can help conceiving such infrastructure projects. The new Twinning and ERA-Chairs actions can help attracting leading professors and research teams, while Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND can support the internationalisation of human resources in research.

- Strengthen the capacity to provide innovation support services to facilitate getting innovations into the market. The Enterprise Europe Network (under the COSME programme) is invited to proactively transfer new and better practices in innovation and SME support to the region. This aims at strengthening the services of organisations that are partners in the network but also at other services providers in the region (like incubators, cluster organisations, investors and others). Support services to be strengthened in this way include but are not limited to: Innovation management, IPR management, advice for business plan development and investor readiness, technology audits to help SMEs detect needs and technology absorption potentials, etc. Also support for the up-take of results of FP7/Horizon 2020 and CIP/COSME projects is recommended.
- The implementation of substantial parts of the Horizon 2020 budget will be delegated to public-public-partnerships (Article 185 TFEU, e.g. EUREKA-Eurostars) and public-private-partnerships (in particular Joint Technology Initiatives under Art. 187 TFEU). Since MAs are often linked to the managers of the national/regional programmes (e.g. units within the same ministry) that for instance join up their programmes via Article 185 TFEU, this offers opportunities to use the governance mechanisms of the public-public-partnerships to optimise synergies with the RIS3 and programmes via shaping the annual work plans. The same applies to all Joint Technology Initiatives. Envisage teaming up with other Member States (e.g. via macro-regional strategies), e.g. to mobilise support for possible additional Article 185 TFEU initiatives or ERA-Nets.
- Get internationally connected to be faster in the development of multi-country proposals for Horizon 2020 and European Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG) calls for transnational cooperation. Team up with other MAs that will invest in related smart specialisation areas (also via macro-regional strategies and the above-mentioned types of platforms and networks) or have related public procurement needs (e.g. need for innovative solutions for environment, health, e-government, e-learning, or transport). MAs can identify the smart specialisation intentions of other Member States and regions via the S3Platform,²⁸ their sectorial and cross-sectorial regional industrial strength via the European Cluster Observatory and cluster organisations and other SME intermediaries active in or interested in the building of European Strategic Cluster Partnerships via the European Cluster Collaboration Platform²⁹. MAs

²⁸ <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home;jsessionid=PbYvS6ZCpXwP7FVnMxzRnkgTJ7rvnV2xpQY65QyYChHLwQKNgbyv!123550707811392122210307>

²⁹ www.clustercollaboration.eu

are strongly recommended to join and flag their specialisation fields via the S3Platform and to encourage their SME intermediaries to register at the European Cluster Collaboration Platform in order to be identifiable for others in search of cooperation partners.

- Foresee close-to-market support in the RIS3 strategies, e.g. for technology readiness levels (TRL)³⁰ 4-7 industrial research, development (including via contract or collaborative research actions linking SMEs and universities/public research bodies), demonstration and experimentation grants. Also TRLs 8 and 9, i.e. market introduction and expansion of productive capacities can be supported (in particular through suitable financial instruments), e.g. via early product validation and first production actions, certain innovation infrastructures (e.g. LivingLabs, FabLabs, Creative Factories), cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains and cross-sectoral cluster cooperation, large scale demonstrators or public procurement of innovative solutions, and support to the development of advanced manufacturing capabilities.

The authorities in charge of the drafting of Partnership Agreements and ESIF programmes are recommended to:

- Open the programming documents for transnational activities, foreseeing explicitly the possibility to invest outside the programme area (Article 70(2) of CPR). In the ESIF programme section dedicated to interregional and transnational actions (Article 96(3)d of CPR) name more than one Member State to allow the cooperation potential with other Member States to be fully exploited (e.g. through making use of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies)³¹. Consider European territorial cooperation opportunities³².
- Envisage types of priorities, implementation and project selection methods that allow for combinations and synergies in the course of the ESIF programme implementation: permanently open submission of applications for funding to react timely to Horizon 2020 or other call/opportunity for combined funding / synergies; get familiar with the types of eligible costs and project formats under the different EU programmes to design appropriate complementary support types; allow all types of innovation activities³³ - including service innovation and non-technology driven innovation³⁴, besides the standard research activities and infrastructure and student mobility measures.
- Use the opportunity to align the cost models and eligibility rules to those of Horizon 2020 programmes (or COSME, Creative Europe, Erasmus +, etc.), in particular to allow the use of the same unit costs for similar operations and beneficiaries without

³⁰ Measure to assess the maturity of evolving technologies during its development (TRL scale from 1 – basic principles to 9 – first production); Horizon 2020 can support actions until TRL 8. ESIF can support actions until TRL 9 and beyond, subject to state aid rules.

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/index_en.cfm

³² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/cooperation/index_en.cfm

³³ Pilot lines, testing, value-chain networking, marketing, IPR and innovation management support, technology adoption/acquisition, etc.

³⁴ Design, creative thinking, demand tools like public procurement of innovative solutions, etc.

restriction.³⁵ Provide a strong reference in the relevant ESIF programme sections to the alignment to the Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. cost models.

- Align the content and selection criteria for ESIF funding to Horizon 2020 type of activities³⁶, to be able to give ESIF support to projects that have passed successfully the Horizon 2020 evaluation threshold but could not be funded for lack of Horizon 2020 budget³⁷. Ideally these projects might be prioritised in the selection procedures as the Horizon 2020 evaluation procedures guarantee impartial assessment and high-quality proposals (provided that they fit into the relevant RIS3 and ESIF programme). Annex 2 provides further information on project formats under Horizon 2020 and other directly managed EU instruments that should be analysed when designing the policy mix for the smart specialisation strategies and type of measures, principles for selection and implementation methods that will be funded by their ESIF programmes.
- Install a “Horizon 2020 watch”, i.e. consult regularly Horizon 2020 Work Programmes and calls to identify forth-coming calls and initiatives. The same should go for the COSME, CEF digital services, Erasmus+ and CreativeEurope calls with a view to designing calls that allow for the exploitation of potential synergies. It could be organised via the relevant NCPs that would digest and send the information to the relevant MA.
- Improve capacities and services of business and innovation support structures (including via linking up to NCPs, Enterprise Europe Network, BICs), in line with international quality standards, such as the EBN Quality System for BICs or the quality label developed through the European Cluster Excellence Initiatives³⁸ so that they can deliver the relevant high-quality services (see above).
- Foresee full cost models to allow private co-funding without being conditional on public budgets. This would avoid hampering private R&I support for lack of national/regional co-funding.
- Provide R&I support service measures (possibly in cooperation with the NCPs and the Enterprise Europe Network to facilitate international R&I partner finding) to advise potential applicants on Horizon 2020 procedures and requirements.
- Provide information and training on Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. and the relevant cost models.

