



Briefing Summary

European Plant Science Organisation
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Opportunities for Plant Scientists within European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), focus on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Brussels, 12.07.2017

ESIF **aims** to reduce differences in the varying levels of development between regions in Europe. They are therefore implemented at *national & regional level*, with broad themes and priorities defined at the European level. ESIF is applied throughout the EU, although the least developed regions and Member States are prioritized.

Main differences between the	
European R& I Programme Horizon 2020	European Structural and Investment Funds
Non-territorial	Place-based
Focus on individual R&I projects	Largely focused on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems
Centrally managed (EC)	Shared management with national and regional public intermediaries
Competitive calls for proposals addressed to international groupings	Policy-related prioritization based on cohesion considerations and RIS3 priorities

For the period of 2014-2020, **11 thematic objectives (TO)** were outlined for ESIF, the 4 most relevant to EPSO members are:

- strengthening research, technological development and innovation
- enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT
- promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
- preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

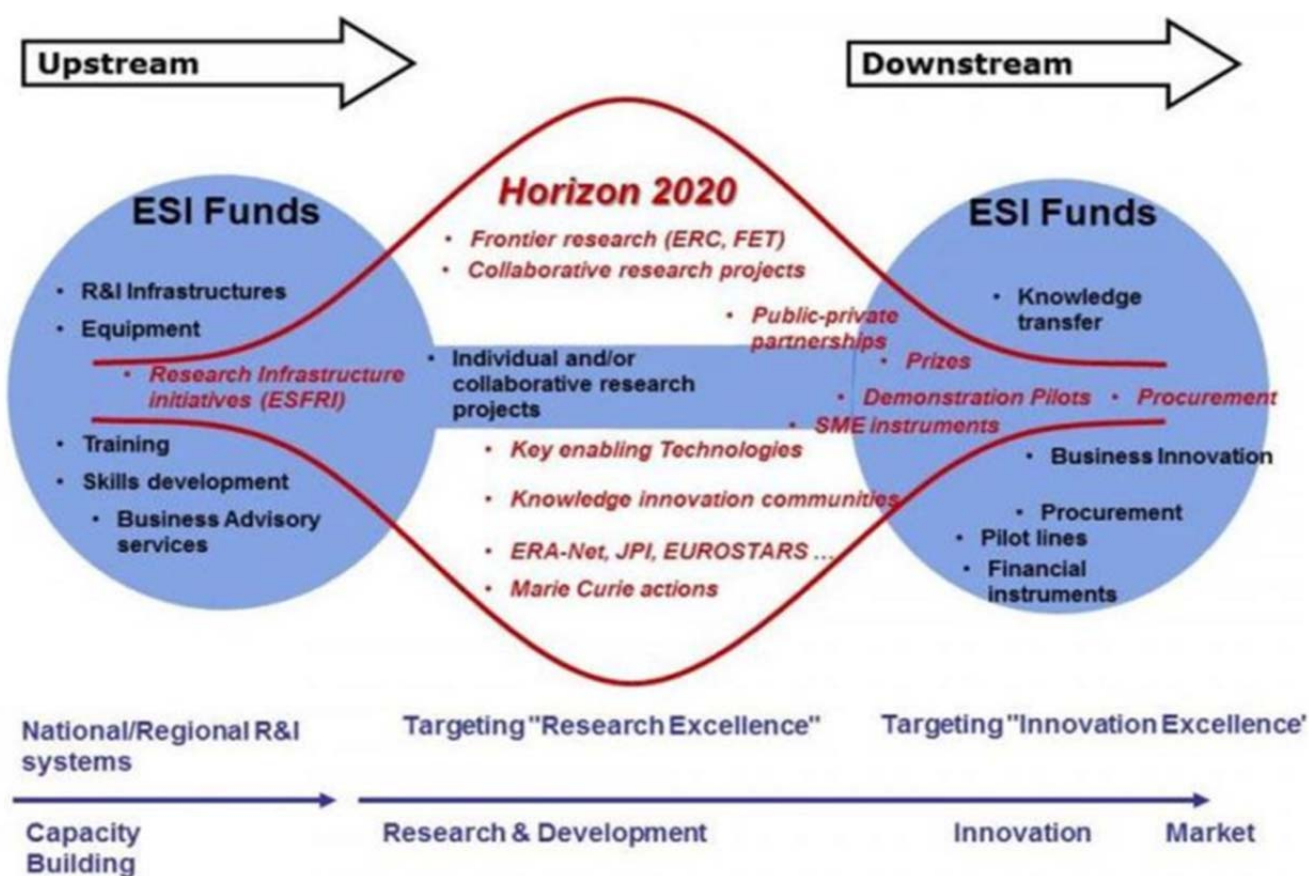
ESIF is divided into the following **five main funds**, four of which support R&I (▲ relevance to EPSO):

