



Funds for Europe's Supply Chain Revival

Accessing EU Money for Greener,
Digitalised Vehicle Logistics

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1. Introduction: EU Funding for Vehicle Logistics Operations

1.1 Increased Funding and Opportunities

Every seven years, European Union Member States commit around 1.1% of their gross national income to the bloc's budget, known as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Over the 2021-27 timeframe, the MFF has allocated €1.07 trillion in spending. In the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, however, the European Commission has created an additional funding instrument, called NextGenerationEU, to supplement the budget by a further €750 billion, bringing spending to more than €1.8 trillion in the period 2021-2027.

While this budget covers large parts of the European economy, there are many areas where vehicle logistics providers may be able to obtain funding and partner with others to be part of EU-financed projects. A number of the funding areas include investment in transport, infrastructure and cross-border connectivity, while many include aims to reduce emissions as part of the EU's Green Deal and sustainability targets, as well as support for digitalising industry and transport networks. This framework overlaps strongly with the priorities for many European vehicle logistics providers.

Such funding is both competitive – the success rate for applications is around 10% – and complex with different funding rates and application procedures under each mechanism. Most providers would need supporting expertise and often partners to obtain funding.

However, that should not deter companies from pursuing opportunities. This report aims to clarify and highlight relevant details for ECG members and vehicle logistics players.

Figure 1.1 EU 2021-2027 Budget in Brief

EU expenditure 2021-2027



Source: European Commission

1.2 Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

The Multiannual Financial Framework is the main backbone to EU funding across Europe and comprises four basic funding mechanisms over the 2021-2027 period.

- **Horizon Europe** – for research and development
- **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) 2.0** – for transport and digital connectivity
- **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)** – for regional and social development and cohesion
- **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** – for farming and agricultural support

The most relevant sources of funding for vehicle logistics projects are likely to be within Horizon Europe, such as for research and trials in new technologies and systems, and the CEF 2.0, including transport and infrastructure programmes. However, some players may also find relevant programmes in the European Structural and Investment Funds, for example in employing apprentices or in retraining (upskilling) workers.

1.3 NextGenerationEU

NextGenerationEU brings additional support and funding in a mixture of grants and loans, with a particular emphasis on both sustainability goals and digitalisation. The majority of its funds are channelled via the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). However, it also supplements spending in a number of other EU funds through the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion Territories of Europe (REACT-EU), including in the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF).

For vehicle logistics, most of these recovery funds are channelled through projects at local, regional or national levels. However, the programme also tops up and supplements the budget for a number of programmes in the existing EU budget, such as Horizon Europe, as well as funds within the ESIF. It is worth vehicle logistics providers understanding the outline of this funding.

2. Horizon Europe

2.1 Horizon Europe Outline

Horizon Europe is essentially the research and innovation arm of the EU and provides the framework for funding innovation projects. For the 2021-2027 period, Horizon Europe's budget is €95.5 billion, which includes €5.4 billion from the NextGenerationEU Recovery Fund. Several rounds of Calls for Proposals (CfP) are published each year, with the first in the new budget period expected by May 2021.

Horizon Europe covers a wide range of scientific, health, food and climate-related areas. Among its clusters are also key initiatives around digitalisation, industry and mobility, with projects and partnerships likely to be relevant for vehicle logistics. Institutional partnerships across the programme, for example, are focused on clean hydrogen fuel, rail and smart networks.

