Just Transition Platform Working Groups

Action 1: Knowledge Exchange Guide

November 2023

Action 1: Develop resources to improve knowledge exchanges and to foster sharing of knowledge and lessons learned on just transition

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Category: *Horizontal*

The **Just Transition Platform (JTP) Working Groups (WGs)**, established in November 2021, bring together all stakeholders from across Europe with a common concern for the people and places affected by the transition to a climate-neutral economy. The WG for **Steel, Cement and Chemicals** each have a focus on a specific carbon-intensive sector that is heavily impacted by the transition, while a fourth Working Group focuses on **Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy**.

After finalising their Scoping Papers, outlining the focus areas and objectives of their WG, the WG members developed a common Implementation Plan, which sets out their 17 actions. This plan was finalised and published in April 2023. Throughout the rest of the year, the Action leaders, together with other WG members contributing to the Action, have been implementing their respective Action.

This document presents the final output of Action 1.

Introduction

Challenges addressed by Action 1

One of the biggest barriers to the just transition process is a lack of information on the just transition process itself and on how to access the support available.[1] This is true both for regions that address their challenges in isolation, even though they face similar challenges as other regions, and for key actors who are excluded from the transition process. Knowledge exchange activities can help overcome information barriers. Regions can learn from and be inspired by successful – and unsuccessful – initiatives and solutions to the challenges of just transition in other regions, creating synergies for mutual benefit and leading to the development of new, targeted solutions. For a successful just transition, it is also crucial to understand who the actors working on the Just Transition Mechanism and Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) are, in order to make them aware of each other and connect them, potentially identifying key actors that are not yet involved in the process.

Objectives of Action 1

This document is intended as a **comprehensive guide** to help improve knowledge exchange and learning in the field of just transition, thereby connecting actors working on this issue and promoting opportunities for knowledge exchange.

Answers are given to three basic questions:

- How can knowledge exchange be done?
- With whom knowledge exchange can be done?
- How to finance knowledge exchange?

The guide is structured in a needs-oriented way, kept as concise as possible and, wherever possible, builds on and links to existing tools, as often good sources of information are already available. In addition, best practices provide exemplary insights.

A central and constantly updated hub of knowledge on the just transition process is the [Just Transition Platform Knowledge Repository](). It includes policy approaches and projects that can often serve as best practices and source of inspiration in your search for knowledge and information.

The guide is the result of the work of the Horizontal WG of the European Commission's [JTP](). Bringing together stakeholders from across Europe, the JTP WGs provide a forum for strategic exchange on challenges shared by stakeholders involved in the transition process in carbon-intensive regions. The Horizontal WG in particular tackles common, cross-thematic issues in the most-affected regions, such as **guidelines for monitoring and implementing just transition projects**, a **toolkit for communicating about the just transition**, and this **resource to improve knowledge exchanges**, amongst others.

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[1] A recent survey of just transition stakeholders conducted as part of the Horizontal Working Group's activities found that the 'lack of available information on just transition processes' and 'lack of information on how to access the support available' were two of the three major barriers faced when developing or submitting just transition projects.

Stakeholders targeted by Action 1

This document is designed for relevant actors in Just Transition Fund (JTF) regions, including government and public authorities, business and industry, academia and research centres, civil society and NGOs, and others.

How this Action was implemented

The work for producing this Action was started by members of the Action group who conducted extensive research on existing initiatives, approaches, and best practices that were relevant to knowledge exchange. Following this research, the draft materials were shared with other WG members to gather feedback and build on the knowledge and experiences of a broader range of stakeholders, to ensure the final Action output was as actionable and practical as possible.

Knowledge exchange guide

How to exchange knowledge – first steps

Before you start and plan a knowledge exchange, you should first be clear about what exactly you want and need to achieve. For this purpose, it is necessary to carry out a preliminary analysis.

1. Needs analysis

As a first step, try to think about what exactly your needs are and what challenges you face. If you are clear about this, you can better look for partners for knowledge exchange and increase the chances of success. Other regions and actors may have faced similar challenges in the past and there is much to learn from their approaches to tackling them. Some other group of stakeholders may be trying to find a solution to a similar issue, and exchanging with them could inspire new ideas and provide guidance on how to move forward.