- ▲▲ The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF/Regional)
 - The most relevant for EPSO members. Aims to correct economic and social imbalances between EU regions. The budget for the 2014-2020 period is €196 billion, containing up to €61.5 billion dedicated to the theme of R&I, 93.5% of the total for R&I within ESIF.
 - The ERDF/Regional focuses on investments in 4 key priority areas:
 - innovation and research;
 - the digital agenda;
 - support for SMEs;
 - the low-carbon economy.
- ▲ European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD/Agriculture)
 - Managed under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), it supports Rural Development. €4.2 billion is dedicated to R&I. It mainly achieves this through the [European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural productivity and Sustainability \(EIP-AGRI\)](#), for which EPSO has previously produced a comprehensive [briefing](#). This includes Operational Group, linking farmers, extension services, scientists, and companies.
- ▲ The European Social Fund (ESF/Social)

- The EU's main programme for supporting jobs. It has relevance for EPSO members through opportunities for higher education institutions: The ESF supports postgraduate studies, training of researchers, networking activities and partnerships between higher education institutions, research institutes and enterprises.
- Δ European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF/Maritime)
 - The EMFF supports action to connect fisheries and R&I stakeholders. One of the main tools supported by the EMFF is the European Marine Observation and Data Network ([EMODnet](#)); a consortium of organisations, including research institutions gathering and sharing marine data. The EMFF can also directly finance specific research studies to support the development of new policies in the field of fisheries management.
- The Cohesion Fund (CF)
 - Invests in trans-European networks of transport infrastructure and key environmental infrastructure projects. It does not invest in research.

Each nation or region has significant autonomy in the distribution of these funds and each produces its own programmes, please **contact your managing authority** in your region to determine your own opportunities, a list is provided in the briefing annex. In the briefing we will provide an overview of the programme and examples of funding within it.

Synergies with Horizon 2020: The Juncker Commission has the mandate to create synergies between ESIF and Horizon 2020. This political commitment will continue through an upcoming Commission Communication on Smart Specialisation (including synergies) in 2017. While Horizon 2020 is based on the pursuit of excellence, the ESI Funds address broader economic, social and territorial development. The link is made through the “smart specialisation strategy”, for which responsibility is shared between the European, the Member States and regional levels. The Commission has published a [Synergies Guide](#) in 2014 and a [brochure of practical examples](#) in 2016.



Examples of Synergistic Activities Funded through the ERDF/Regional from various countries – check the possibilities in your nation/region

A comprehensive workshop on [Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds \(ESIF\) & Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Funding](#) took place on 8/3/2017, with presentations representing local managing authorities listing examples of R&I activities funded through the ESIF. All presentations can be accessed on the webpage.

In [Latvia](#):

- A programme for international cooperation projects in research and innovation (see case study below)
- An applied research programme
- A postdoctoral research programme
- Financing for a H2020 teaming project

In [Estonia](#):

- Financing for H2020 teaming projects
 - o Support for infrastructure and equipment
 - o Support for human capital, internationalisation and business cooperation
- Financing ERA Chairs H2020 projects
- Support for applicants who achieve high results in ERC evaluation, but who do not receive a positive financing decision (in the amount of national personal grant up to 100 000€ per year, for up to 1.5 years)
- Support for preparing successful applications to Horizon 2020. E.g. trainings and study visits for researchers (to prepare for successful H2020 applications)
- KICs
 - o Support for costs that is not covered by H2020

Etc.

Case Study: Latvian Programme for international cooperation projects in research and innovation – An example of how ERDF could help you finance EPSO membership fees and participation in meetings

The aim of the programme is to promote the participation of Latvian researchers in the European Research Area, thereby promoting international cooperation in research and technology. The programme includes 5m EUR dedicated to Networking activities for institutions to increase the performance in H2020.

Main results of the programme:

- Doubled the number of international partners of Latvian universities
- Supported 458 H2020 project applications evaluated above the quality threshold, representing a two-fold increase for Latvia compared to FP7.