Figure 2.1 Horizon Europe's 5 Mission Areas



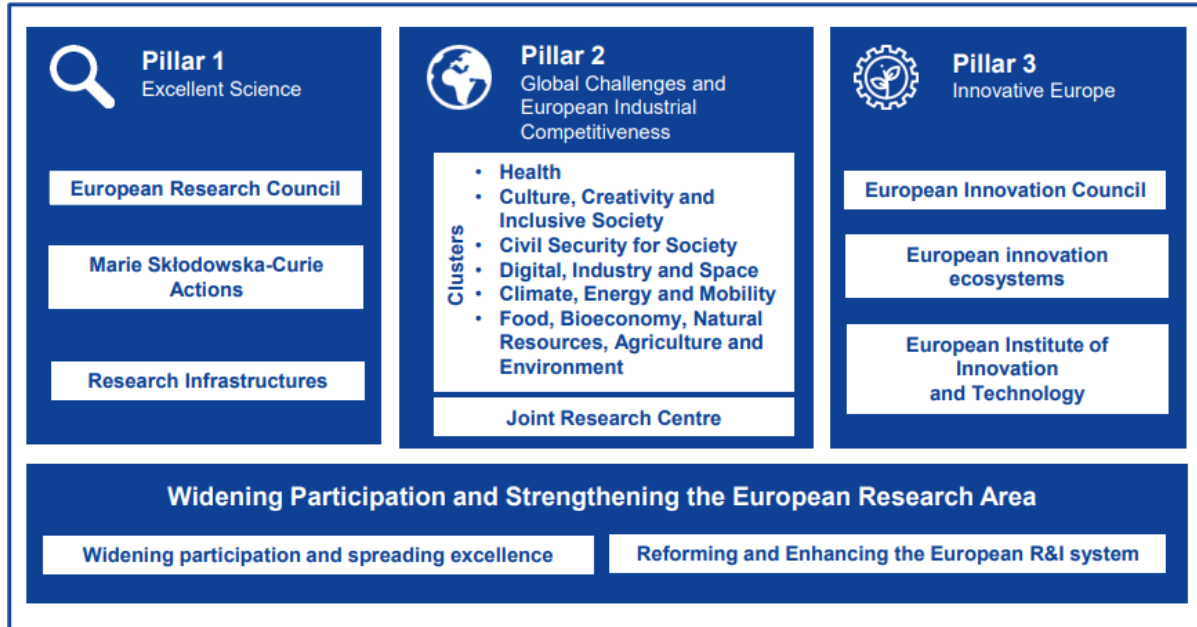
Source: European Commission

2.2 Horizon Europe Key facts

- €95.5 billion budget for the 2021-2027 period
- Contributes to the objectives of the European Green Deal and strengthens the European Research Area
- Partnerships are open to public and private partners, such as industry, universities, research organisations, bodies with a public service mission at local, regional, national or international level, and civil society organisations, including foundations and NGOs

- Horizon Europe has 3 Key Pillars across which the budget is allocated, with some overlap:
 - **Pillar 1:** Excellent science
 - **Pillar 2:** Global challenges and European competitiveness
 - **Pillar 3:** Innovative Europe

Figure 2.2 Horizon Europe's 3 Key Pillars



Source: European Commission

2.3 Horizon Europe Key Clusters for Automotive and Logistics

Among the most relevant aspects of the Horizon Europe pillars are several clusters under Pillar 2 on global challenges and European competitiveness. Cluster 4, 'Digital, Industry and Space', aims to help build a competitive, digital, low carbon, circular industry in Europe. Key focus areas include:

- Manufacturing technologies
- Key digital technologies including quantum technologies
- Emerging enabling technologies
- Advanced materials
- Artificial intelligence and robotics
- Next generation Internet
- Advanced computing and Big Data
- Circular industries
- Low carbon and clean industries
- Space including Earth observation

Cluster 5, meanwhile, on ‘Climate, Energy and Mobility,’ aims to make transport sectors more efficient, competitive, smarter, safer and more resilient and to understand causes of climate change and assess impacts, risks and opportunities in these key areas:

- Climate science and solutions
- Energy supply
- Energy systems and grids
- Buildings and industrial facilities in energy transition
- Communities and cities
- Industrial competitiveness in transport
- Clean, safe and accessible transport and mobility
- Smart mobility
- Energy storage

2.4 Horizon Europe Partnerships

Horizon Europe works through regular Calls for Proposals and features three types of partnerships:

- **Co-programmed European partnerships:** between the European Commission and private/or public partners with contractual arrangements.
- **Co-funded European Partnerships:** using a programme co-fund, with partnerships involving EU countries, research funders and public authorities.
- **Institutional European Partnerships:** partnerships in the field of research and innovation between the EU, Member States and/or industry. These institutional partnerships require legislative proposals to set up so-called ‘Joint Undertakings’ with a separate secretariat. In essence these 10 new institutional partnerships combine the allocated EU funding together with matched funds from industry.

Horizon Europe’s 10 Institutional Partnerships have been allocated €10 billion funding in total. Each of the partnerships is expected to get additional, matched funding from the industry partners, bringing the total available to €20 billion.