2. Research into framework conditions

It is also essential to research the framework of the just transition process in your region in order to be clear about the possibility/feasibility of certain actions and the people to be involved. These frameworks include the legal basis in the form of the [Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs)](#), other related strategies and action plans at regional/local level, and initiatives and actions already undertaken or in progress. A good knowledge of the TJTP is also important to understand which actions are eligible for funding, including knowledge exchange activities. A well-conducted review of your region's TJTP, current status of implementation, monitoring framework and actors involved will be critical to the success of your knowledge exchange(s).

3. Stakeholder mapping & information collection

Finally, a mapping of relevant stakeholders in your region – both those who are involved in the just transition process and those who are not currently but should be – as well as existing sources of information will be of great benefit to the success of your knowledge exchange and, more generally, to overcoming the challenges and barriers identified. A good starting point for stakeholder mapping is the Database of Actors in JTF regions developed by the JTP WG. In terms of information sources, many supporting documents can be found at European level, notably on the [JTP](#). Additional informational material could be available at national and/or regional level. Here, the managing authority responsible for the just transition in your region should be your first point of contact.

Typology of knowledge exchanges & best practices

This section provides a brief overview of the different types of knowledge exchanges and presents valuable sources of information on available technical assistance and best practices.

1. Identifying the ideal type of exchange – from a practical point of view

There are several types of exchanges and in general the needs should determine the optimal format, but there are some aspects worth considering. In this chapter the aim is not to do a theoretical classification but to focus on the advantages and disadvantages of the different formats. Basically, two types of exchange can be distinguished: online and in-person formats (Table 1).

Table 1 Advantages and disadvantages of different types of exchanges

	ONLINE	IN-PERSON
Advantages	- Relatively easy to find time to organise in line with participants' calendars - Time-effective way to get in touch - Less human-resources-intensive format - Little to no cost	- Likely provides deeper insights into the challenges and needs of a particular region - Easier to understand the working environment of a particular actor - Higher potential for further cooperation
Disadvantages	- Rather impersonal - Less potential for further collaboration - Harder to understand the working environment of a particular actor - Provides fewer insights and impressions about the challenges	- More difficult to find a date that is optimal for everyone - Host region needs more time for preparations - Possibly entails costs for both hosting and visiting regions - Human-resources-intensive format

The number of potential participants is another aspect that could influence the ideal format of an exchange. If the topic is well-described, having **focused, bilateral online meetings** could provide an effective discussion framework. **Job shadowing** is a special opportunity for a person to spend more time in another organisation and gain deeper knowledge. It is an efficient and intensive way of learning, but it requires a lot of time from both the visitor and the host. If you need more people on board with a broad range of expertise, it is worth organising a **group visit**. The topics of the exchange should determine the optimal composition of the delegation, although the optimal number might be a problem. It is worth aiming for a small group that can cover the relevant skills and expertise to avoid ineffective ways of working.

2. Example of academia-industry exchanges

Although the focus of this action is on exchanges between coal regions, it is important to note other types of exchanges, such as between academia and industry. Transition

requires a wide range of expertise and knowledge, and academia and industry play an important role in the successful implementation of transition, mainly due to the innovation potential based on the cooperation between the two sectors and the possible synergies.

With regard to the strategic priorities, the following main principles are identified on the basis of which academia-industry partnerships should be operationalised:

- focus on the opportunities and competitive advantages of the regions while being consistent with national priorities;
- market orientation of research activities based on interests and business-related problems and cooperation with representatives of the business sectors;
- multisectoral partnership organised on the basis of the principles of openness and inclusiveness;
- holistic integration into the value chain;
- establishment of international networks with identical and complementary experiences and interest-related activities in science and business.

This leads to the establishment of a single system for:

- creating a culture for the use of the results from research activities;
- aligning research activities with industry and society;
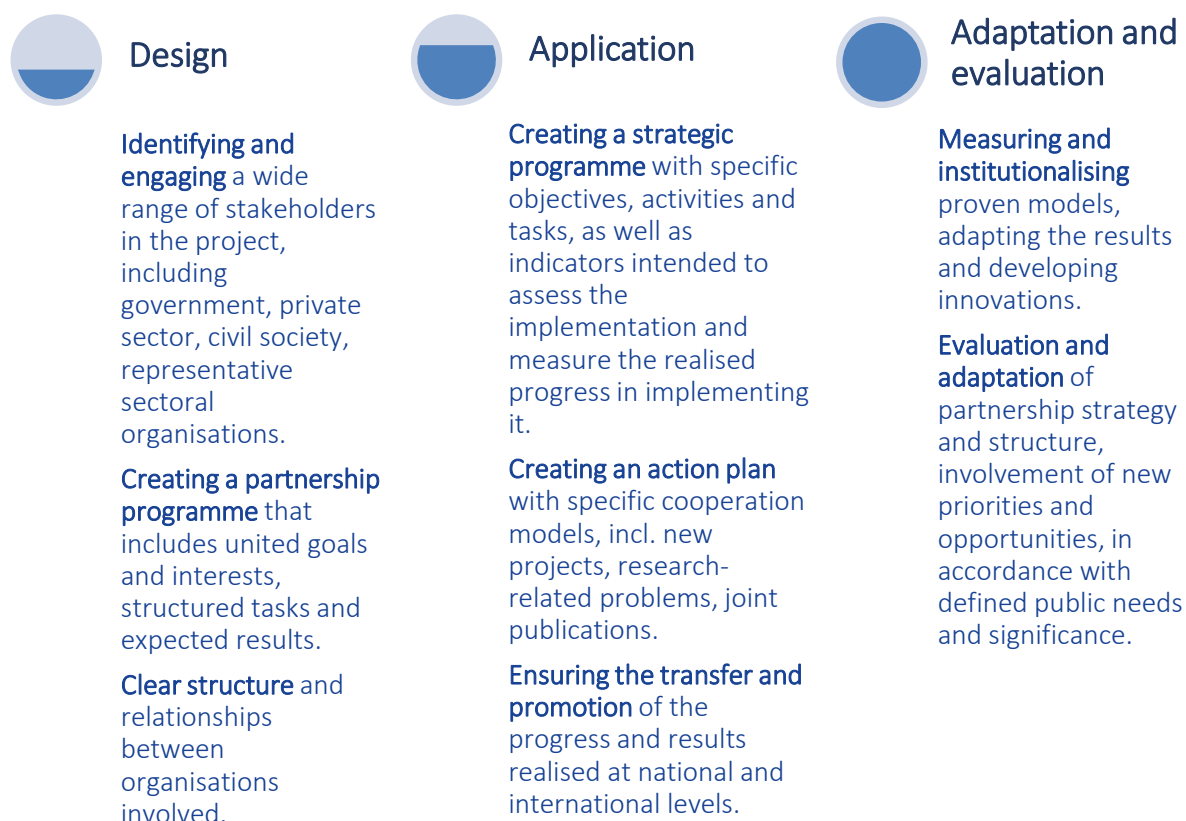- promoting formal technology transfer (through licensing and cooperation agreements).

Design

Identifying and engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the project, including government, private sector, civil society, representative sectoral organisations.

Creating a partnership programme that includes united goals and interests, structured tasks and expected results.

Clear structure and relationships between organisations involved.

Application

Creating a strategic programme with specific objectives, activities and tasks, as well as indicators intended to assess the implementation and measure the realised progress in implementing it.

Creating an action plan with specific cooperation models, incl. new projects, research-related problems, joint publications.

Ensuring the transfer and promotion of the progress and results realised at national and international levels.

Adaptation and evaluation

Measuring and institutionalising proven models, adapting the results and developing innovations.

Evaluation and adaptation of partnership strategy and structure, involvement of new priorities and opportunities, in accordance with defined public needs and significance.

Figure 1 Logic framework for cooperation between academia and industry

3. Technical assistance

A range of technical assistance is available at the European level, and other initiatives have been taken in the wider energy transition field that could prove valuable sources of good practice and capacity building of a particular region. Below is a list of some relevant examples of technical assistance programmes that are active as of the end of 2023:

- **JTP GROUNDWORK:** JTP GROUNDWORK supports eligible JTF regions in implementing their TJTPs, providing tailored technical assistance and advisory services. Possible services may include: project planning & development; capacity building; engaging and mobilising stakeholders; strengthening collaboration.
- **C4T GROUNDWORK:** C4T GROUNDWORK supports managing authorities responsible for the implementation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund in eligible EU Member States, specifically focused Policy Objective 2, 'a greener, low carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy' investments, through the provision of tailor-made advice and technical assistance.
- **START:** START provides tailored, short-term support to coal+ regions across a wide array of transition topics. It assists efforts to decarbonise energy production and usage, diversify economic activities, and progress social development in regions and communities that are heavily affected by the transition away from fossil fuels.
- **TARGET:** The Technical Assistance for a Green Energy Transition (TARGET) programme, launched in November 2021, is a technical facility that aims to closely assist EU coal, peat and oil shale regions with the identification and preparation of clean energy and energy efficiency projects. It will also support sustainable investments and local jobs moving away from fossil-fuel-based activities. The facility is free of charge for its beneficiaries.
- **JASPERS:** Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS) is a technical assistance partnership between the European Commission (Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy), European Investment Bank, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. JASPERS helps cities and regions deliver high-quality projects. Their experts provide independent, hands-on support in strategies, programmes and projects to make EU-funded investments that promote growth and pave the way to a greener, more connected and more innovative Europe. JASPERS assistance is free of charge for local authorities and promoters and is available to most EU and pre-accession countries.
- **ELENA:** European Local ENergy Assistance (ELENA) provides technical assistance for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments targeting buildings and innovative urban transport.

4. Best practice examples

JTPeers Exchange

JTPeers Exchange is a programme launched under the Just Transition Platform in 2023, to facilitate exchanges and collaboration between JTF regions and other relevant stakeholders and practitioners with a wide range of expertise, knowledge, and experience on just transition related topics. The aim is to support JTF regions in the implementation of their TJTPs and covers both coal and carbon-intensive regions. There are two types of exchanges, those taking place between two regions, and those occurring between a region and an expert, both types which lead to exchanges on knowledge and best practices when it comes to implementing the JTF.

In September 2023, the first group of regions were selected to participate in JTPeers Exchanges. They are presented in the table below.

Table 2 Overview of the selected JTPeers regions in 2023

Participating regions	Focus areas
Region-to-region matches	
Norrbotten (SE) and the Midlands (IE) will exchange in-person with additional support from an expert from Heves (HU)	Participatory & community-led approaches, green economic diversification, job creation, clean affordable energy, multi-level governance, capacity-building.
Western Macedonia (EL), Velenje (SI) and Lower Silesia (PL) (in-person)	Stakeholder engagement, project development, green economic diversification, cross-border cooperation, transition governance, energy communities.
Zasavje (SI) and Lower Silesia (PL) (in-person)	Land restoration/repurposing, policy design, green economic diversification.
Ida-Virumaa (EE) and Western Macedonia (EL) (online)	Just transition observatories, project development, attracting investments.
Region-to-expert matches	
Gotland (SE) will exchange with an expert from Western Macedonia (EL) (online)	Improvement of multi-level governance mechanism & administrative capacity for TJTP implementation, clean energy.
Silesia (PL) will exchange with an expert from Jiu Valley (RO) (online)	Design of a monitoring & management system for regional just transition observatory.
Moravia-Silesia (CZ) will exchange in-person with an expert from Silesia (PL)	Post-mining landscape development.

exchangeEU

The exchangeEU programme enabled meaningful and tangible exchanges between coal+ regions across Europe. Participating regions had the opportunity to capitalise on:

- an exchange agenda, tailored to the participating regions' interests and needs;
- hands-on learning opportunities and tangible results for collaborative action;
- creation of a long-lasting practitioners' network.

The first round involved 19 delegations from 18 coal+ regions in transition and the second round involved 23 delegations from 18 coal+ regions. All exchanges were very well documented, resulting in a rich information base on the participating regions. In each exchange, EU facilitators were involved in the implementation of the exchange, which made the exchanges focused and efficient, providing real added value. You can access all leaflets on the website of the programme to study the focus topics, the main challenges

and the recommendations. Table 2 provides an overview of the exchanges that were carried out.