³⁵ See Art. 65(11) and 68 CPR. The flat rate for indirect costs applying to the ESIF is now up to 25% of eligible direct costs (with a methodology to underpin it) i.e. the same flat rate as for Horizon 2020 (without any justification needed). It is up to 15% of eligible direct staff costs (without any justification needed). A delegated act will set out the EU policy areas where flat rates for indirect costs under the ESIF can be drawn from.

³⁶ e.g. Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions for researchers' training mobility and career development, EUREKA-Eurostars type of projects for SME R&D, knowledge-triangle projects like in the EIT-KICs, ERC proof-of-concept, SME feasibility study support, etc.

³⁷ This is in particular promising for proposals submitted by a single SME for support by the SME instrument. A very high oversubscription of available funds is expected and 'the European added value' will likely become a decisive factor for support. Project proposals failing for phase 2 support simply because of a lack of European dimension will be awarded a 'label of excellence' by the EC services and will be supported by Enterprise Europe Network to find alternative sources of funding. An easy entrance to regional programmes, potentially making use of the existing results of expert evaluations, could deliver high impact.

³⁸ <http://www.cluster-excellence.eu/>

- Design and implement grant schemes, which scale-up successful innovative initiatives supported by Erasmus + programmes.

<p>The authorities in charge of setting up the management, audit and reporting systems for the new ESIF programmes are recommended to:</p>
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- In case of intentions to apply Art. 65(11) CPR for combining ESIF with Horizon 2020 grants in the same project:
 - Install a system of formal and conditional commitment of funding, including possibly the development of standard letters for conditional commitment of ESIF that can be provided to project applicants who prepare a cumulative funding project in the sense of Art 65(11) CPR.
 - Install a mechanism to reserve the relevant funds until the results of the Horizon 2020 project evaluation are available (in general 5 months after the deadline for project submission, which might fall into the next financial year). The final commitment can be made dependent on successful Horizon 2020 evaluation. There are usually 3 months between the communication of the results of the Horizon 2020 evaluation and the signature of the Horizon 2020 grant agreement. During this time a MA should be able to give the final commitment for the grant agreement under ESIF.
 - Align also the reporting requirements and timelines to the Horizon 2020 grant, as far as possible under the relevant ESIF programme.
 - Train ESIF auditors on the options for synergies, extra-territorial funding and Horizon 2020 rules on eligibility of costs, to avoid problems if combined funding occurs.
- Install a tracking system for synergies with Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes, e.g. by asking in applications or implementation reports for previous funding from Horizon 2020 or other EU support received or parallel actions under another EU instrument that lead to cross-fertilisations with the ESIF support.
- Analyse the information provided by the Commission/NCPs on Horizon 2020, COSME, Erasmus+ National Agencies, etc. results and participants in a territory to detect whether the projects and/or their results can contribute to the smart specialisation fields and how. Inform the RDI support providers about the results and participants.
- Recognise international cooperation as major driver of innovation and value it as a positive criterion for project selection. The use of international evaluators to assess the quality of the ESIF project application would be ideal. MAs can benefit from the new "Synchronised Call Initiatives" under Horizon 2020 that allow for an evaluation of purely national/regional R&I project proposals under national/regional programmes

(incl. those with ESIF support) by international experts from the Horizon 2020 database, provided that calls are coordinated and the proposals come in English.³⁹

- Offer potential participants in Union instruments directly managed by the Commission information sessions/material on the R&I support schemes available in the territory (e.g. via the Enterprise Europe Network or NCPs). MA could consider the following activities:
 - Awareness raising, information and advice on how to access the Union programmes, including early information regarding future calls for proposals, feedback from information events and assistance in participation to info days on calls and information on initiatives for facilitating access to risk-finance;
 - Creation of sectorial or cross-sectorial interest groups and *alumni clubs* of former and current beneficiaries from the region;
 - Promotion of local academia-industry cooperation and their cross-border networking;
 - Support to international partner search to facilitate the formation of trans-national consortia;
 - Advice and quick check of project ideas or grants for exploring project feasibility and validation of project ideas, unless the Union instruments directly managed by the Commission integrate such support, like in the case of Horizon2020 ‘SME instrument’;
 - Support to ERA-Net projects on strategic topics. These projects are excellent springboards for regional actors' participation in Horizon 2020;
 - Provide training, mentoring and coaching to potential EU project managers, partners and stakeholders.
- Address regularly at the monitoring committee meetings the issue of synergies, good examples and the progress of the RIS3 implementation actions, in particular the up-stream and down-stream actions to Horizon 2020.⁴⁰
- Reconsider the value added of setting up own support schemes, instead of using dedicated instruments set up at Union level, e.g. the SME initiative⁴¹ or instruments under CEF⁴².
- Ensure inter-operability of ESIF supported e-government solutions with the CEF digital services infrastructures (see annex 2).

³⁹ See for example INSO-8-2014: Synchronised Call initiatives:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/work-programmes/societies_draft_work_programme.pdf

⁴⁰ CPR annex I, section 4.3.2 a) and b)

⁴¹ See Article 39 CPR and http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/the_funds/fin_inst/index_en.cfm

⁴² See: http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/cef_brochure.pdf

3.2.2 How to enable combination of funds in the same project

The synchronisation of the timing of the funding decisions under Horizon 2020 and ESIF is a crucial issue for enabling the combination of funding in the same project.

When preparing ESIF programmes, managing authorities (MA) should envisage implementation modalities and selection methods that allow to align the timing of ESIF funding decisions under the relevant priority axis to the Horizon2020 time-lines (e.g. open calls with cut-off dates, preference to projects with international outlook, etc.) and proposal templates that allow identification and description of parts of a project supposed to be funded from Horizon 2020 (or of related projects if sequential or parallel projects are funded from other EU programmes)

As the Horizon 2020 grant agreements are in many cases⁴³ signed 6 to 8 months after the deadline for proposal submission, the MA could set up a system of conditional approval for ESIF grants that allows reserving ESIF budgets until the results of the evaluation of the Horizon 2020 project proposals are known (in many cases 5 months after the submission deadline). If a MA has agreed to a cumulative support to a specific proposal before its submission to a Horizon 2020 call, such conditional approvals should then allow the final approval of the ESIF grant in less than 3 months after the positive Horizon 2020 evaluation result is communicated.

Moreover, a system to alleviate the administrative workload for beneficiaries in terms of financial management, reporting and audits should be set-up. MAs should consider not only alignment of cost models to the Horizon 2020 standards, but also of their reporting requirements (i.e. accept a single report on the overall project progress) and coordination of the audits and on-site controls with Horizon 2020 project reviews.