Table 2.1 Institutional Partnerships under Horizon Europe

1. Global Health EDCTP3
2. Innovation Health Initiative
3. Key Digital Technologies*
4. Circular Bio-based Europe*
5. Clean Hydrogen*
6. Clean Aviation
7. Europe’s Rail*
8. Single European Sky ATM Research 3
9. Smart Networks & Services*
10. European Partnership in Metrology (EURAMET)

*Most relevant for vehicle logistics sector

Horizon Europe Partnership Examples**European Partnership for Transforming Europe's Rail System (Joint Undertaking)**

Aim is to accelerate development and deployment of innovative technology (digital and automation) to deliver on European Green Deal Objectives

- Partner: Community of European Railway & Infrastructure Companies (CER)
- Partner: European Rail Industry Association (UNIFE)
- Partner: European Rail Infrastructure Manager Association (EIM)
- EC contact: elenamihaela.williams@ec.europa.eu
- Partner contact: enno.wiebe@cer.be
nicolas.furio@unife.org
bardo.schettini@eimrail.org

European Partnership on Clean Hydrogen (Joint Undertaking)

Aim is to accelerate development and deployment of European clean hydrogen technologies to contribute to sustainable, decarbonised energy systems.

- Partner: Hydrogen Europe
- EC contact: Patrice.millet@ec.europa.eu
- Partner contact: N.brahy@hydrogeneurope.eu

European Partnership Towards Zero Emission Waterborne Transport

Aim is to transform maritime and inland waterborne transport to eliminate emissions.

- Partner: Waterborne Technology Platform
- EC contact: RTD-CLEAN-WATERBORNE@ec.europa.eu
- Partner contact: jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu

European Partnership Driving Urban Transitions to a Sustainable Future

Aim is to engage with stakeholders to co-create methods and services in support of urban transformative transitions.

Partners: JPI Urban Europe

EC contact: Christos.Fragakis@ec.europa.eu

Partner contact: margit.noll@jpi-urbaneurope.eu

European Partnership for Clean Energy Transition

Aim is to accelerate research and innovation programme to boost energy transition.

- Partners: Swedish Energy Agency
- Partners: Austrian Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation & Technology
- EC contact: Maria.Getsiou@ec.europa.eu
- Partner contact: lisa.lundmark@energimyndigheten.se
hans-guenther.schwarz@bmk.gv.at
Michael.Huebner@bmk.gv.at

European Partnership on Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility (CCAM)

Aim is to implement CCAM technologies and services across the value chain. By 2030 the partnership will have helped to increase safety and reduce carbon footprints.

- Partner: European Road Transport Research Advisory Council (ERTRAC)
- EC contact: EU-CCAM-PARTNERSHIP@ec.europa.eu
- Partner contact: info@ertrac.org

European Partnership Towards Zero Emission Road Transport (2ZERO)

Aim is to accelerate development of zero tailpipe emission transport in Europe to deliver a multi-stakeholder roadmap for a clean road transport system.

- Partner: EGVA
- EC contact: guido.sacchetto@ec.europa.eu
- Partner contact: info@egvi.eu

For more details on partnerships under the Horizon Europe programme:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en

2.5 How to Apply

Details of how to apply and open tenders:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon>

- You may need to consider joining or creating a 'consortium' involving partners with which you can build a Horizon Europe project.
- Check your proposal meets the [eligibility criteria here](#)

Horizon Europe application process: One Stop Shop

There are 5 main steps for applying for projects and funding under Horizon Europe at the programme's 'One Stop Shop' [funding and tenders portal](#).

1. Find an opportunity:

- Look for 'Funding' or 'Tender' opportunities by clicking on the link above

2. Find partners

- Find partners once you have chosen your funding and tenders topic
- Use the 'partner search' section on the page
- You can also see organisations successful in previous projects on the topic
- Click here for more [help on managing your partner search profile](#)

3. Create an account

- Register for an [EU Login account](#)
- [For additional help click here](#)

4. Register your organisation

- [Register your organisation](#) to get a 9-digit Participation Identification Code (PIC)
- Use your EU login (Step 3) to then create your organisation login

5. Submit your proposal

- Select the topic you want to submit a proposal for
- Go to 'Submission Service' section
- If the status is 'Open', you can submit your proposal

