

# **KOHESIO & LISTS OF OPERATIONS TOOLBOX**

## Introduction

Visibility, communication and transparency are essential for making European Union action visible on the ground. In the 2021-2027 programming period, these provisions have been reinforced in the regulatory framework, which puts forward an important potential for Member States.

In terms of transparency, a key requirement is the list of operations. This regulatory provision allows citizens, the private sector, civil society and public administrations to see how European funds are being used. In 2014-2020, innovative practices were set up by Member States to capitalize on these datasets. In addition to these cases, the regulatory framework of the new programming period allowed the European Commission to step up efforts in capitalisation and further re-use of the valuable data provided in lists of operations. This is being achieved via [Kohesio](#), a knowledge management platform that re-uses data from 27 Member States to display more than 1.9 million operations of the 2014-2020 programming period, with more operations to be integrated in 2021-2027.

However, Member States and managing authorities approach the list of operations in different ways, which consequently affects the way how EU actions are represented on the ground. To consolidate Kohesio's role as the single project data system for 2021-2027, it is essential to make sure that all programmes provide the same level of transparency, accessibility and visibility of their operations. For this, a shared aim to standardise information from different funds, regions, programmes, languages and formats is brought forward in this document.

The purpose of this support tool is to provide Member States and managing authorities an explanation of Kohesio's aims and working method, outline links between the platform and the list of operations requirement, and suggest best practices for drafting the lists of operations. The document is a follow-up of the discussion and questions raised at the Inform EU Expert Group on Communication.

### Disclaimer:

This document was prepared by the Commission services and does not commit the European Commission. Only the Court of Justice of the European Union is competent to authoritatively interpret Union law. This document aims at explaining the Kohesio platform and providing examples of the list of operations requirement.

## 1. List of operations: a snapshot of implementation

The list of operations is a regulatory requirement for the 2021-2027 programming period, spelled out in Art. 49, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)<sup>1</sup>:

*3. The managing authority shall make the list of operations selected for support by the Funds publicly available on the website in at least one of the official languages of the institutions of the Union and shall update that list at least every 4 months. Each operation shall have a unique code. The list shall contain the following data:*

- (a) in the case of legal entities, the beneficiary's and, in the case of public procurement, the contractor's name;*
- (b) where the beneficiary is a natural person the first name and the surname;*
- (c) for EMFAF operations linked to a fishing vessel, the Union fishing fleet register identification number as referred to in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/218 (47);*
- (d) name of the operation;*
- (e) the purpose of the operation and its expected or actual achievements;*
- (f) start date of the operation;*
- (g) expected or actual date of completion of the operation;*
- (h) total cost of the operation;*
- (i) fund concerned;*
- (j) specific objective concerned;*
- (k) Union co-financing rate;*
- (l) location indicator or geolocation for the operation and country concerned;*
- (m) for mobile operations or operations covering several locations the location of the beneficiary where the beneficiary is a legal entity; or the NUTS 2 level region where the beneficiary is a natural person;*
- (n) type of intervention for the operation in accordance with point (g) of Article 73(2).*

*For data referred to in points (b) and (c) of the first subparagraph, the data shall be removed 2 years from the date of the initial publication on the website.*

*4. The data referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article shall be published on the website referred to in paragraph 1, or on the single website portal referred to in point (b) of Article 46 of this Regulation, in open, machine-readable formats, as set out in Article 5(1) of the Directive (EU) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council (48), which allows data to be sorted, searched, extracted, compared and reused.*

*5. The managing authority shall inform the beneficiaries that the data will be made public before the publication takes place in accordance with this Article.*

In other words, the list of operations is a snapshot of implementation of EU funds in a given programme at a given moment. It requires managing authorities to provide information from all operations funded as part of a programme, so citizens can use an up-to-date and publicly available source about operations in their city, region, country or the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.](#)

## **Data fields**

The type of information that needs to be included in lists of operations is listed in Art. 49 (3) of the CPR. It entails data fields that provide operation and programme, beneficiary and funding information. Aiming for better visibility of EU policies and to tap the potential of the Kohesio platform, managing authorities and Member States are encouraged to provide more information about projects (see section 3 for details).