Using financing from Horizon 2020 and ESIF for the same project requires adequate accounting practices at beneficiary level so that they are able to separate and appropriately record the respective cost items from the very beginning of the action. At the project conception stage MAs should remind potential applicants to identify the different work packages (e.g. a test series), or types of activity (e.g. costs of training activities), or types of cost (e.g. personnel costs) as well as the geographical location where the actions will be implemented and unfold their benefit (in the sense of Article 70(2) CPR). Thus, the costs can be attributed to the different corresponding EU funding sources from the beginning. Applicants should be reminded that they will have to monitor and record costs/expenditure accordingly.

The different steps could be visualised as follows for the case of an industrial project:

⁴³ Depending on the H2020 project type this can be longer or shorter.



In case the ESIF programme call allows for it (in terms of location of beneficiaries, cost model, etc.), it could be envisaged to invite proposers of Horizon 2020 projects that received a positive evaluation but cannot be co-financed under Horizon 2020 due to unavailability of budget, to contact the relevant ESIF Managing Authorities for exploring possibilities to take over the project.

3.3 Actions for National and Regional authorities involved in Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU programmes

In order to put the achievement of synergies between Cohesion Policy, rural development and maritime policies and EU policies in the fields of research, innovation and competitiveness high on the agenda of the evolution of the existing EU strategies and initiatives in these fields, the following actions are recommended:

- The European Innovation Partnerships, the Knowledge and Innovation Communities, the high-level group on Key Enabling Technologies, the SET plan steering group, the European Research and Innovation Area Board, the ESFRI Executive Board, the Enterprise Policy Group, groups and initiatives active in the Digital Agenda for Europe Assembly⁴⁴ and other bodies and initiatives that contribute to the shaping and monitoring of EU level policy strategies take note of the smart specialisation priorities that emerge in fields related to their activities and examine the potential for synergies with these bottom-up priorities and strengths.

In order to translate the regulatory scope for synergies and complementarities into reality, the authorities involved in the preparation of work programmes and work plans are recommended to take the following actions:

- NCPs of Horizon 2020 and similar national bodies for Erasmus+, COSME and Creative Europe should actively cooperate with MA and regional structures of support, interlink websites and provide information to beneficiaries on ESIF funding opportunities.
- Foster the understanding of potential beneficiaries of the budget structures for projects that combine Horizon 2020 and ESIF.
- Facilitate transfer of technology, dissemination and take-up of research results from Horizon 2020 (and other Research Framework Programmes⁴⁵) by companies (that may receive ESIF support).
- Facilitate access to finance in particular for start-ups and innovative SMEs by promoting the different schemes proposed through the EIB, EIF and local financial intermediaries.⁴⁶
- In view of preparing work plans and call specifications, the Dedicated Implementation Structures of P2Ps, Joint Undertakings of JTIs, as well as their partners in the JTO, P2P, and research infrastructures should contact the MAs of relevant ESIF programmes to explore synergy potentials.
- Organise workshops bringing together the relevant MAs and bodies in charge of RIS3 with representatives in the different Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. programme

⁴⁴ e.g. Startup Europe: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/about-startup-europe>

⁴⁵ http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html

⁴⁶ See for instance: <http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/funding-grants/access-to-finance/>

committees, to brainstorm about possible synergies and synchronisation of funding decisions, to regularly exchange information and mutually learn about the state of play of the RIS3 implementation. For example, they could explore potential alternative funding / reorientation of high quality Horizon 2020 proposals with a score above threshold, for which there was not enough Horizon 2020 budget available.

In order to translate the regulatory scope for synergies and complementarities into reality, authorities and bodies involved in EU innovation-related programmes' implementation are recommended to take the following actions:

- NCPs should inform MAs about projects, participants and results in their territory in a timely manner.
- Disseminate information on Horizon 2020 and FP7 results to national/local innovation stakeholders (cluster organisations and other SME intermediaries, business networks, science and technology parks, the Enterprise Europe Network centres, etc.).

4 Commission support to facilitate synergies

The Commission services support the synergies efforts by the national and regional authorities by the following:

Synergies friendly implementation of EU instruments directly managed by the Commission:

- Use, in implementing Horizon 2020 and other concerned directly Commission managed EU programmes, the full range of new regulatory possibilities for synergies, in particular Article 37 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation (cumulative funding with ESIF) as well as facilitating the use of ESIF up-stream measures in Horizon 2020 projects, encouraging the down-stream use of results of Horizon 2020 (and of the previous research framework programmes) projects for ESIF projects. This includes advice and support through the respective Commission help-desks⁴⁷ and relevant National Contact Points⁴⁸. In parts of the Horizon 2020 work programme 2014-2015 specific references to potential synergies with ESIF, leverage of other private, national or regional (including ESIF) funding or coherence with policy strategies and initiatives, including smart specialisation strategies, and their relevance for the scope, eligibility or expected impact of project proposals have been inserted⁴⁹. Information seminars with stakeholders on potentially interesting areas were organised.

Training

- Auditors involved in ESIF at regional, national and European levels and other Union programmes, will be trained and informed to get a greater understanding of the functioning of Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU programmes, including different

⁴⁷ e.g. see for example the Horizon 2020 Research Enquiry Service on the Web (see <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries>)

⁴⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html

⁴⁹ See for instance: calls for proposals under the “Twinning”, “Teaming” and “ERA Chairs” (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-sewp_en.pdf), in the Nanotechnologies, Advanced Materials, Biotechnology and Advanced Manufacturing and Processing section (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-leit-nmp_en.pdf) and the 2014 Call for Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) proposals (<http://eit.europa.eu/kics/2014-call-for-kics/>)

accounting systems and terminologies. Furthermore, inform about new possibilities for synergies among the programmes, including knowledge of new forms of innovation support and widened possibilities under the modernised state aid rules for research, development and innovation (in particular the General Block-Exemption Regulation, the R&D&I Framework and the Important Projects of Common European Interest).

Evaluation

- In Horizon 2020, some specific topics (close to market activities) may be identified at the level of the biennial Work Programmes as particularly suitable for mobilising additional funding from other available instruments, involving public or private funding of research and innovation activities, including - but not limited to - EU instruments such as ESIF. In such a case, the particular Work Programmes and Calls for proposals could specify the additional conditions and/or lay down further details of the application of the evaluation criteria under which these actions would be considered for funding by Horizon 2020 including any possible additional contribution of other Union funding instruments.