Table 3 The implemented exchanges with focus topics under exchangeEU

Participating regions	Focus areas
First round	
Exchange between Zasavje (SI), Moravia-Silesia (CZ), Northern Hungary (HU)	– Transition governance and strategies – Infrastructure and site sustainability
Exchange between Upper Nitra Region (SK), Eastern Cohesion Region (SI), Jiu Valley (RO)	– Economic diversification and regional development – Clean energy transition
Exchange between Małopolska (PL), Aragón (ES), Ústí (CZ)	– Infrastructure and site sustainability – Social fabric and community
Exchange between Western Macedonia (EL) Stara Zagora (BG)	– Transition governance and strategy – Social fabric and community
Exchange between Midlands (IE) and Western Macedonia (EL)	– Social fabric and community – Economic diversification and regional development
Exchange between Leipzig (DE) and Karlovy Vary (CZ)	– Economic diversification and regional development – Transition governance and strategy
Exchange between Asturias (ES) and Silesia (PL)	– Transition governance and strategy
Exchange between Saxony-Anhalt (DE) and Ida-Virumaa (EE)	– Economic diversification and regional development – Social fabric and community
Second round	
Exchange between Lusatia (DE) and Zgorzelec (PL)	– Sustainable infrastructure – Recultivation of old coal mining areas
Exchange between Northern Hungary (HU), Upper Nitra (SK) and Western Macedonia (EL)	– Energy communities – Re-skilling and upskilling workers – Stakeholder engagement
Exchange between Northern Hungary (HU) and Zasavje (SI)	– Economic diversification through infrastructure development – Implementing just transition projects
Exchange between Stara Zagora (BG) and Karlovy Vary (CZ)	– Digitalisation and innovation – Recultivation of coal mining regions for tourism
Exchange between Upper Nitra (SK), Ústí (CZ) and Asturias (ES)	– Governance and use of JTF funds – Hydrogen economy
Exchange between Western Macedonia (EL), Moravia-Silesia (CZ) and Ida-Virumaa (EE)	– Youth engagement in the just transition process – Project implementation

Exchange between the Rheinish Region (DE) and Eastern Wielkopolska (PL)	– Transition governance – Economic diversification with focus on making the region attractive for young people
Exchange between Ida-Virumaa (EE), Sisak-Moslavina County (HR) and Western Macedonia (EL)	– Economic diversification – Re-skilling and upskilling – Involvement of municipalities in JT
Exchange between Savinjsko-Šaleška Region (SI) and Silesia (PL)	– Clean energy transition – Diversifying industry and revitalisation

How to find partners for knowledge exchanges

Cooperation plays an essential role in planning and implementing the just transition: the Just Transition Mechanism is a new tool for all EU Member States, therefore 'thinking and working together' could lead to a more efficient and successful transition. For a given region, it could be crucial to build partnerships with other regions facing the same – or at least similar – challenges. This chapter provides some practical experiences on how to find partners for knowledge exchange.

1. Overview of regions eligible for the JTF

A map of JTF regions is available on the JTP website. The regions can be divided into main categories based on the economic sector they depend on (Figure 2).
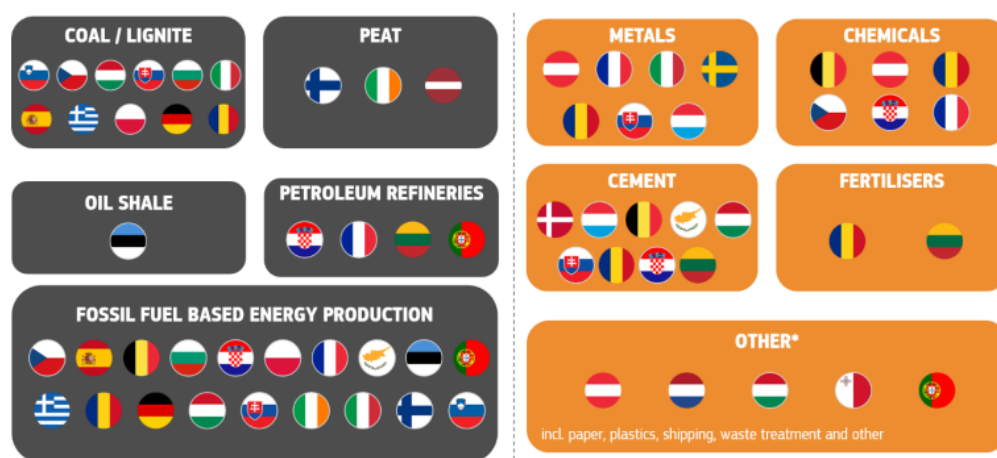

Figure 2 Declining (in grey) and transforming sectors (in orange) identified in the Annexes D of the European Semester country reports of February 2020

2. Identification of possible regions for cooperation

The first crucial step in building your network is to find the region that is relevant to you and where cooperation could add value to your region and your organisation. There are many ways to gather information about the regions, and it is especially worth **studying the TJTPs of the regions**, which are also available on the JTP website. As the TJTPs have the same structure, it is relatively easy to find the relevant parts that address the identified needs and challenges. Another option is to **explore the events organised by the Just Transition Platform and Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition**, which include JTP conferences, where one can not only learn about the region-specific challenges but also identify the key actors in the transition.

