

Single Market Programme (SMP)

Specific provisions and opportunities for EU outermost regions

The outermost regions face permanent constraints recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which provides for specific measures to support these regions. It is in this spirit that many EU funds and programmes 2021-27 include specific provisions applicable to the outermost regions and/or provide important opportunities to support these regions' development. In its [Communication](#) "Putting People first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth and unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions", the European Commission has committed itself to facilitating outermost regions' uptake of EU tools to capitalise on their assets, foster economic diversification, and further integrate into the single market. The Single Market Programme contributes to the overall support addressing specific needs of outermost regions and their integration in the internal market. ¹

About Single Market Programme (SMP)

Since its establishment in 1993, the single market has been at the heart of the European Union and has grown to become the biggest market worldwide where people, goods, and services move as within a single country. EU citizens can study, live, shop, work and retire in any Member State while their consumer rights and quality of goods and services are assured. The SMP is the first ever financial programme directly supporting the Single Market and aims to ensure its well-functioning and economic recovery post-COVID-19 towards achieving its full potential. The Programme pools together previous programmes from various policy areas under one umbrella aiming to increase synergies found within the single market. The Programme is organised into 6 specific objectives with dedicated funding and managed by 7 Directorate-Generals (DGs), with the support for some parts of 2 Executive Agencies, as outlined in the table below. Overall programme coordination is assured by DG GROW.

Key Facts

Programme duration: 2021-2027

Total Budget: 4.200.000.000 euros

Thematic categories: Food safety, Consumer interest protection, Competitiveness of SMEs, Standards, Statistics

Target group: Private enterprises, NGOs and civil society organisations, public authorities

Type of funding: Grants for Financial Support, Project Grants, COSME Enterprise Europe Network Actions, Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions Grants, European Statistics

OBJECTIVE	MANAGEMENT*	IMPLEMENTATION	BUDGET SHARE
A More Effective Single Market <i>SMP Regulation Article 3 (2)(a)</i>	DG COMP, DG TAXUD, DG FISMA, DG GROW, DG JUST	EISMEA/DGs	13%
Support to Small and Medium-sized Businesses <i>SMP Regulation Article 3 (2)(b)</i>	DG GROW	EISMEA	24%
Effective European Standards <i>SMP Regulation Article 3 (2)(c)</i>	DG FISMA, DG GROW	EISMEA/DG	5%
Consumer Protection <i>SMP Regulation Article 3 (2)(d)</i>	DG JUST, DG FISMA	EISMEA/DG	5%
Food Safety <i>SMP Regulation Article 3 (2)(e)</i>	DG SANTE	HaDEA	40%
High Quality European Statistics <i>SMP Regulation Article 3 (2)(f)</i>	Eurostat	Eurostat	13%

* Full name of each DG in annex

¹This factsheet has been elaborated as part of the organisation of seven virtual workshops for EU outermost regions on the following EU competitive programmes: Connecting Europe Facility (CEF); Digital Europe Programme; Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE); Erasmus+; Horizon Europe; Creative Europe Programme; Single Market Programme.

Opportunities for EU Outermost Regions (ORs)

Outermost regions face specific challenges due to their remoteness and isolation, mostly small size, limited resources as well as economic dependence on a reduced number of products. They present high levels of unemployment (especially among young people), a gross domestic product (GDP) significantly below EU and national averages, and high vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events. However, outermost regions also have important assets such as a young population, extensive maritime zones, a specific climate for a varied agriculture and a location suitable to activities in fields such as meteorology, astrophysics, research, and innovation in biodiversity.

The Regulation setting up the Single Market Programme states that the Programme should contribute to addressing outermost regions' specific needs and their integration in the internal market.² Therefore, outermost regions are encouraged to participate and benefit from the available tools – such as Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs of the Enterprise Europe Network - and from the funding opportunities it offers.

The SMP can help foster pan-European trade, economic diversification, and growth in the outermost regions by providing them with access to a larger consumer base, a streamlined regional, national and international cooperation, and increased investment opportunities. Furthermore, a better integration into the single market can enhance supply chain resilience, allowing these regions to better withstand external disruptions such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 crisis.