However proposers need to note that, unless explicitly specified in the Work Programmes, the existence of potential funding synergies between different EU instruments will not be considered and assessed during the evaluation of a proposal submitted under Horizon 2020 (hence such cases will not in themselves lead to a higher evaluation score). The impact of a Horizon 2020 proposal is measured by its potential to develop new products and / or services in the market or solve a societal challenge / problem. Nevertheless, it would be still worth-while to plan and foresee such synergies, since this would enable a more integrated implementation on the ground and has the potential to stimulate a better local uptake of the project's outcomes and give it a wider perspective.

- Include in the briefing sessions for the evaluators of project proposals under Horizon 2020 and other relevant EU instruments information on the concept of synergies, the specific references to synergies related issues in the specific call, relevant ESIF, Horizon 2020, etc. specific rules and opportunities arising from cumulative funding of Horizon 2020 with ESIF.

Collecting data, providing information and guidance, raising awareness

- Information will be provided to the prospective participants in Horizon 2020 calls for proposals about possibilities for combined, cumulative or consecutive funding in a particular area of the Horizon 2020 Participant's Portal⁵⁰.
- Information on ESIF funding in the participant portals of COSME, Erasmus+, CEF digital services, CreativeEurope, etc.
- New links to the INFOREGIO website and other relevant ESIF websites⁵¹ on the websites of Horizon 2020 and other programmes (COSME, Erasmus+, digital CEF,

⁵⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/other/index.html#collapseFive>

⁵¹ See links to the relevant ESF, EAFRD and EMFF web-sites in annex 1

CreativeEurope, etc.) to make information on relevant ESIF programmes, contacts to MAs and information on open calls easily accessible.

- Updated "Practical guide to EU funding opportunities for research and innovation" to help identifying the most suitable EU funding or support sources for research, innovation, digital growth and SME competitiveness via a checklist (implementation of Article 13 CPR).⁵²
- Information provided to successful applicants in directly managed EU programmes, on potential ESIF support in their territory (e.g. through a reference to the InfoRegio or other relevant ESIF websites, or in the standard cover letters to the Evaluation Summary Reports on the Horizon 2020 project evaluation).
- A system will be developed able to target relevant information at MAs, in particular:
 - identify the territory in which a Horizon 2020 participant is located to allow to send the information on project participants and on their successful Horizon 2020 projects to the relevant NCPs who may wish to share this information with the relevant MA;
 - classify the Horizon 2020 results by research / technology/ sector in order to allow for a matching with smart specialisation fields;
 - classify Horizon 2020 projects also according to the ESIF thematic objectives and investment priorities whenever relevant;
 - set-up a system to track synergies with ESIF in selected Horizon 2020 proposals;
 - develop a system that allows to identify for each successful Horizon 2020 project the technology readiness level and / or the potential for further RDI measures towards commercial use, public procurement needs, in order to facilitate potential innovation actors' understanding of the Horizon 2020 results and needs for further investment and its business innovation potential (e.g. through inserting in the templates for the Horizon 2020 mid-term / final reports appropriate sections for Horizon 2020 participants to assess the needs and potentials for further R&I support);

Analysing and disseminating information with regard to synergies

- Published scenarios describing the different Horizon 2020 project formats and cost models and sketching out possibilities for synergies to facilitate the understanding of this for national and regional authorities.⁵³
- Analysis and dissemination of policy mixes and approaches that proved to be successful for increasing synergies between the EU funds, including in the framework of the European Parliament Pilot Project "Cohesion Policy and the synergies with the research and development funds: the stairway to excellence", will be ensured. For instance, the Erasmus+ programme puts demonstration of EU added value, impact and

⁵² See existing practical guide:

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/0/new_practical_guide_EU_funding_opportunities_R%26I.pdf

On-line check list: http://cordis.europa.eu/eu-funding-guide/finding-sources_en.html#checklist Update is in preparation. See:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/activity/index_en.cfm

⁵³ See annex n.2 to this document.

results of projects at the core of its actions. To this end, performance results and dissemination have been embedded in a dedicated chapter of the legal basis. The ultimate objective of dissemination and exploitation of results (D&E) is to feed into system development, to show the results obtained by the projects financed in the framework of the three key activities, their usefulness and transferability and their relevance in strengthening the links and synergy between the Programme and the main EU policy priorities and processes, particularly the implementation of Europe 2020, Education and Training 2020 and Youth Strategies and the priorities of the EU external action.

- Directly managed Union instruments are used to facilitate the testing of and experimentation with good practices and new forms of research, innovation and competitiveness support and for facilitating capacity building at national and regional levels. This should in particular include large-scale demonstrators, public procurement of innovative solutions, pre-commercial procurement, social innovation, "widening" actions, innovation in the public sector (see annex 2 under Horizon 2020), cluster cooperation along value chains, advanced business and innovation support services (see annex 2 under COSME), Knowledge Alliances (see annex 2 under Erasmus+), inter-operable e-government solutions (see annex 2 under CEF digital services). Set up a system of channelling such best practices, methods and tools developed and tested into ESIF programme management and into the policy mix of RIS3 strategies.
- A tracking system for identifying and measuring progress of synergies between ESIF investments and Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, CEF, COSME etc. projects will be set-up. This could be done via an invitation to report on synergies in implementation and progress reports, i.e. ask to describe whether ESIF funding related to the programme proposal/project directly managed by the Commission was received in the past. The Commission services will work closely with the Executive Agencies managing Horizon 2020, COSME, etc. projects to track-down all available information and data on developing synergies with ESIF in selected projects.
- Identification and dissemination of good practice examples for synergies, e.g. via requesting systematically in all European Commission awards and prizes (e.g. European Entrepreneurship Awards, EU prize for Women innovators, EIT Entrepreneurship Awards, European Capital of Innovation Award, European Social Innovation Competition, European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration, European Business Awards for the Environment, European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) Award, etc.) information on previous ESIF support and vice-versa in the RegioStars Awards. Also, specific studies could be launched, like the report on synergies in the field of transport research.⁵⁴

Stimulating dialogue and cooperation between the stakeholders involved in ESIF and directly managed Union instruments

- NCPs, Enterprise Europe Network, EGESIF⁵⁵, programme/management committee meetings, etc. will be used to ensure better and more systemic information flow

⁵⁴ See http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/pdf/report_synergies_horizon_2020_cohesion_policy_en.pdf
⁵⁵ Group of experts on European Structural and Investment Funds

during implementation, and strengthen the collaboration of the NCPs with MAs and regional structures of support (e.g. regional development agencies, cluster organisations, etc.).