In addition to these opportunities, it is worth highlighting the **exchangeEU programme**, which was also part of the Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition and provided an opportunity for meaningful and tangible exchanges between coal+ regions across Europe. At the end of the programme, leaflets were produced – in addition to many useful materials such as success stories – containing not only the profiles of the regions and the common challenges identified but also recommendations and lessons learned. These informational brochures also provide references to the main actors and organisations in each coal+ region. Additionally, and important programme to note is the ongoing JTPeers Exchange that is bringing together regions and other relevant stakeholders and experts, from both

carbon and coal-intensive regions to exchange knowledge and expertise in order to the support the implementation of their TJTPs. This programme launched in 2023, and will reopen calls for interested regions and experts to apply in 2024.

Best practices from different regions (not only under the JTP) can be found divided by category on the [Functional Areas in the EU](#) website (a European Commission pilot project, implemented together with the World Bank).

3. Find the right partner

Once you have identified the region facing similar challenges or found a best practice to learn from, the next step is to find a partner to work with. This might be the most difficult part of the process. While exploring the regions (e.g. by studying TJTPs or presentations/videos from JTP conferences) in the previous step, you may have located **some organisations and actors** working in the field of just transition in a particular region.

To make this step smoother and more efficient, members of Action 1 and the JTP Secretariat have created a **database** where you can find **local contact points** from almost all eligible JTF regions. It covers a wide range of local actors and includes the names of the organisations, their area of expertise and contact details. With the help of this database, you can easily get in touch with the actors in the target region.

Another very useful database within the JTP is the [JTPeers Experts Database](#). This is a database of experts working on just transition across Europe. Once included in the database, JTF regions and other interested stakeholders can ask the experts for advice on how to implement just transition projects.

Regions looking for partners could also be inspired by the concept of 'twin towns' or 'sister cities', which have a long tradition in Europe. The underlying idea being to establish relationships with a geographical entity (be it a city, a municipality or a region) to cooperate and exchange on a more regular basis for the benefit of both partners.

Conclusions

1. Building cooperation with other coal+/carbon-intensive regions requires capacity from the searching organisation, but if you find the right partners, you can create added value and synergies.
2. There are programmes that can bridge the potential capacity gap, such as the exchangeEU programme and JTPeers (others are listed in previous chapters). It is worth keeping your eyes open for cooperation opportunities.
3. It is worth studying the JTP website, where you can access the regions' TJTPs: these include the challenges and needs of the regions.
4. Once you have a picture of the regions, you can start to find the right partner. The data sets described above could make this step more efficient.
5. It may strengthen cooperation if you can identify a common challenge that you want to address together. The coal+ and carbon-intensive regions are quite different, but the challenges are surprisingly similar.
6. During the exchange – even in the partner search phase – it pays to be as focused as possible: well-defined topics and well-described, clear goals can lead to more efficient cooperation.

How to finance knowledge exchange

EU funding opportunities abound but understanding them can be a daunting task. A plethora of programmes and allocated funds exist, each managed by different European and/or national bodies, and therefore pursue different goals and follow different rules. However, as is often the case, reality is less complicated than it first appears.

All European funding opportunities come from the EU budget, the so-called **Multiannual Financial Framework** (MFF). It is a long-term budget that spans several years. The current MFF period covers the years 2021–2027. In addition to the MFF, the EU has created an unprecedented temporary funding instrument called **NextGenerationEU** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU budget and the NextGenerationEU instrument are divided into different programmes and funds.

A very good and comprehensive overview of the different EU funding programmes and funds is provided by the **Guide to EU Funding** (2023 edition) of the European Parliamentary Research Service, the think tank of the European Parliament. The guide divides the various EU funds by funding themes, e.g. 'Regional Policy' or 'Energy'. In addition to EU funding programmes, there are different forms of designated funding set aside for the provision of technical assistance, which connects regions and other stakeholders in different capacities.

Technical Assistance

Below are some examples of technical assistance opportunities available to regions:

- **JTP Groundwork**

Launched under the Just Transition Platform in 2023, JTP Groundwork is technical assistance available for eligible JTF regions to get tailed support in the form of technical assistance and advisory services to aid in the implementation of their TJTP.