SMP's 6 Specific Objectives

Specific Objective 1 – A more effective single market³ - The Programme aims to ensure the smooth functioning of the EU internal market, including financial services, for the benefit of citizens and businesses. The SMP aims to remove product market barriers, increase market surveillance, enforce rules, and enhance collaboration with national and regional authorities. The Programme also supports the EU competition policy and non-EU cooperation. The interests and protection of outermost regions must be upheld in international trade negotiations due to their proximity to non-EU countries that produce similar goods at lower costs but at lower standards. To enact these objectives, the SMP relies in part on internal market governance tools such as the [Your Europe platform](#), the [Internal Market Information System](#), and the [SOLVIT network](#).

Specific Objective 2 – Support to small and medium-sized businesses⁴ - Under this objective, the SMP provides assistance to businesses, in particular SMEs, to boost their competitiveness, facilitate market access, foster entrepreneurship and promote sustainable practices that address global and societal challenges. The [Enterprise Europe Network \(EEN\)](#) action offers comprehensive advice for SMEs on competitiveness, international growth, and business development in the single market and directly refers to the inclusion of outermost regions.⁵ To encourage synergies and cooperation between SMEs, the Programme funds [industrial clusters](#) within a specific field, policy sector, and/or geographic region. SMEs in outermost regions are actively participating in these groupings and are encouraged to build and expand the network. Without adequate skills, SMEs in outermost regions will be unable to internationalise or take advantage of the single market. Furthermore, the large young population of outermost regions should take advantage of the [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) mentoring scheme to energise the local economy and foster innovation. Finally, this objective also places a high importance on empowering tourism SMEs. Innovative projects that promote sustainable and resilient practices can be co-financed up to 90% by the Programme.⁶

2. Recital 73, Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation 2021/690

3. Article 3 (a), Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation and implemented through C/2023/1119 Annex I

4. Article 3 (b), Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation and implemented through C/2023/1119 Annex II

5. C/2023/1119 Annex II, Introduction

6. C/2023/1119 Annex II, 2.10 Transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem – empowering tourism SMEs

Specific Objective 3 – Effective European standards⁷ - The SMP supports the development of Europe-wide standards to ensure that products and services meet an agreed level of quality and safety. It also grants organisations developing auditing and financial and non-financial reporting standards. Furthermore, this action enhances the involvement of stakeholders representing SMEs, consumers, environmental interests, and trade unions. To fully enter the single market, products and services from outermost regions have to meet the same standards as the European mainland which highlights the importance for these regions to participate in their preparation.

Specific Objective 4 – Consumer protection⁸ - Citizens residing in outermost regions are entitled to the same quality and safety of products and services than in other European countries. The SMP aims to promote the interests of all European consumers and provide access to redress mechanisms if the quality of goods and/or services is not up to standards. Hence, the Programme strives to empower and educate citizens and businesses on their rights, the mechanisms and tools in place for their protection and to guide them in making sustainable and informed choices. Specific actions among others include funding for the [European online dispute resolution platform](#) for e-commerce related issues and [Safety Gate](#) to take measures against dangerous non-food products.

Specific Objective 5 – Food safety⁹ - It is crucial to ensure a high level of health for humans, animals and plants throughout the food chain. The SMP strives to prevent, control, and eradicate animal diseases and plant pests, support sustainable food production and consumption, and encourage the exchange of best practices between stakeholders in those fields. In outermost regions, where agriculture remains a key sector, the Programme would specifically aim to control pests since these regions are excluded from the EU plant health territorial regulation.¹⁰ One key instrument to maintain the safety standards in the food chain is the [Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed \(RASFF\)](#) which ensures the swift flow of information between its members when food risks are detected. Participation in the SMP helps outermost regions to maintain the safety and quality standards necessary to distribute their products in the single market. The actions under this objective are central to the SMP as it accounts for 40% of the entire allocated budget.

Specific Objective 6 – High quality European statistics¹¹ - Evidence-based decision making relies on sound statistical analysis to assess initiatives and formulate new policy options and legislative proposals. For citizens, statistics are crucial to better understand and participate in the democratic process at the heart of the EU. In order to make informed decisions, citizens of outermost regions are entitled to the same information quality and accessibility than any other EU nationals. The SMP aims to provide support for the production, and distribution of high-quality statistics by the [European Statistical System](#) that are comparable at an EU level. The Programme also aims to improve access to statistics and enhance statistical literacy of the public. Due to their specific characteristics, outermost regions are different from their mainland counterpart in most statistical fields. Hence, it is vital for statistics to be reflect these regional specificities and be available at the regional and local level. This information will enable policymakers to address the specific challenges and constraint of outermost regions.