- Horizon 2020 and other programmes beneficiaries will be invited to inform MAs about their participation and potential interest in ESIF support.
- Add a sentence in the cover letter to the Evaluation Summary Report for projects above threshold, but not funded (notably for Horizon 2020 SME instrument), inviting them to contact the relevant ESIF MA to explore potential alternative funding/reorientation of the proposal towards ESIF rules and conditions.
- The inclusion of policy-makers and innovation actors who flagged in their RIS3 strengths and potentials in fields that are relevant for an EIP, KIC, SET plan, etc. will be promoted in order to fully exploit the innovation potential of Europe for addressing the societal challenges.
- Linked up the innovation investments under the EAFRD to the EIP for 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability'.⁵⁶

Integrating new elements in the Horizon 2020 projects life cycle

- The RIS3 specialisations (e.g. via the Eye@RIS3 tool⁵⁷) are being screened, identifying which MS/region has selected which smart specialisation priority field (and if relevant which ESIF programme will be funding them) and consider this information when up-dating Horizon 2020 work programmes, or when developing and implementing European Innovation Partnerships agendas.
- Insert further references to potential synergies in Horizon 2020 work programmes whenever relevant.

Providing specific support for smart specialisation strategy development, preparation of Partnership agreements, ESIF programmes and their implementation

- Since 2011, the Commission provides hands-on support for individual regional and national governments for the development of smart specialisation strategies through experts.
- The Commission set up the S3Platform that is hosted by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) in Seville, part of the Commission's Joint Research Centre. The S3Platform is open to regional and national administrations of EU, candidate and neighbouring countries. Its services include providing information, methodologies, expertise and advice to national and regional policy makers, promoting mutual learning (incl. peer-reviews of RIS3 strategies), trans-national co-operation and contributing to academic debates around the concept of smart specialisation. In particular, it provides information on the emerging fields of smart specialisation priorities and potentials for synergies with ESIF to the relevant bodies

⁵⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/index_en.htm

⁵⁷ <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/map>

and groups, allowing to detect areas that represent a particular potential, also for less research intensive regions and to others seeking strategic transnational partnerships.⁵⁸ The S3Platform is complemented by the cluster mapping of sectoral and cross-sectoral regional industrial strength by the European Cluster Observatory, the Regional Innovation Monitor and the regional Innovation Union Scoreboard⁵⁹.

- Upon request, provide MAs and ESIF intermediaries with contacts to independent experts registered in the Commission's expert databases (in particular the database for Horizon 2020 evaluators⁶⁰). Such independent experts can be appointed to assist research and innovation assignments including the evaluation of proposals, monitoring of projects, evaluation of programmes, or design of policy tools. Such requests might be sent to a functional e-mail box. The right to personal data protection under Reg. No 45/2001 will be guaranteed.
- A platform/network for exchange of information, best practice examples and solving practical issues which might arise during implementation of synergetic projects will be set-up.
- Support to the completion of RIS3, their monitoring and possible revisions will be provided via the S3Platform, the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility⁶¹ and experts.
- "Synchronised call initiatives" will be used under Horizon 2020 to improve the evaluation systems in the Member States and regions via international joint peer reviews for calls for proposals addressing a pre-determined research and innovation field with one identical call deadline. The funding decision will be made by each national/regional research funding body.⁶²
- ESIF programmes and progress with the implementation of major research projects under ESIF will be analysed to make information about new research capacities available to Horizon 2020 programmers.
- Thematic guides for MAs to be used as guiding principles for the selection of operations and for the choices of types of projects and support mechanisms has been published and will be further completed and up-dated.⁶³
- Commission services' support for the improvement of the policy mix to support innovation and competitiveness, notably via the S3Platform, mutual learning, studies, analysis and the provision of experts will be enhanced⁶⁴.

⁵⁸ See Eye@RIS3 database: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/eye-ris3>

⁵⁹ See: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/facts-figures-analysis/index_en.htm

⁶⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html>

⁶¹ The PSF aims to improve the design, implementation and evaluation of national/regional research and innovation policies. It will offer expert advice to public authorities at national or regional level on a voluntary basis, covering the needs to access the relevant body of knowledge, to benefit from the insight of international experts, to use state of the art methodologies and tools, to receive tailor-made advice. See "Spreading excellence and widening participation" part of the work programme

⁴³ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/2474-inso-8-2014.html>

⁶³ Guides are available on service innovation, innovation-based incubators, entrepreneurial skills, advanced SME support policies, connecting universities to regional growth, cultural and creative industries in smart specialisation, energy efficient innovation through procurement, eco-innovation, converting research into commercial success and on social innovation (see: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides>). Guidance on science and technology parks, clusters in less favoured regions, ICT and digital entrepreneurship support, and innovation procurement will be available soon.

- Data and analysis to facilitate international and EU wide comparisons is published and regularly up-dated.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Call for expression of interest to establish a list of experts to assist the Directorate-General for Regional Policy in the appraisal, implementation and monitoring of Cohesion policy interventions. TED: 2012/S 55-088796. See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/tender/expression_en.cfm

⁶⁵ e.g. the [national and regional innovation scoreboards](#), the [Regional Innovation Monitor](#), the [European Cluster Observatory](#), the [European Competitiveness reports](#), the KETs Observatory, the Innovation Union Competitiveness reports, etc. see: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/benchmarking>

List of acronyms

(See also glossary section of Horizon 2020 participants' portal :
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/reference_terms.html)

CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
COSME	Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (see details in annex 1)
CP	Cohesion policy (see details in annex 1)
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation for all European Structural and Investment Funds (2014-2020) Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the EP and the Council of 17 December 2013 (OJ L 347, p. 320 of 20.12.2013)
CSF	Common strategic framework for all European Structural and Investment Funds (2014-2020)
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EaSI	European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation
ECSEL	Electronic Components and Systems Initiative JTI (merger of former ENIAC and ARTEMIS JTIs)
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EIP	European Innovation Partnerships are innovation stakeholder platforms around societal challenge themes, currently: Active Healthy aging, agricultural sustainability and productivity, Smart Cities and Communities, Water, Raw Materials. No funding from Horizon2020 for substance activities, only funding of networking activities.
EIT	European institute of Innovation and Technology
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERA	European Research Area
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESF	European Social Fund
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report, i.e. the evaluation result of Horizon 2020 project proposals
ETP	European Technology Platforms are industry-led stakeholder fora (participants are mostly from industry) that develop short to long-term research and innovation agendas and roadmaps for action at EU and national level to be supported by both private and public funding. There are currently 20 ETPs under the themes of Bio-based economy, Energy, Environment, ICT, Production and processes, Transport, nano-technologies and industrial safety. H2020 only funds their networking activities.