## **Wide availability**

The list of operations shall be publicly available, i.e. they will be published on the programme website or the single website portal (Art. 49 (3 and 4)). It is considered a good practice to provide stable website addresses which do not change when different versions of lists of operations are uploaded. As for the language, it is needed to publish list of operations in at least one of the official languages of the Union.

## **Updated and actual**

Providing up-to-date information is of high importance for creating reliable and accurate datasets on EU policies. Following Art. 49 (3), this shall be achieved by updating the data at least every 4 months. Member States and managing authorities may do it more often, for example after selecting and contracting new operations.

## **Format and re-use**

The format of lists of operations is an important element for accessibility: it shall be published in open, machine-readable formats, which allow data to be sorted, searched, extracted, compared and re-used. In practice, open and machine-readable formats (such as .csv, .xlsx and other) offer structured data that allow finding new ways of using it and creating new services or products. The aforementioned becomes especially important in the case of public sector information<sup>2</sup>, which constitutes a vast and diverse pool of resources.

## **Informing the beneficiaries**

The managing authority shall make sure the beneficiaries are aware of the requirement and inform them that the data will be made public before the publication takes place (Art. 49 (5)).

With reinforced parameters and additional data fields, the 2021-2027 regulatory framework sets the stage for creating added value from the data found in lists of operations. This has been done primarily with Kohesio.

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<sup>2</sup> As outlined in the [Directive \(EU\) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on open data and the re-use of public sector information](#).

## 2. Kohesio: a platform for EU-funded projects

[Kohesio](#) is a knowledge management platform that aims to capture and visualise operation data from list of operations, with more than 1.9 million Cohesion policy operations<sup>3</sup> included in the platform. It was officially launched in March 2022, after a pilot period where the Commission integrated operation data from the 2014-2020 period, covering the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and Cohesion Fund (CF). The first phase of the Kohesio pilot included operations from six Member States<sup>4</sup> which were then expanded to all 27. In July 2022, Interreg projects were included too. Currently, REGIO is looking into options to make Kohesio a single project system for all funds covered by the CPR.

### A frontrunner for accessibility and transparency

Kohesio aims to make implementation of EU funds more transparent, more accessible and encourage re-using existing data. Its functionalities include an interactive map, a project and beneficiary module. The modules allow searching EU-funded initiatives by:

- keywords,
- country and region,
- thematic, policy objectives and general themes,
- project categories,
- fund,
- programme,
- priority axis,
- total and EU budget,
- intervention field,
- date and
- beneficiary organisations.

As such, the platform allows finding information and communicating territorially, making EU policies more accessible despite language differences and increasing understanding of policies with concrete operations examples. In addition to these aims, Kohesio's functionalities may support different day-to-day programme management tasks. The platform relies on open-source and free software developed by Wikimedia Deutschland and uses technology such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and semantic search.

### Origin of data

The main source of data are the lists of operations, as explained in Art. 49(3) of the CPR<sup>5</sup>. The data that is brought together according to Art. 49(3) is the backbone of Kohesio: it includes all operation information which

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<sup>3</sup> After the formal launch of Kohesio in March 2022, the platform included 1.718.033 operations. This number is continuously expanded with new data integrated into Kohesio.

<sup>4</sup> The first Member States whose data was included in Kohesio are France, Denmark, Ireland, Czechia, Italy and Poland. Representatives of these Member States took part in a Technical Seminar on Kohesio in 2020 and provided valuable feedback for developing the platform.

<sup>5</sup> As for the 2014-2020 programming period, Art. 115 and Annex XII of the [Regulation \(EU\) No 1303/2013](#) apply.

is then re-used, structured and visualized in the platform (an exhaustive overview of lists of operations used for Kohesio and related hyperlinks can be found in Kohesio's [FAQ section](#)).

### **The language**

Kohesio uses [eTranslation](#), the Commission's machine translation tool, to translate details on operations from different languages to English.

### **Target audiences**

As a communication and transparency tool, Kohesio offers a wide set of possible uses for making Cohesion policy nationally or regionally visible. For Member States and managing authorities, Kohesio can be used to keep track of investments in certain regions of one or several countries, communicate specific operations (using a specific URL as each operation has its own page in Kohesio, and embedding Kohesio on programme websites for example) or promote new operations selected for support. For beneficiaries, Kohesio makes their work more visible and offers more promotion opportunities by putting them on the map of EU co-funded operations. The media, international institutions, regional development and other experts can take advantage of Kohesio by researching implementation of Cohesion policy, finding information about specific beneficiaries and operations, and taking stock of operation achievements. With the *Projects near me* functionality, citizens can use Kohesio to find operations around their current location, or in other areas where they live, work or spend time. Lastly, the European Commission plans to use Kohesio for selecting operations for visits, interviews, briefings, etc.