- **REGIO Peer2Peer +**

The REGIO Peer2Peer + scheme enables staff of programme authorities and other public bodies involved in managing and implementing ERDF, Cohesion Fund and JTF programmes to meet and exchange knowledge and good practice on both a bilateral and multilateral level.

- **JTPeers**

The programme facilitates exchange between JTF territories and other relevant just transition stakeholders, including regional and public authorities as well as socio-economic partners such as NGOs, universities, unions, or businesses. It supports the sharing of knowledge and best practices between experts, JTF territories and other relevant stakeholders, offering them the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences.

A very useful resource that emerged from the Functional Areas in the EU project and can serve as a springboard in the search for funding is this regularly updated database on EU Funding Sources. Many organisations have furthermore written guides on EU funding for specific target groups that might be worth looking into, such as this guide from the European Trade Union Confederation, which is aimed at trade unions.

This document is a guide to knowledge exchange in the context of the just transition process, only some of these funds are of interest to be further explored as financing sources:

- **JTF**

Access to the JTF (total volume of EUR 19.2 billion) is linked to TJTPs developed by Member States in dialogue with the European Commission. However, the Member States' administrations (at national, regional and local levels) choose which projects to finance and take responsibility for day-to-day management, so-called 'shared management'. Only those territories that are expected to be the most negatively impacted by the transition towards climate-neutrality have been eligible for developing a TJTP. The plans identify the types of operations envisaged and specify the governance mechanisms.

To find out if you can access JTF financing for your knowledge exchange, you need to check the TJTP of your region and/or contact the managing authority responsible for implementing the actions it sets out.

- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

The ERDF is another fund that is managed in shared responsibility. The ERDF targets all EU regions and cities and invests in their social and economic development. The Member States themselves decide how much of the ERDF is to be used for each of the five priority areas defined by the European Commission. However, at least 30 % must be allocated to the 'greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net-zero carbon economy and resilient Europe'.

The ERDF also explicitly supports 'exchange of experience'. As with the JTF, you need to contact the ERDF managing authority in your region to find out exactly how to access ERDF financing for your knowledge exchange.

- **Interregional Cooperation (Interreg C)**

The EU's programme to promote cooperation between regions is called Interreg. Interreg is divided into different strands depending on the type of cooperation: cooperation between border regions (Interreg A), within large defined transnational cooperation areas, e.g. the Baltic Sea Region (Interreg B), or interregional cooperation (Interreg C).

Interreg C has a particular focus on promoting exchanges of experience, innovative approaches and capacity building between regions. It is therefore the main strand of Interreg to consider when seeking funding for knowledge exchange.

Interreg C is further divided into four programmes, of which two are of interest for the purposes of this document:

- o **Interreg Europe** is a policy learning programme for **public authorities**. It promotes the exchange of experience and the transfer of good practices between actors at all levels of government. Submitting a project idea to search for partners and funding is easily done via the programme's website.

- o **Interact** is a support programme. Its aim is to ensure the exchange of experiences, information and innovations in order to promote best practices and facilitate cooperation. This is to be achieved through targeted events, publications

and tools. Interact does not issue calls for proposals itself, but has a number of offices to support stakeholders in the implementation of territorial cooperation projects and initiatives.

- **Horizon Europe**

While the focus of this document is to support knowledge exchange regarding the demonstration and implementation of the just transition, specific exchanges on scientific knowledge and research results might also be desirable. The EU framework programme to support research and innovation actions is Horizon Europe. An overview of open calls for knowledge valorisation actions can be found here.

- **Erasmus+**

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2021–2027. Education, training, youth and sport are key areas that support citizens in their personal and professional development. High-quality, inclusive education and training, as well as informal and non-formal learning, ultimately equip young people and participants of all ages with the qualifications and skills needed for their meaningful participation in democratic society, intercultural understanding and successful transition in the labour market.

- **Urban Agenda for the EU**

The Urban Agenda for the EU is an innovative multi-level governance initiative on urban policy, developed in the scope of intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters. It enables cities, Member States, city networks, the European Commission, other EU institutions, the EU's advisory bodies, and other stakeholders to come together to jointly tackle pressing urban matters and deliver concrete outputs for the benefit of EU citizens. The Urban Agenda for the EU is boosting the role of cities in national and EU policymaking to better connect the EU with citizens' needs. It is a key delivery mechanism at EU level for the New Urban Agenda.