JTI	Joint technology Initiatives (see details in annex 2)
JPI	Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI) aim to pool national research efforts (funding programmes) in order to tackle common European challenges more effectively in a few key areas. They start with a structured process whereby Member States agree, on a voluntary basis and in a partnership approach, on common visions and Strategic Research Agendas to address major societal challenges. On a variable geometry basis, Member States commit to JPIs where they implement together joint Strategic Research Agendas mainly financed from own national programmes.
JU	Joint Undertaking
KICs	Knowledge and Innovation Communities
MA	Managing Authority in charge of the implementation of ESIF
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
MSC COFUND	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes
NCP	National Contact Points of the directly managed EU programmes, in particular Horizon 2020
PA	Partnership Agreement setting out the framework for all 2014-2020 ESIF programmes in a Member State
PCP	pre-commercial procurement
PPI	public procurement of innovative solutions
PPP and P2P	Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) or JTI under Art.187 TFEU or on contractual basis under Horizon 2020 and Public-Public-Partnership (P2P) under Art. 185 TFEU (see details in annex 2)
R&I or RDI	Research and Innovation or Research, development and innovation
RI	Research Infrastructures
RIS3	Research and Innovation strategies for smart specialisations
SET	The European Strategic Energy Technology Plan
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TO	Thematic Objectives correspond to the goals of Europe 2020: TO 1-3 for smart growth, TO 4-7 for sustainable growth, and TO 8-11 for inclusive growth. They are also aligned to the thematic areas of Horizon 2020.
TRL	Technology Readiness Level, see definition for Horizon 2020: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf
WP	Horizon 2020 work programme: the (bi)annual work programme of Horizon 2020 are the basis for calls for proposals Besides descriptions of the topics of the calls, work programmes may introduce additional eligibility criteria, specify details on the number of participants, type of participant and place of establishment, lay down further details for the application of the award criteria (excellence, quality and efficiency of the implementation, impact), and specify weighting and thresholds, specify the funding rate for an action, specify that lump sums or scale of unit costs can be used for an action (subject to prior separate Commission Decision) or exceptionally even identify beneficiaries for grants without a call for proposals.

Annex 1

Overview of differences and communalities between relevant EU programmes

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Basic principles of the Cohesion Policy and ESIF⁶⁶

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) include the financial tools for implementation of Cohesion Policy, aiming at promoting and supporting the overall harmonious development of its Member States and Regions.

As stated in Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in order to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion, the Union aims at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions or islands.

The funds providing specifically support under cohesion policy are the following:

- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, aiming at redressing the main regional imbalances in the Union and investing in growth)
- **European Social Fund (ESF)**, investing in people
- **Cohesion Fund (CF)**, investing in environment and trans-European networks in the area of transport infrastructure,

Apart from the three Funds under the Cohesion policy, other ESIF have the potential to contribute to structural and investment goals, i.e.

- **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**
- **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**

For the 2014-2020 period the Funds supporting cohesion policy have been brought together with the EAFRD and the EMFF under a common strategic framework in order to maximise their effectiveness and optimise synergies. They are named "European Structural and Investment Funds" (ESIF).

In order to contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020) and to economic, social and territorial cohesion, in the 2014-2020 programming period the ESIF should focus their support on a **limited number of common thematic objectives**, to ensure maximum impact for these investments.

Under the EU's 2014-2020 budget, Cohesion Policy will invest EUR 366.8 billion⁶⁷ in Europe's Member States, their regions and cities to deliver the EU-wide goals of growth and jobs, as well as tackling climate change, energy dependence and social exclusion.

Cohesion Policy will invest in all EU regions, adapting the level of support and the national contribution (co-financing rate) to their levels of development:

- Less Developed regions (GDP < 75% of EU-27 average)
- Transition regions (GDP 75% to 90% of EU-27 average)

⁶⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/how/index_en.cfm

⁶⁷ Please note that these figures do not include EAFRD and EMFF.

- More Developed regions (GDP > 90% of EU-27 average)

Investments under ERDF will be concentrated on **4 key priorities**: innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and the low-carbon economy. EUR 109.5⁶⁸ billion will be dedicated to these sectors.

Around EUR 66 billion will be focused on priority Trans-European transport links and key environmental infrastructure projects through the Cohesion Fund.

Through the **ESF**, Cohesion Policy will provide a significant contribution to EU priorities in the field of employment, for example through training and life-long learning, education and social inclusion (at least 23,8% of the ESF in each Member State will have to be used to support this objective).

The **EAFRD**⁶⁹ disposes of around EUR 95.3 billion (current prices) and includes among its priorities the fostering of knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas and enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forests.

The **EMFF**⁷⁰ will have a budget of around EUR 5.5 billion (current prices) and has among its priorities the fostering of innovative, competitive and knowledge based fisheries and aquaculture including related processing. This includes strengthening technological development, innovation and knowledge transfer.

Cohesion policy is delivered under **shared management**. While Commission sets priorities, negotiates and approves the strategies through Partnership agreements and Operational Programmes (OPs) proposed by the Member States, and allocates resources, Member States manage the programmes, select the projects, monitor and assess them, in partnership with the relevant regional and local authorities, economic and social partners as well as civil society bodies.

The Commission is involved in monitoring and evaluation commits and pays out approved expenditure and verifies the control systems

The responsibilities of Members states are carried out by the **Managing authorities (MAs)**, i.e. public or private authorities or bodies at national, regional or local level, designated by the Member State to manage assistance from the ESIF. If the Member State designates a MA other than itself, it shall determine all the modalities of its relationship with the MA and of the latter's relationship with the Commission.

The assistance from ESIF follows the principles of complementarity - **EU assistance should be additional to national investments and not replace**

⁶⁸ Please note that the figures are expressed in current prices.

⁶⁹ See http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-funding/budget/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/research-innovation/index_en.htm

⁷⁰ See http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/emff/index_en.htm

public or private expenditure by a MS, multi-annual programming/financing, proportionality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and sustainable development.

Specific conditions – "**ex-ante conditionalities**" must be fulfilled before funds can be channelled to ensure more effective investments. For example, "smart specialisation strategies" identifying innovation strengths and potential are conditional to investments into the RDI field. Other conditionalities include business-friendly reforms, transport strategies, measures to improve public procurement systems, compliance with environmental laws, strategies to fight youth unemployment, early school leaving or to promote gender equality and non-discrimination are all necessary preconditions.

A Common Strategic Framework provides the basis for better coordination between the European Structural and Investment Funds. This also links better to other EU instruments like Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility or the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. In addition, a common set of rules for all European Structural and Investment Funds as well as simpler accounting rules, more targeted reporting demands and more use of digital technology ("e-cohesion") are in place.