Complementarity with other programmes

Since the SMP is the combination of 6 previous programmes (and independent budget lines) managed by various services in the Commission, it has complementarities with some other EU programmes across various sectors, which are outlined in the work programme by specific objectives, including the following:

Specific Objective 1 relates to the smooth functioning of the internal market holds synergies with the [FISCALIS](#) programme which enables the exchange information and expertise between national tax administrations, and the [CUSTOMS](#) programme between custom authorities.

7. Article 3 (c), Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation and implemented through C/2023/1119 Annex I

8. Article 3 (d), Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation and implemented through C/2023/1119 Annex I & III

9. Article 3 (e), Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation and implemented through C/2023/1119 Annex IV

10. Annex II, Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation (EU) 2016/2031

11. Article 3 (f) of Single Market Programme (SMP) Regulation and implemented through C/2023/1119 Annex V

The competitiveness of SMEs (**Specific Objective 2**) is a cross-cutting action that carries many synergies with EU programmes. For instance, the [InvestEU](#) programme has a pillar dedicated to the support of SMEs through both financial and advisory instruments. Lack of skills is a major obstacle for enterprise growth and the SMP works with the [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) among other programmes to foster the necessary skills for SMEs to thrive, including in outermost regions. The Programme also has links to Horizon Europe through investments in both the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) and the European Solar Academy in the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#).

For Specific Objective 5 on food chain safety, the SMP supports the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) regarding the Codex Planetarius which complements and leverage ongoing funding efforts by the [Global Environmental Facility \(GEF\)](#) within the GEF-7 Food System, Land Use and Restoration Impact Programme (FOLUR-IP).

Example of funded projects

As part of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), the SMP funds a consortium of 5 organisations in the Canary Islands, including regional authorities. The EEN Canarias aims to foster competitiveness of SMEs through internationalisation, technology transfer and access to financing. More information on the project and the assistance the consortium provides can be found [here](#).

Similarly, the Programme also funds a project in the French Caribbean outermost regions: EEN Antilles. The project aims to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs in French outermost regions in the region, and better integrate them in the regional market due to their geographic distance from the mainland.

The "Island Sustainable Tourism Action through Resilient SMEs" project aims to transform tourism SMEs on COVID-19 affected islands into more resilient, innovative, and sustainable businesses. The project provides them with skills, knowledge, and financial support, making sustainability the new norm in the tourism sector. Although this project is not located in the outermost regions, it can be helpful for future projects since tourism sector contributes significantly to the economy of outermost regions. More information on the project can be found [here](#).

More information

How to apply?

Calls for proposals are published on the [EU Funding and Tenders Portal](#). Proposals are published following the 6 core objectives.

Applicable EU law

[Regulation \(EU\) 2021/690](#) establishing the Single Market Programme

Other information

Single Market Programme: [SMP Webpage](#), [SMP Performance](#)

Work Programmes: [2023-2024](#), [Annex I](#), [Annex II](#), [Annex III](#), [Annex IV](#)

Cluster Mapping: [Web page](#)

Enterprise Europe Network (EEN): [Web page](#)

Currently open calls

[Interregional Innovation Investments Instrument \(I3\), Capacity Building Strand \(2b\)](#) (deadline 15 February & 14 November 2024)

[Transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem – empowering tourism SMEs](#) (deadline 21 February 2024)

[SocialTech for Europe for Resilient and Responsible Ecosystems](#) (deadline 8 March 2024)

[Sustainable and Resilient Transformation of the Rural Coastal Tourism Industry](#) (for Portugal only) (deadline 12 March 2024)

[Supporting recovery and business transformation of lighting & furniture SMEs for the Europe Industry of Tomorrow](#) (deadline 25 March 2024)

[Cross-Sectoral Cluster Approach for Higher Competitiveness through Digital, Green Transition and Resilience](#) (deadline 4 April, 6 May & 31 May 2024)

Annex – Acronyms of directorate-generals & agencies

DG COMP – Directorate-General for Competition

DG FISMA – Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union

DG GROW – Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

DG JUST – Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

DG SANTE – Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety

DG TAXUD – Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union

EISMEA - European Innovation Council and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency

Eurostat – European Statistical Office

HaDEA – European Health and Digital Executive Agency