3. Connecting Europe Facility 2.0

3.1 Connecting Europe Facility 2.0 Overview

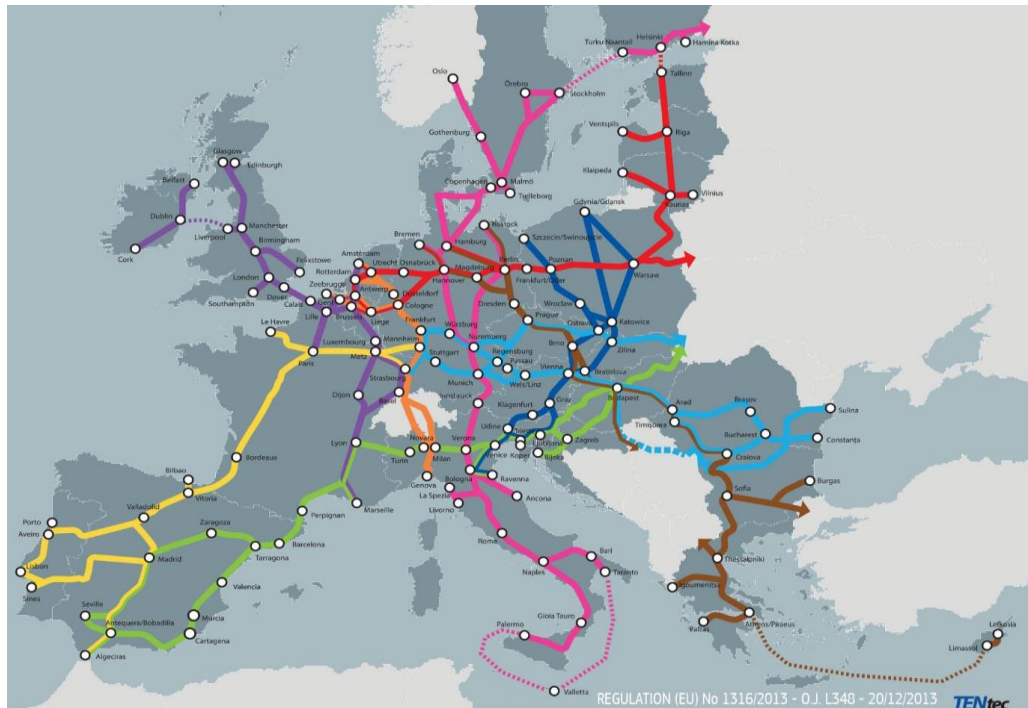
The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) 2.0 spans the 2021-2027 timeframe with a proposed budget of €33.71 billion. The final proposal was submitted in late March 2021 and is expected to be passed by June with tenders to be released shortly after. The funding will also be backdated to start from the beginning of the year.

CEF 2.0 concentrates on transport, energy and digital sectors, with an overriding emphasis on projects that emphasize synergies between the three. It is a significant source of funding for transport and logistics.

CEF 2.0 aims to adhere to the EU Green Deal and the Paris Climate Agreement, as well as previously laid out mandates under the [Trans European Transport Network](#) (TEN-T). The 'Core Network', which focuses on nine network corridors across Europe, has a target deadline date of 2030 for the development of railway lines, roads, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airports, and railway terminals.¹

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t_en#:~:text=The%20Trans-European%20Transport%20Network,ports%2C%20airports%20and%20railroad%20terminals

Figure 3.1 CEF 2.0's Core Network Corridors



Source: European Commission

Under CEF 2.0, transport comprises 77% of the budget. It includes two main initiatives: one for Europe's rail network and the second for its maritime pathway. Projects can include new infrastructure, upgrading of existing infrastructure, enhancing connectivity throughout the EU through efficient, interconnected and multimodal networks.

3.2 CEF 2.0 Key Facts

CEF 2.0 has budget in three sectors in 2021-2027.

- **Transport** – €25.81 billion
- **Energy** – €25.84 billion
- **Digital** – €2.06 billion

Transport projects

- Interconnected and multimodal networks to modernise rail, road, inland waterways and maritime infrastructure
- Priority to trans-European Transport Networks
- €1.56 billion to finance major rail projects between cohesion countries

Energy projects

- Interoperability of energy networks facilitating decarbonisation.
- Cross-border renewable energy generation

Digital projects

- Digital transformation of economy and society
- Projects to contribute to digital single market and EU connectivity targets

3.3 European Rail Traffic Management System

The European Rail Traffic Management Systems (ERTMS) aims to improve and digitalise railway transport by improved network management. It includes:

- European Train Control System (ECTS) which aims for a single automatic train control system to replace 20 different national train control and command systems
- Global System for Mobile Communications-Railways (GSM-R), which aims for a radio system providing voice and data communications between train and track

The ERTMS has a group of eight core partners, including Alstom Transport, Ansaldo STS, AZD Praha, Bombardier Transportation, CAF, Mermec, Siemens Mobility and Thales.