Investments from ESIF are disbursed on **territorial basis**, to the region or member state subject of the OP. Nevertheless, there is also room for **cross-border cooperation**, making the setting up of more cross-border projects easier with the possibility to support projects located outside the programme area. Moreover, ensuring macro-regional strategies like the Danube and the Baltic Sea is supported by national and regional programmes.

Co-financing rates for each OP are fixed by the relevant adopting Commission decision. The co-financing rates vary on the basis of the category of region and are applied at the level of the priority axes (specific priorities within each OP). Therefore, at the level of single projects, they might be different and will be determined on the basis of selection criteria defined within the calls.

Cohesion Fund: co-financing rate of 85%, eligible MS those with GNI per capita <90% of EU 27 in 2008-2010

ERDF and ESF: depending on the GDP, may vary between 50%, 60%, 80% and 85%.

Differences and Communalities with other EU programmes

While ESIF acts mainly at national and regional level, with some leeway towards trans-territorial activities, Horizon 2020 and other Union research and/or innovation programmes are mainly centrally managed and most often foster transnational projects.

By their different goals, the nature of actions will be different.

Nevertheless, overarching themes that originate in the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives⁷¹ for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are reflected at national/regional level in the ESIF ex ante conditionality of Research & Innovation smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) that defines priority areas that can be linked to research and innovation topics of other programmes.

The Commission Services compiled an overview of differences and communalities by programme with ESIF, to better illustrate the potential opportunities:

⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/flagship-initiatives/index_en.htm

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 supports the implementation of the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with a EUR 79.4 billion budget (in current prices), this R&I Framework Programme is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe.

H2020 Programme: 3 main priorities:

1. Excellent Science - includes:

- European Research Council (ERC)
 - Future and Emerging Technologies (FET)
 - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) for researchers' training, mobility and career development
 - Research infrastructures (including e-infrastructures) – support to feasibility study and building (incl. for large infrastructures above EUR 20 million).
- } Fundamental research; proof of concept grants for ERC projects that proved to be successful

2. Industrial Leadership (applied research projects up to TRL⁷² 8) - includes

- Enabling and Industrial Technologies such as:
- ICT (including two Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) photonics and micro- and nano-electronics),
- Other KETs: nanotechnologies, advanced materials, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and processing
- Space
- Access to risk finance; and
- Support for "Innovation in SMEs" (including 'policy actions for better SME support' and the topics addressed by the SME instrument, that provides staged support for feasibility study and an innovation project that is core to realise an ambitious business plan).

3. Tackling societal challenges

Horizon 2020 reflects the policy priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and addresses major concerns shared by citizens in Europe and elsewhere. It will include establishing links with the activities of the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP).

⁷² Technology Readiness Levels: see definitions in http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

All Work Programmes and ancillary documents can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html

See also: Horizon2020 Official Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/h2020-sections>

Horizon 2020	ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds
DIFFERENCES:	
Non-territorial , mainly transnational approach based on excellence and impact; H2020 does not take into account geographic specificities in allocating funding	Place-based approach supporting economic and social cohesion.; co-funding rates vary according to the region and programme
Individual (R&I) Projects tackling the whole cycle of innovation, taking into account strategic approaches at EU level, e.g. through European Innovation Partnerships and the Strategic Energy Technology plan; Co-Fund actions: focus on co-funding specific R&I Calls or programmes PCP/PPI, PPP, P2P, ERA-NETs, etc.)	Largely focused on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities (RIS3). There is also an increase of support to R&I activities as such, e.g. business-university cooperations and closer to the market activities (prototyping, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production).
Directly managed (European Commission/executive agency) and awarded directly to final beneficiaries or managed by a Union body or multi-country entity; in case of Programme Co-Funding, with Dedicated Implementation Structure (indirect management)	Shared management with national and regional public intermediaries (managing authorities, implementing agencies and intermediate bodies) which define the implementation details and allocate the funding to final beneficiaries
Not counted for EU State Aid purposes	Counted for EU State Aid purposes
Competitive calls for proposals addressed to multi-country consortia (participation beyond the EU is possible) without geographic pre-allocation. (European Research Council and	Policy-related prioritisation based on cohesion considerations and RIS3 priorities to individual firms/bodies and consortia within the territory covered by the operational programme ⁷³ (and only within the EU).

⁷³ ESIF/S3 can support (to a limited extent) cooperation with actors outside the programme territory: up to 15% for the ERDF, the CF and the EMFF [Art.70(2)b CPR] – 5% in case of EAFRD.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions also address individuals; SME instrument also address single SME)	Use of competitive attribution through calls and aid schemes based on project selection criteria are also increasingly used (depending on MS)
OPPORTUNITIES:	
<p>Horizon 2020 will focus on: industrial leadership and tackling major societal challenges, maximising the competitiveness impact of research and innovation and raising and spreading levels of excellence in R&I.</p> <p>Horizon 2020 includes actions to close the research and innovation divide: ERA Chairs, EIT Regional Innovation Scheme, teaming and twinning, research infrastructure development, etc.</p> <p>Horizon2020 has the objective of spreading excellence and widening participation compared to FP7</p> <p>It is foreseen that for certain types of actions (including the SME instrument) proposals that fulfil excellence criteria but cannot be supported from Horizon2020 are awarded a 'Seal of excellence'. This seal might be taken up by national / regional programmes to facilitate access to project funding⁷⁴.</p>	<p>Besides improving the innovation eco-systems, Cohesion policy will partly increase the capacity of regions and Member States to participate in Horizon 2020 ("Stairway to Excellence") and partly fund R&D&I activities in a MS/region that can build on FP7 and Horizon2020 projects.</p> <p>ESIF programmes can take up good practices and project formats that were tested under Horizon 2020, e.g. public procurement of innovative solutions, pre-commercial public procurement, stage-gating for projects (like in the SME instrument), knowledge-triangle settings like in the EIT-KICs, "proof-of-concept" type of actions like under the ERC, social and public sector innovation approaches, etc.</p> <p>Horizon 2020 can provide support for the policy development at national and regional levels.</p>
<p>Similar cost options that may facilitate combining funds: lump sums, flat rates, unit costs etc. (Art 67 and 68 CPR & H2020 Rules for Participation)</p>	

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

⁷⁴ The Commission declared following the suggestions from the European Parliament that "Union level intervention enables EU-wide competition to select the best proposals, thereby raising levels of excellence and providing visibility for leading research and innovation. The Commission considers that positively evaluated European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska-Curie, teaming actions, phase-2 SME instrument or collaborative project proposals that could not be funded for budgetary reasons, have still met the Horizon 2020 criterion of excellence. Upon approval of the participants, this information can be shared with the responsible authorities. The Commission therefore welcomes any initiatives to fund such projects by national, regional or private sources. In this context, cohesion policy also has a key role to play through building capacity."

