

Cohesion Policy and Croatia

⌘ In 2014-2020, Croatia manages **two operational programmes** under EU Cohesion Policy. Of these, one is multi-funded including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund, and one will receive funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).



Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF) eligibility 2014-2020

- Less developed regions
(GDP/head < 75 % of EU-27 average)
- Transition regions
(GDP/head between \geq 75 % and < 90 % of EU-27 average)
- More developed regions
(GDP/head \geq 90 % of EU-27 average)

How much cohesion funding will be invested in Croatia?

For 2014-2020 Croatia has been allocated around **€8.6 billion** (current prices) in total Cohesion Policy funding:

- **€5.84 billion** for less developed regions (all)
- **€2.56 billion** under the Cohesion Fund
- **€146.1 million** for European Territorial Cooperation
- **€66.2 million** for the Youth Employment Initiative

Of that total amount, the ESF in Croatia will represent a minimum of **€1.5 billion**. The actual ESF share is set in light of the specific challenges the country needs to address in the areas covered by the ESF.

What are the main investment priorities for Croatia?

The investment priorities for 2014-2020 will be set out in a Partnership Agreement with the European Commission. The main priorities are expected to include:

- Strengthening the competitiveness of the economy.
- Increasing labour market participation, ensure better education and skills and reduce poverty taking into account regional differences.
- Preserving and maintaining a healthy environment, protecting natural resources and heritage, adapting to climate change.
- Strengthening administrative capacity, enhancing an efficient public administration and increasing the involvement of civil society and social partners.

What results have been achieved so far?

Under the pre-accession IPA programmes, the national authorities have gained a valuable experience of managing EU Funds, in line with the European requirements. Regional and local stakeholders have used the IPA funds to develop new types of projects in the fields of transport (railway infrastructure, inland waterways), environment (waste and water management), business and research, anticipating the implementation of the Union's *acquis*.

For example, two waste management centres are being built in Kastijun and Marišćina. The water supply and waste water treatment plants in Knin, Sisak, Porec and Osijek will increase the share of population connected to public sewerage systems and improve water quality. The BIOCentre in Zagreb University will provide research, business facilities, and expertise in biotechnologies to small and medium enterprises active in Croatia. The completed renovation and upgrading of infrastructure around Zagreb's main railway station allows international rail traffic to flow more quickly and easily through this important hub, to the benefit of local people and companies.

Croatia has also expanded cross-border cooperation with EU Member States (Hungary, Italy and Slovenia) as well as neighbouring Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia). Croatia participates in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, and is also actively contributing to the preparation of the new Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region.

Cohesion Policy success stories

ERDF projects

● **Water supply and sewerage system for Slavonski Brod**

The objective of this environmental investment from the EU's Cohesion Fund is to improve the water system in the Danube River Basin, by improving the security of water supply to existing consumers and connecting approximately 4 300 additional inhabitants. [The modern wastewater treatment plant for Slavonski Brod](#) will allow more effective treatment of the waste water, increasing the number of inhabitants (9 950) connected to the discharge system. The project will help protect the environment and ensure conformity to EU environmental standards.

Cohesion Fund contribution: €15.3 million

● **Biosciences technology centre**

On the campus of Zagreb University a [Biosciences Technology Commercialization and Incubation Centre](#) (BIOCentre) is being built using a €14 million investment from the ERDF. This centre will provide support to biotechnology and life sciences start-up businesses in Croatia. The overall project objective of the BIOcentre is to develop technology transfer and commercialisation capacities of the higher education institutions and public research organisations.

ERDF contribution: €13.9 million

- **Harnessing the potential of Croatia's world famous indigenous cherry**

The Marasca cherry is a type of sour Morello cherry and those cultivated along Croatia's coast, particularly around the town of Zadar, are reputed to be the world's finest and are characterised by their astringent flavour and dark red juice. This ERDF-funded project has focused on the application of sophisticated technologies (freeze drying, spray drying) in the [production of food products and preparations based on Marasca cherries](#). The aim is to create new products and find new markets for this local fruit, creating new employment possibilities.

Total cost: € 496 800 (ERDF contribution: € 360 000)

ESF projects

- **Sustainable jobs for highly educated long-term unemployed**

Using an investment from the ESF, this project aims to [improve employment prospects for highly educated long-term unemployed persons](#) from Osijek – Baranja and Vukovar – Srijem counties. It provides support in the area of entrepreneurship, personal and IT skills.

ESF contribution: € 149 000

- **Youth in the labour market**

By providing [childcare for working parents and jobs for those setting up and running children's playgroups](#), the Croatian county of Pleternica aimed to bring a two-fold benefit to its local community. The project targeted 225 young people in the county, to offer training and work experience in planning and operating newly established playgroups.

ESF contribution: € 94 551

Find out more about EU cohesion policy projects in Croatia

For more project examples, as well as links to the complete list of beneficiaries of EU cohesion policy funding, see the following websites:

- [European Commission Regional Policy website](#)
- [European Social Fund website](#)