3.4 Motorways of the Sea

Two main focus areas of the Motorways of the Sea programme are to improve access to markets throughout Europe and to reduce the strain on Europe's over-stretched road network. As the maritime pillar of the TEN-T programme, the short-sea initiative aims to adhere to the four main aims:

- **Decarbonisation:** Following targets under the European Green Deal and under the FuelEU Maritime initiative, Motorways of the Sea aims to accelerate the uptake of alternative fuels in maritime transport and ports, and to find ways to accelerate the demand for low or zero carbon fuels.
- **Air Pollution:** Under directives such as Marpol Annex VI, the North Sea as NOx Emission Control Areas (NECAS), Motorways of the Sea aims to curtail emissions, specifically sulphur and nitrogen oxides.
- **Infrastructure and Marine Environment:** Under directives such as the EU Directive on Port Waste Facilities and the Marine Strategy Framework, the aim is to address issues of marine litter and underwater noise.
- **Digital Single Market:** Includes projects such as the European Maritime Single Window Environment (EMSWe), which aims to provide a harmonised interface for ship reporting obligations and the Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI), which aims to optimise communication between transport operators and authorities.

3.5 How to Apply

CEF 2 funds are allocated via the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), the European Commission's agency focused on implementing EU funding and projects.² The specific portal for the [Transport sector can be found here](#).

Step 1: Identify a Relevant Call

- Go to CINEA's website to keep up to date with the latest open calls, successful bids and partnerships.
- Updates can also be tracked by following CINEA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

Step 2: Create Proposal and Submit

- Follow the specific guidelines for the proposal, eligibility conditions and procedures unique to each call.
- Proposal/application to be made at the Funding and Tenders portal (unique link is provided in the open call documentation).
- Submit proposal.

Step 3: Evaluation and Selection

- European Commission, CINEA and external experts will evaluate application.
- List of proposals recommended for funding is made.
- Successful applicants notified and invited to sign agreements.

4. European Structural and Investment Funds

4.1 European Structural and Investment Funds Overview

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – also referred to as the new Cohesion Policy – link common objectives across eight different social and development funds. The entire ESIF has a budget of more than €330 billion during the 2021-2027 period, it is allocated through the Member States and directed at regional and local levels.

4.2 European Structural and Investment Funds Key Facts

- European Structural and Investment Funds are allocated based on three regional categories: less-developed, transition, more-developed.
- The funds consider measures such as GDP per capita, youth unemployment, low education level, climate change, reception and integration of migrants.

² https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/index_en

Eight Funds of the ESIF

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Cohesion Fund (CF)
- European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)
- Just Transition Fund (JTF)
- Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF)
- Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI)
- Internal Security Fund (ISF)

4.3 European Regional Development Fund

Established in 1975, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) provides funding for EU Member States and regions according to GDP per capita, categorised according to less developed, transition and more developed. The ERDF has more than €200 billion in funds for the 2021-27 period.

The ERDF, together with the Cohesion Fund (see below), aims to enable investments in a smarter, greener, more connected, more social Europe that is closer to its citizens.³ Climate objectives should comprise a minimum of 30% of ERDF funds.

European Regional Development Fund 5 Key Policy Objectives (PO)

- PO1 - Smarter Europe; supporting innovative & smart economic transformation
- PO2 - Greener, low-carbon Europe; promoting clean energy transition, circular economy
- PO3 - Connected Europe; enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity
- PO4 - Social Europe; implementing European Pillar of Social Rights
- PO5 - Closer Europe; fostering sustainable, integrated developments of urban, rural, coastal areas

How to apply

Funding through the ERDF programme goes through the Member States. The managing authority (MA) is the body formally responsible for managing the programme on behalf of participating partner countries. It signs the subsidy contracts on behalf of the programme with the selected projects. Companies can find the managing authority in their respective country via the 'point of contact' in the [Managing Authorities Portal](#).

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2333

Companies can use the [Interreg Europe portal](#) to locate a point of contact in each Member State that is responsible for all Structural Funds programmes and country specific information.

4.4 Cohesion Fund

Set up in 1994, the Cohesion Fund provides funding for environmental and trans-European network projects in Member States where the gross national income is less than 90% of the EU average.⁴ The Cohesion Fund has a proposed allocation of €42.6 billion in 2021-2027, of which an allocated €10 billion is for the Connecting Europe Facility 2.0. Climate objectives should comprise a minimum of 37% of the Cohesion Fund.