### **The working method**

Kohesio relies on lists of operations that are already published by Member States and managing authorities. Operation information is captured from Member States and managing authorities' websites in an automated way. In other words, Member States and managing authorities are required to prepare and publish operation data in open, machine-readable formats. The Commission then captures lists of operations directly from these websites, enriches data and cross-checks its quality, and finally integrates it in Kohesio. In these steps, data is captured from websites several times a year to make use of most recent updates.

When Member States and managing authorities fulfil their obligations concerning lists of operations, there is no additional tasks concerning Kohesio. However, a gap exists concerning the lists of operations and Kohesio. Different ways of structuring datasets and different data included in lists of operations that are found across Member States affect coherent and comparable understanding of EU action on the ground, as well as the availability of data (not only for Kohesio, but for other communication purposes). This makes an impact on transparency of EU funds and Kohesio. Providing a structure for more harmonisation across Member States and managing authorities' lists of operations is seen as a way to address this challenge.

### 3. Bridging the gap: from diverse approaches to a common standard

Based on 2014-2020 practices of publishing list of operations data, it was noticed that Member States and managing authorities approach the list of operations requirements in different, not always systematic ways. This diversity of approaches refers to the format of data fields, inconsistencies between different versions of lists of operations, and to a lesser extent differences concerning which data fields are included<sup>6</sup>.

Therefore, this chapter aims to establish a common structure for producing list of operations, it suggests how to improve data quality and illustrates the aim with best practices. In line with the importance of raising visibility of EU policies, Member States and the European Commission share a common interest to publish high quality operation data, capitalise it via Kohesio and bring added value to transparency, visibility and communication of EU policies.

The next page shows a **mock-up of an expanded list of operations**, including data fields outlined in Art. 49(3) and more fields essential for transparency and Kohesio, their explanations and examples. The aim of this example is to illustrate how a rich and valuable list of operations might look like. The mock-up is followed by an Excel file (annexed to this document), which presents the same fields but in a format allowing easier re-use. Member States and managing authorities are encouraged to follow the order of data fields presented in the mock-up (column *Data* field). The section ends with a list of general practices in making the most out of lists of operations.

Please note that Member States and managing authorities are required to provide data listed in Art. 49(3). Expanding the list of operations based on the proposed expanded mock-up<sup>7</sup> is on a voluntary basis. Doing so is highly encouraged, as it also taps the potential of already available sources. Namely, the expanded mock-up data fields refer to data to be recorded and stored electronically on each operation, which is outlined in Article 72(1,e) and Annex XVII. Secondly, expanding the original list of operation will bring more transparency for Member States and managing authorities, both via more datasets that allow more reuse and via Kohesio.

Therefore, Member States and managing authorities are invited to make use of the examples and mainstream these practices to programmes. Doing so will underline our approach to communication: communicating EU policies is a joint venture involving the Commission, Member States and managing authorities, whose engagement, dedication and expertise are a key condition for success.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, it was noticed that more than a hundred different templates are provided across the EU. A number of lists of operations were not published in a machine-friendly format, while others did not provide a stable URL (i.e. the link to the list of operations changed after updates). Next, a number of lists of operations uses different wording for same data fields, which hampers integration of data into Kohesio.

<sup>7</sup> Additional data fields proposed in the expanded mock-up are marked with an asterisk (\*).