COSME

The new Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) will run from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of EUR 2.3 billion, of which 60% shall support financial instruments and EUR 350 million shall support the operations of the Enterprise Europe Network in all regions.

COSME	ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds
DIFFERENCES:	
Non-territorial, COSME does not take into account geographic specificities in allocating funding, except for the Enterprise Europe Network where 'informal pre-allocation of funds to MS/regions takes place'	Place based approach supporting economic and social cohesion
Focus on projects strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the Union's enterprises, particularly SMEs and encouraging, entrepreneurial culture and promoting the creation and growth of SMEs (no support to individual SME's projects)	Largely focused on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities (RIS3)
Directly managed (European Commission/executive agency) and awarded directly to final beneficiaries	Shared management with national and regional public intermediaries (managing authorities, implementing agencies and intermediate bodies) which define the implementation details and allocate the funding to final beneficiaries
Competitive calls for proposals addressed to legal entities without geographic pre-allocation.	Policy-related prioritisation based on cohesion considerations and RIS3 priorities to individual firms/bodies and consortia mainly within the territory covered by the operational programme (and only within the EU). Use of competitive attribution through calls and aid schemes based on project selection criteria are also increasingly used (depending on MS)

OPPORTUNITIES:	
Enterprise Europe Network provides business support services with a trans-national dimension directly to SMEs and shall catalyse the transfer of better practices in business support to the region	Business support services are customised to the needs of SMEs in a territory and focus on place-based support. Funding the testing of new and better support schemes originating from partner regions.
Improvement of cluster management, and international cooperation (incl. beyond the EU)	Funding cluster secretariats and activities, science and technology parks and other innovation infrastructure

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU's new programme for education, training, youth and sport with a budget of around EUR 14.5 billion. It supports three main types of activities:

- Learning mobility for individuals.
- Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, including with non-EU countries, through partnerships and IT platforms.
- Support for policy reforms in Member States including experimentation and forward-looking projects, transparency and recognition tools, knowledge development and dialogue with stakeholders.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

ERASMUS+	ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds
DIFFERENCES:	
<p>Differences:</p> <p>Mainly indirectly managed, awarded directly to final beneficiaries through National Agencies.</p> <p>Knowledge Alliances (Key action - KA2), Sector Skills Alliances (KA2), Policy experimentations and Forward Looking Projects (KA3) managed via the Executive Agency (EACEA)</p>	<p>Managed by Managing Authorities in Member States in the framework of shared management</p>
Supports mainly transnational mobility actions (KA1) and transnational cooperation projects (KA2, KA3)	Place-based approach supporting economic and social cohesion
<p>Focus on mobility actions (KA1), multilateral cooperation (KA2) and policy support projects (KA3) to improve education and skills, modernise education and training systems and foster cross-sector cooperation.</p> <p>Competitive call for proposals, some also including non-EU countries</p>	<p>Focus on improving education and training systems, including through grant schemes.</p> <p>Focus on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities</p>

OPPORTUNITIES:	
<p>Focus on improvement of skills level through (trans-national) mobility (KA1). Cooperation in the fields of education, training and youth to promote exchange of knowledge and experience, employability and innovation through partnerships including education institutions, administrations, public bodies, enterprises youth organisations etc.) (KA2).</p> <p>Supporting policy reforms through knowledge development, transparency and recognition tools, policy experimentation and support to stakeholder organisations (KA3).</p>	<p>Focus on improvement of skills levels and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training</p> <p>Mainstreaming and up-scaling successful policy experimentations and innovative practices funded by Erasmus+</p>

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

Creative Europe

Creative Europe plans to help the cultural and creative sectors to seize the opportunities of the 'digital age' and globalisation while safeguarding and developing European cultural and linguistic diversity. The programme has a budget of EUR 1.46 billion for the period 2014-2020. It builds on the former Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA mundus programmes, adding a new component which strives to facilitate an access to finance for cultural and creative sectors. It aims at enabling the sectors to reach their potential so that they can contribute to the Europe 2020 goals for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion and to open up new international opportunities, markets and audiences.

CREATIVE EUROPE	ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds
DIFFERENCES:	
Foster European cultural and linguistic diversity and promote European heritage	Foster socio-economic development, incl. redressing the main regional imbalances through structural adjustments, etc.
OPPORTUNITIES:	
<p>Support artists and cultural professionals to develop their skills, competences and know-how that contribute to strengthening the cultural and creative sectors (e.g. encouraging adaptation to digital technologies, testing innovative approaches to audience development and testing of new business and management models).</p> <p>Support artists and cultural professionals to work across borders.</p> <p>Funding for transnational cultural activities within and outside of the EU</p>	<p>Possibility of mainly place-based support of SMEs active in the cultural and creative sector and potential support for digitisation</p>

Calls for proposals and advice on applications may be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm

Connecting Europe Facility – digital services

The Connecting Europe Facility is specifically designed to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at European level. It will support the roll-out of high-performing, sustainable and joined-up trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy, and broadband & digital services.

For more details see brochure and amended proposal for a Regulation on guidelines for trans-European telecommunications networks (COM(2013)329 final) and <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/connecting-europe-facility>. Synergies with the CEF broadband component are explained in the revised version of the Broadband guide.⁷⁵

Connecting Europe Facility – digital services	ESIF – European Structural and Investment Funds
DIFFERENCES:	
Facilitate the deployment and operation of trans-European digital services, e.g. for public procurement	At national or regional/local level: Foster e-skills, e-commerce and establishment of new businesses and business models based on ICT. Foster e-government, e-health, e-procurement, etc.
OPPORTUNITIES:	
<p>Platforms will facilitate interoperability of public IT services and applications in a transnational perspective.</p> <p>Building block for Digital Services Infrastructures (DSI) are components reusable at EU and national level. The following priorities for such DSI have been identified in the work programme 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic identification and authentication — eIdentification and eSignature • Electronic delivery of documents — eDelivery • Electronic Invoicing – eInvoicing 	<p>Public sector IT solutions funded from ESIF could be designed or adopted to be interoperable with CEF digital services.</p> <p>Public sector IT solutions funded from ESIF could reuse existing building block DSIs saving costs, reducing time-to-market and increasing interoperability throughout the Union.</p>

⁷⁵ See: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europeana - single access point to Europe's digital culture • Safer Internet - Creating a Better Internet for Kids • Open Data- facilitate access to public sector information, e.g. geographical information, statistics, weather data, data from publicly funded research projects, and digitised books from libraries • Automated Translation - make online content available in every European language. • Cyber-security 	
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Calls for tender, proposals and advice on applications may be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/connecting-europe-facility>