As per regulations passed in July 2020, the new Cohesion Fund will continue to allocate resources to the 15 member states as in the 2014-2020 programme cycle. These include Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia.

4.5 European Social Fund Plus

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the main instrument for investing in people in Europe, with the aim to build a more social and inclusive region. The ESF+ aims to help achieve the European Pillar of Social Rights by 2030 with three main targets: increasing employment, improving skills and fighting poverty.⁵

ESF+ Key Points

The ESF+ has a budget of €88 billion targeting five policy priorities.

- Investments in young people
- Investments in capacity building and transnational cross-border co-operation
- Investments in children
- Food and basic material assistance to the most deprived
- Direct financial support to social innovation

Funding for ESF+ is allocated to Member States with restrictions on how the funds should be used, for example how much should be provided for young and unemployed, or for assisting the most deprived with food and basic material assistance.

⁴ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/96/cohesion-fund>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en

Transport and logistics companies could apply for funds under ESF+ for projects which encourage national apprenticeship programmes, for example, as well as work experience or upgrading employees' qualifications.

How to apply

Applications are usually via Member States government portals. Unless an organisation is a Co-Financing Organisation (CFO), applications for ESF+ funding should only be made in response to an 'open call opportunity.'

For Germany, for example, [funding information can be found here](#). The website also includes a portal to [find current open calls](#). Open calls for France, meanwhile, [can be found here](#).

Interreg Europe has also created an information website, which has access to projects, [funding and details of approved projects and calls for projects](#).

The UK will still take part in this programme despite Brexit. [Details to apply can be found here](#). Once an open opportunity has been found, the full application for the UK is to be submitted via the [ECLAIMS IT System](#).

5. NextGenerationEU

As Covid-19 continues to cause havoc across Europe, the EU created a fund as a temporary recovery instrument. With an allocated €750 billion of grants and loans, NextGenerationEU has been routed within the overall EU long-term budget for the 2021-2027 period. The NextGenerationEU funds will be invested across several programmes, with the bulk of funding through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RFF), as well as further assistance through the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion Territories of Europe (REACT-EU), which tops up the budget of several other programmes.

5.1 Recovery and Resilience Facility

Of the total in NextGenerationEU, around €672.5 billion, or 89%, will be allocated via the Recovery and Resilience Facility, including as grants (€312 billion) and loans (€360 billion). The grant funds are allocated to EU countries on the basis of 'allocation criteria', such as GDP, per capita income, unemployment levels, population size and the impact of Covid-19.

Access to funds is via Member States' 'National Recovery and Resilience Plans', which set out reforms and public investment projects with implementation dates up to 2026. The

plans need to address RFF's 'four dimensions' – environmental sustainability, productivity, fairness and macroeconomic stability. They should include green and digital transitions.

Flagship areas for investments include clean technology, creating energy efficient buildings, sustainable transport and charging facilities, education, and training to enhance digital skills.

Once Member States submit the Recovery and Resilience Plans, the Commission will assess these against the 'twin targets' of green and digital objectives. Each recovery and resilience plan will have to include at least 37% of expenditure for climate investment and reforms, and a minimum of 20% to help foster digitalisation.

Figure 5.1 Recovery and Resilience Facility Areas for Investment



Source: EU Commission

5.2 Recovery and Resilience Facility Examples

To understand the type of projects available under the RFF, here are examples linked to projects which automotive logistics players could also consider.

Component Reforms: Clean, Smart, Fair Urban Mobility

- Under flagship 'Recharge & Refuel' programme.
- By 2025, the proposed reforms and investments will ensure the completion of X charging points in the country and Y hydrogen stations, where direct electrification is not possible.
- The component is also related to sufficient supply of renewable electricity and hydrogen, in relation with the European flagship area 'Power Up'.

- **Twin transition:** This component provides an opportunity to promote jointly the green and digital transition, through smarter and more integrated urban mobility services.
- **Jobs and Growth:** The investments related to the component will create a significant number of jobs and contribute to growth both at local and national levels.
- **Social resilience:** Through a wider access to sustainable urban mobility and the reduction of travel times, labour market participation and labour productivity will increase. The investments in clean and smart urban mobility will improve public health through decreased pollution and noise, increased safety and more active lifestyles.