Data field	Description	Example
<b>Programme</b>		
<b>Programme*</b>	Refers to the CCI, a specific code allocated to each programme, which helps identifying the exact programme (among many in Kohesio).	2022FR16M00P003
<b>Priority*</b>	Programme-specific priority which addresses one policy objective. <i>Tip: use a standard format for priorities and official translations (EUR-Lex) in the language used for the list of operations</i>	2 – Sustainability
<b>Specific objective</b>	Specific objective which is selected and included in each programme (and listed in the CPR and fund-specific regulation). <i>Tip: introduce both code and name of the specific objective in the language of the list of operations.</i>	2.7. - Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of transition to a net zero carbon economy
<b>Operation</b>		
<b>Operation ID</b>	A unique code identifying an operation, defined by the managing authority or Member State. <i>Tip: make sure all operations have identification numbers in all versions of lists of operations, to ensure update of operation data from one version of the list to another. If possible, the ID should be the same as the one in Member States and managing authorities' information system. For operations of strategic importance, use the prefix 'OSI' or see the suggestion two rows down.</i>	Project_CZ_01 or OSI_CZ_01
<b>Operation name</b>	Title of the operation or group of projects. <i>Tip: choose simple and understandable titles and avoid technical terms, if possible. Use acronyms when they are meaningful or resonate well with the audience.</i>	Improving public transport in the city of Osijek
<b>Operation of strategic importance*</b>	Specify if the operation is an operation of strategic importance. This data will allow highlighting, filtering and retrieving operations easily in the Kohesio platform.	Yes or



		No
<b>Call for proposal*</b>	Specify under which call for proposal the operation was selected by the programme. The identifier of the call for proposals should match the one included in the timetable required by article 49(2). <i>Tip: introduce both the identifier and name of the call for proposal.</i>	TRANSP_01 – actions aimed at strengthening public mobility in cities
<b>Purpose and expected or actual achievements</b>	A tailored description of the operation's main purpose and achievements. <i>Tip: provide a clear, simple and meaningful description, and include key information about the operation, such as description of the challenge the project is addressing, project objectives, purpose and achievements, description of project activities and target groups, stakeholders, end users and other citizens who will benefit from the project. If possible, avoid acronyms.</i>	... The project aims at boosting public transport in the city of 'xy'. A new 10 km metro line will be built in neighborhood 'z' and will connect residential areas with the business centre. The project supports its long-term vision to become a green and resilient city. ...
<b>Operation start date</b>	Date when the operation starts implementation. <i>Tip: use consistent formats for all operations, as outlined in the example.</i>	20/05/2021
<b>Expected or actual date of completion of the operation</b>	Planned or real end date of the operation. <i>Tip: use consistent formats for all operations (see example).</i>	20/05/2023
<b>Location indicator or geolocation for the operation</b>	Information indicating the location of the operation. <i>Tip: use geographical latitude and longitude or postal codes as they will provide the most precise locations of operations. Geocoordinates can be extracted <a href="#">here</a>.</i>  For <u>location-based operations</u> , it is suggested to include the location where the physical investment has been made, the purchased equipment installed, or the most significant or the majority of project activities implemented (this is also the place where durable plaques, billboards or posters clearly visible to the public should be displayed).	50.84801789269416, 4.350378703504829 <i>Or</i> 1000

	<p>For <u>operations not implemented at one specific location</u>, please see the <i>Location of beneficiary</i> field.</p> <p>For <u>Interreg</u>, it is suggested to include locations of all project partners.</p>	
<b>Country</b>	<p>Information indicating the country.</p> <p><i>Tip: use standardized country codes as listed in <a href="#">Eurostat's webpage</a>.</i></p>	NL
<b>Type of intervention</b>	Codes and/or descriptions referring to types of interventions, as specified in Annex I of the CPR.	038 Energy efficiency and demonstration projects in SMEs and supporting measures
<b>Funding</b>		
<b>Total cost of the operation</b>	<p>Total eligible costs related to the operation.</p> <p><i>Tip: when introducing amounts, use '.' as separator</i></p>	1000000.00
<b>Fund concerned</b>	<p>Refers to the European Fund(s) that are supporting the operation.</p> <p><i>Tip: use (<a href="#">EUR-Lex</a>) official translations of Fund names in the language used for the list of operations (e.g. ERDF in English, EFRR in Croatian, FESR in Italian...) If an operation is funded by more than one fund, specify the funds separating them by a pipe symbol (" ").</i></p>	<p>ERDF</p> <p>or</p> <p>ERDF   ESF</p>
<b>Union co-financing rate</b>	<p>Co-financing rate of an operation</p> <p><i>Tip: provide percentages or decimals.</i></p>	<p>32%</p> <p>or</p> <p>0.32</p>
<b>Beneficiary</b>		
<b>Beneficiary's name</b>	<p>Indicate the name of beneficiary (in case of legal entities) and first name and surname (where the beneficiary is a natural person).</p>	<p>City of Ferrara</p> <p>or</p> <p>Giovanni Giannini</p>

