

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

AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES REGION – FRANCE

WHAT IS IT?

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

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

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



Smarter Europe

innovation, digitalisation, economic transformation and support to SMEs



Greener Europe

carbon-free, green energy, climate change adaptation



More connected Europe

strategic transport, digital networks, connectivity



More Social Europe

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



Europe closer to citizens

locally-led strategy, sustainable urban and rural development

HOW MUCH DOES IT AMOUNT TO?

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

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



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

HOW DOES IT WORK?

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



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COHESION POLICY IN THE AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES REGION (FRANCE)

2021-2027

For the 2021–2027 period, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region (France) has a total financial envelope of approximately €880 million under the Cohesion Policy. These funds will be allocated as follows:

ERDF

€660 million

Aim: to strengthen the cohesion of the European Union and correct the imbalances between its regions

ESF+

€143 million

Aim: to support the creation of better quality jobs and improve the professional perspectives of citizens

JTF

€77 million

Aim: to support regions in the transition towards climate neutrality

An additional envelope, REACT-UE, may be allocated in 2022 depending on the socio-economic situation in France.

A SINGLE AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

From 2021 to 2029, the Region will allocate the resources of the Cohesion Policy (ERDF, ESF+, JTF) through a single Operational Programme. This Operational Programme has two financial envelopes: Auvergne and Rhône-Alpes. The average intervention rate is 60% for Auvergne and 40% for Rhône-Alpes. The areas of intervention are four: the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the Rhône (Chemical Valley) and Isère, the Massif Central, and the Rhône and Saône basin. This programme finances projects in line with 10 priorities. For instance, these could be activities to provide better access to employment for all job seekers, particularly young people; the promotion of intermodal transport and urban mobility; or supporting the transition to a climate-neutral economy.

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AN INTERREGIONAL SECTION FOR THE MASSIF CENTRAL

In the 2014–2020 period, specific “intermassif” Operational Programmes existed to allocate the Cohesion Policy resources to mountain areas. As of 2021, these programmes have been integrated into the single Operational Programme of the Region of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, within “interregional sections”. For instance, the regional Operational Programme includes an interregional section dedicated to the Massif Central. Actors located in the Departments of Allier, Puy-de-Dôme, Cantal, Loire, Haute-Loire and part of Rhone and Ardèche can benefit from the funds of the Cohesion Policy.

What projects can be financed in the Massif Central?

- Support specific industries in the Massif Central such as timber, textiles including wool and leather, and stone
- Contribute to climate change adaptation and sustainable water management
- Halt the loss of biodiversity in emblematic ecosystems such as ancient forests, open herbaceous habitats, bogs
- Improve and promote mobility between regions and across the Massif Central
- Strengthen, promote and develop tourist attractiveness

Who can benefit from these funds?

Beneficiaries of the funds can include entrepreneurs, companies, researchers, associations, organisations and public authorities.

MORE FUNDS FROM OTHER INTERREGIONAL SECTIONS

More funds from other interregional sections: the Operational Programmes of other regions also include interregional sections that can be used to finance projects in our region's mountain areas.

For instance, under the **Operational Programme of South Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region**, the departments of Haute-Savoie, Savoie and Isère can finance projects in the **Alps**. These projects might include activities to develop year-round and eco-tourism offers in mountain areas, to foster the resilience of territories, to protect inhabitants from natural risks to preservation and the restoration of the biodiversity, or to develop solutions for mobility.

The **Operational Programme of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region** also has an interregional section dedicated to the **Jura massif**. This programme finances schemes to support sustainable tourism offers and to develop year-round tourism. The only territory in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region that is eligible for this programme is Ain.

INTERREG PROGRAMMES

Local and regional actors in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region are also eligible for funding under certain **Interreg programmes**:

2 Cross-border programmes

Interreg ALCOTRA
Interreg France-Switzerland

3 Transnational programmes

Interreg Euro-MED
Interreg SUDOE
Interreg Alpine Space

1 Interregional programme

Interreg Europe

▶ INTERREG ALCOTRA

What is it? This programme covers the Alpine area between France and Italy. It aims to improve the quality of life of local people, the sustainable development of its territories, and cross-border cooperation in relation to the economy, the environment and public services.

As of 2021, there is a new opportunity: about €2 million of ERDF funding will be used to finance 50 small-scale projects, with sums ranging from €25,000 to €75,000 (80% co-financing). The aim is to expand and diversify the base of public and private beneficiaries of the programme. To be eligible for funding, the project should have a cross-border value and include at least one French and one Italian partner. Actors in Haute-Savoie and Savoie are eligible for these funds.

▶ INTERREG FRANCE-SWITZERLAND

More info: www.interreg-alcotra.eu

What is it? This programme is implemented in a cooperation zone which covers 5 French departments and 7 Swiss cantons. It supports projects that fall under the following themes: green transition; new technologies; sustainable mobility, tourism and culture; and the reduction of obstacles at the Franco-Swiss border. The ERDF envelope for the 2021–27 period is €70 million. Actors in Ain and Haute-Savoie are eligible for these funds.

More info: www.interreg-francesuisse.eu

▶ INTERREG EURO-MED

What is it? This programme aims to make the Mediterranean region smarter and greener. It supports projects that develop innovative concepts and practices towards a climate-neutral and resilient society. Actors in the former Rhône-Alpes Region are eligible for these funds.

More info: www.interreg-med.eu

INTERREG SUDOE

What is it? This programme promotes transnational cooperation to solve common problems in the territory it covers, such as low investment in research and development, weak competitiveness on the part of small and medium-sized enterprises, and exposure to climate change and environmental risks. Actors in the former Auvergne Region are eligible for these funds.

More info: www.interreg-sudoe.eu

INTERREG ALPINE SPACE

What is it? This is a European cooperation programme that finances cooperation projects in the Alps. It finances innovative and pioneering ideas that support sustainable economic development, societal wellbeing and the preservation of the outstanding natural beauty of the Alps. Actors in the entire region are eligible.

More info: www.alpine-space.eu

INTERREG EUROPE

What is it? This helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy across all possible topics. To do this, it finances projects that create opportunities for sharing solutions and policy experiences across different regional actors in Europe. Beneficiaries can cooperate on any topics of shared relevance in line with their regional needs, as long as this falls within the scope of the Cohesion Policy. Actors in the entire region are eligible.

More info: www.interregeurope.eu

GET INSPIRED

 The Region has a website called "[The portal for European programmes in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes](#)". This website contains a wealth of information on European funds and projects available in the region. From time to time, the Region also invites you to participate in a range of events to help you learn more about different European funding opportunities.

Did you know? Thanks to the [E-synergie portal](#), applicants can now submit projects and manage all the documentation online.

WHAT IS MONTANA174?

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

www.montana174.org



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



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