[Example details can be found here.](#)

Component Reforms: Reskill and Upskill

- Under flagship 'Reskill and Upskill'.
- Objective of this component is to provide the workforce with skills in line with current and future labour market needs, including in relation to the green and digital transitions.
- **Jobs and Growth:** Achieving a better match between skills and labour market needs will ensure that the country's human capital is used to the fullest and will raise labour market participation, also in view of population ageing.
- **Twin transition:** The component will help young people and the workforce of any age to adjust to the new working methods, perform the new tasks and take up the new jobs emerging from the green and digital transitions.
- **Social resilience:** Upskilling and reskilling support school-to-work transitions, workforce adaptability, ease necessary job transitions and can prevent periods of unemployment/inactivity or reduce their length, thereby strengthening social resilience.
- **Reforms:** Creation of the legal framework for individual entitlements for quality labour market relevant training in the form of individual learning accounts.
- **Investments:** Investment in adult training opportunities through inter-company training centres.

[Example details can be found here.](#)

5.3 How to Apply

To qualify for RRF funding, Member States' Recovery and Resilience Plans must fall within the framework for the co-ordination of economic policies across the EU, which is called the 'European Semester'. The Recovery and Resilience Task Force (RECOVER) is responsible for the overall coordination of the RRF and reports directly to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen⁶.

Member States are recommended to create plans under these seven flagship areas:

1. **Power up** – The frontloading of future-proof clean technologies and acceleration of the development and use of renewables.
2. **Renovate** – The improvement of energy efficiency of public and private buildings.
3. **Recharge and Refuel** – The promotion of future-proof clean technologies to accelerate the use of sustainable, accessible, and smart transport, charging and refuelling stations and extension of public transport.
4. **Connect** – The fast rollout of rapid broadband services to all regions and households, including fibre and 5G networks.
5. **Modernise** – The digitalisation of public administration and services, including judicial and healthcare systems.
6. **Scale-up** – The increase in European industrial data cloud capacities and the development of the most powerful, cutting edge, and sustainable processors.
7. **Reskill and upskill** – The adaptation of education systems to support digital skills and educational and vocational training for all ages.

Once the Member State has submitted its Recovery and Resilience Plan, and this has been approved, a list of 'Open Tenders' will be made available on country specific government portals. The ['search function' on the European Commission website](#) is also a powerful tool to narrow down 'Open Tenders' across the funds and sectors.

5.4 Additional Funding and Recovery Assistance for Cohesion Territories of Europe

Aside from the €672.5 billion under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, another €77.5 billion has been allocated in grants amongst programmes including the Rural Development, Just Transition Fund, InvestEU and several others, as well as a €5 billion top up for Horizon Europe. A further €5 billion has been reserved as the 'Brexit Adjustment Reserve',⁷ to support EU countries and sectors hardest hit by Brexit, including those dependent on fishing in UK waters.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/brexit-adjustment-reserve_en

Another key element is the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion Territories of Europe (REACT-EU), which provides €47.5 billion of additional funds during the 2021-2027 period, and which will complement funding in a number of programmes including the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).⁸ In essence, these are top up funds to help deal with re-building areas which have been most affected by the impact of Covid-19.

The EU will pay 11% of REACT-EU resources for the year 2021 to Member States as pre-financing following the approval of the relevant programmes or programme amendments.⁹ The distribution of the 2022 allocation will take place in the fourth quarter of 2021 following the latest statistical evidence of needs.

The process for application and gaining these funds rests with the Member States, who can choose to direct these funds to 'crisis repair' measures initiated under programmes within the ERDF, ESF+ and FEAD.

6. Conclusion: Get Informed and Act Now

The €1.8 trillion available under the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and NextGenerationEU over the 2021-2027 period is a vast amalgamation of various funding mechanisms for Member States based on their eligibility criteria and on the proposals they submit to various subsidiary funds. Meanwhile, this current long-term budget has an added volume of funds to help the 'Next Generation' in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. This NextGenerationEU fund seeks to remove the hardships caused by the pandemic and create a new level playing field.

This is of course significant money; however, it is only accessible to those that follow stringent criteria and meet strategic requirements. In some cases, funding is available through open tenders, while in other cases, such as Horizon Europe and the Connecting Europe Facility, Calls for Proposals are issued. Some funding could be obtained by a single company, but often there are requirements for multiple partners.

For both European Structural and Investment Funds as well as NextGenerationEU, proposals should be submitted via Member States. For vehicle logistics players, it is imperative to ascertain which funding mechanism or project would be most appropriate.