	<p>In case of beneficiaries as natural persons, the data shall be removed 2 years from the date of initial publication on the programme website or single website portal.</p> <p><i>Tip: ensure consistent naming of beneficiaries and use complete, official names (i.e., avoid typos or similar mistakes, such as “City of Ferrara” and “City Ferrara”). In case the operation includes several beneficiaries, include all of them and divide entries with the pipe symbol (“ ”).</i></p>	<p>or</p> <p>Giovanna Giannina   Paolo Rossi</p>
<b>Beneficiary ID*</b>	<p>A unique identification number of the beneficiary with legal personality. In case a beneficiary is a natural person, the beneficiary ID is omitted.</p> <p><i>Tip: use national identification numbers, such as a company registry number or similar, in order to allow consistency between different versions of list of operations and more accuracy in Kohesio (this will allow grouping of all operations of a beneficiary across regions, programming periods and Funds). In case of several beneficiaries, include IDs for all beneficiaries of an operation and separate them by a pipe symbol (“ ”).</i></p>	<p>B_ID_1121</p> <p>or</p> <p>0062164   0071254</p>
<b>Beneficiary type*</b>	<p>Categorise beneficiaries as legal entities or natural persons.</p>	<p>Legal entity</p> <p>or</p> <p>Natural person</p>
<p><b>Location of beneficiary</b></p> <p><i>(for mobile operations or operations covering several locations)</i></p>	<p>Where the beneficiary is a legal entity, the location needs to be provided.</p> <p>Where the beneficiary is a natural person, the NUTS 2 region needs to be provided.</p> <p><u>Mobile operations or operations covering several locations</u> (i.e. operations not implemented at one specific location such as training projects - with multiple venues or with participants from multiple regions/locations, projects setting up digital services, virtual universities or similar) should provide a location of the beneficiary/ies.</p>	<p>“Corso Martiri della Libertà, 57, 44121 Ferrara, Italy”</p> <p>or</p> <p>"44.83671951293945, 11.619765281677246"</p>

<b>Contractor name</b>	<p>Indicate names of companies, organisations and other actors who are contracted as part of the operation. To be filled in case of public procurement.</p> <p><i>Tip: ensure consistent naming of contractors, to allow accurate data capture and reconciliation. If an operation has more than one contractor, specify them in one cell by separating with a pipe symbol (" ").</i></p>	<p>Contractor X</p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p>Contractor Z   Contractor Y</p>
<b>The Union fishing fleet register identification</b> <i>(for EMFAF operations)</i>	<p>Unique identification number of the vessel in the Union fishing fleet.</p> <p>The data shall be removed 2 years from the date of initial publication on the programme website or single website portal.</p>	<p>HRV000012</p>

### **Good examples of making the most out of lists of operations:**

- Make the list of operations machine-friendly and ensure publishing under a stable URL, which does not change after several changes in the list (e.g. [www.authority.eu/list-of-operation](http://www.authority.eu/list-of-operation)).
- Harmonize and consolidate the way lists of operations are produced in your country: national communication coordinators can raise the question of lists of operations with programme communication officers and set up the same structure across all programmes in a country. In addition, Member States can publish a comprehensive list covering all programmes on the single website portal.
- Make sure communication officers and IT or knowledge management specialists are involved in drafting and publishing lists of operations and using Kohesio. It is noted that the combination of these two profiles makes the most of the requirement.
- In addition, IT or knowledge management specialists in programme authorities will have an overview of data fields that can be re-used concerning Article 72(1,e) and Annex XVII requirements (data to be recorded and stored electronically on each operation).
- Include an export functionality which allows a download button for the entire list of operations.
- Avoid merging cells, as this limits machine readability of data.
- Use universal encoding standards (e.g. utf-8) whenever possible, or otherwise include technical specifications.
- Offer an application programme interface (API), i.e. a software that allows setting up a connection with another software or application. It helps extracting data automatically from different programme websites to Kohesio in a secure and structured way.
- See more examples in the [FAQ section of Kohesio](#).