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_2381

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_2381

The NextGenerationEU is the recovery package to help alleviate the hardships brought about by Covid-19. Primarily, the RRF funds are available via Member States which need to submit overall national level Recovery and Resilience Plans. React-EU is the second main fund under the NextGenerationEU and this seeks mainly to top up projects within the ESIF such as the ERDF, ESF+, FEAD where Covid-19 has played a negative role.

However, that should not deter companies from considering the many opportunities. For vehicle logistics players there are a variety of EU funds that could be applied for especially under Horizon Europe research and development projects. Vehicle logistics providers could also look carefully at the Connecting Europe Facility Transport fund for multi-modal networks, or indeed the Digital fund to bridge connectivity and digital efficiency amongst players across the EU.

Meanwhile the European Social Fund Plus can be accessed if projects show capacity building across Member States, for example in strengthening cross-border transport, or indeed through investments in young workers or retraining employees.

There are myriad possibilities in these funds for vehicle logistics players across Europe, but each will require careful evaluation and planning to be successful in the application, which in many cases would benefit from working with experts in EU funding and application. With more tenders and projects going live, now is a good time to start the process.

7. Useful Information

7.1 Tips and Advice for Applying for EU Funding

- **Check:** Clarify, confirm and check that your project or funding application/investment opportunity meets the described EU programme. For example, funding for transport infrastructure and facilities would be better suited for the Connecting Europe Facility. Investing or trialling new technology, such as electrification or automation, should be through Horizon Europe.
- **Timing:** Take into account the time between submitting proposals and receiving the actual funding – sometimes this can take up to a year between publication of projects or calls for proposals.
- **Expectations:** Manage expectations with regard to conditions and funding rates which differ across programmes.
- **Partners:** Horizon Europe proposals require at least three partners from three different countries, while some projects have consortia of 10 or more partners. There are tools to find partners in Horizon Europe’s ‘one stop shop’, however it can be most effective to partner with organisations in your network, or to connect through trade associations, such as ECG.
- **National approval:** You can apply as a single company to Connecting Europe Facility calls for proposals, however you will need formal agreement or support from the Member State(s) where you plan the project. Each Member State has its own procedure to obtain such support and can take several months. Local or national authorities can also be included directly in the project.
- **Dissemination:** Successful projects must plan to share and distribute information across Europe, including through events, newsletters and press releases, areas in which trade associations can again be helpful and for which they also get a budget.
- **Invest in expertise:** The process for applying to EU funds can be time consuming and is often very competitive, so it is useful to invest in expertise, whether inhouse or through specialised consultancies, to help avoid pitfalls.
- **Act locally:** For regional and national Covid-19 recovery funds, it is necessary to apply to the correct relevant authority managing these funds. Competition here will also be fierce and so requires fast and early action.
- **Networking:** Use networks to help find partners, stay up to date with funding news and stay ahead of competition. National and European associations ([such as ECG](#)) can help with resources and information. The EU and Member States also provide funding to organisations that can help companies obtain funding at local, regional or national levels, and free of charge. A good way to start is via the [National Contact Points \(NCPs\)](#).
- **Connect with the Commission:** Networking should extend to the European Commission itself, including its agency focused on implementing EU programmes, [CINEA \(European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency\)](#).

7.2 Sample areas for Vehicle Logistics EU Funding

- Upgrading truck fleets to low or zero-emission fleets.
- Investing in low-emission shipping fleets.
- Shifting vehicle logistics to rail and multimodal transport modes.
- Installing EV charging infrastructure at ports, compounds or storage centres.
- Investing in hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and hydrogen infrastructure.
- Training staff how to handle and maintain new vehicle technology and electrification.
- Training staff in the shift to digitalisation – paperless processes, tracking software, artificial intelligence.

7.3 Brexit Impact on Applying for EU Funding

While the UK has left the EU and the single market, the country continues to be involved in several programmes.

- **Horizon Europe:** The UK government has announced that the UK will associate to Horizon Europe in the 2021-2027 period. UK scientists, researchers and businesses can access funding under the programme on equivalent terms as organisations in EU countries.¹⁰
- **Interreg Europe:** The Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK has ensured that Interreg Europe projects can continue as planned, under the same rules and arrangements as before. The UK will stay in the programme until the end of the current programming period¹¹.

¹⁰ <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/collaborating-internationally/working-on-eu-funded-projects/>

¹¹ https://www.interregeurope.eu/news-and-events/news/10762/faq-for-uk-project-partners-about-the-post-transition-period/?no_cache=1&cHash=6fd8d693b6c9f9957ac7976c6917e14e

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