



REGIOSTARS 2026

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1 Is my project a good candidate for the REGIOSTARS competition?

1.1 What is the European Commission looking for in this competition?

The European Commission seeks impactful EU-funded projects that contribute to Europe's cohesion and make real difference in people's lives across our regions. The award scheme covers five categories (same as last year), which correspond to the cohesion policy objectives of the current programming period (2021 – 2027).

1.2 What are the competition categories?

The five competition categories are:

- Category 1) A COMPETITIVE AND SMART EUROPE
- Category 2) A GREEN EUROPE
- Category 3) A CONNECTED EUROPE
- Category 4) A SOCIAL AND INCLUSIVE EUROPE
- Category 5) A EUROPE CLOSER TO THE CITIZENS

The project should clearly refer to one of the five award categories. In most cases, project's results correspond to the policy objective and category under which they were funded. Projects funded in the 2014-2020 period should refer to the competition category matching their thematic objective, as indicated in the conversion table (annex 1). A project may also be submitted to an alternative category if that better reflects its objectives and outcomes.

Although each application must indicate only one category, jurors may reassign applications to another category during the first assessment phase if they consider that the project fits that category better based on its objectives and outcomes.

*A more detailed description of the categories and examples of investment types are presented in **the Guide for Applicants** available on the [REGIOSTARS website](#).*

1.3 Which types of EU co-funded projects are eligible?

Eligible projects include those receiving funding from:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),
- Cohesion Fund (CF),
- European Social Fund (ESF) and European Social Fund Plus (ESF+),
- Just Transition Fund,
- and any strand of Interreg.

Only completed projects from the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods are eligible. Projects and initiatives that combine these funds with other EU funding are also welcome.

*Eligibility and award criteria are detailed in **the Guide for Applicants** available on the [REGIOSTARS website](#).*

1.4 Can I submit a project that started before 2014?

No. Project start dates must be on or after 1 January 2014.

1.5 Can I submit a recently completed project?

Yes. All eligible projects must be completed, meaning that all planned activities have been carried out, the final financial contribution has been received, and the project has been declared closed by the project beneficiary and/or the Managing Authority. The project should also be operational.

1.6 What does it mean that a project is “operational”?

Completed projects should generally be operational. However, this depends on the type of project and the nature of its final outcomes (for example, a film festival may be concluded and no longer operational, while a museum may be concluded and remain operational). Please clarify the operational status of your project in the application form.

1.7 Can I submit a project that is ongoing and not yet completed?

No. Only completed projects are eligible for the competition.

1.8 Is there a maximum number of applications?

Yes. A maximum of five applications per programme within one programming period may be submitted.

The Managing Authority of the programme, through its endorsement letter, is responsible for ensuring that this limit is respected (see below).

1.8 What are awards criteria? What should the application highlight?

Projects suitable for the REGIOSTARS competition should clearly demonstrate their results and achievements. The six awards criteria are:

- cohesion,
- impact,
- innovation,
- sustainability,
- citizens, and
- transferability.

Applications should clearly explain how the project addresses each criterion. The “call for applications” specifies the key steps and timeline for the evaluation process.

1.9 Are projects funded by RRF or EAFRD eligible?

No. Projects funded by Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) are not eligible for the REGIOSTARS competition. The eligible types of EU funding are listed under question 1.3.

2 How do I submit my project?

2.1 How does it work in a nutshell?

The application to the REGIOSTARS competition has to be submitted exclusively online through REGIOSTARS application form on **EUSurvey**:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/REGIOSTARS2026>

EUSurvey is the European Commission's official survey tool. It uses EU Login allowing you to sign-in, edit and save a draft, and continue at another moment (in other words, you do not have to complete and submit the form at one go). **Please read carefully the questions and answers on saving the drafts to avoid losing data.** Once the application is final, do not forget to submit the application, because only submitted applications are considered eligible. Once submitted, your application cannot be modified anymore.

Mandatory questions are marked with little red stars. Blue question marks provide additional explanations – you just need to click on them to expand.

2.2 When is the deadline for application submission?

22 May 2026 23:59:59 CET.

2.3 Who should submit the application?

Applications must be submitted by the project promoter (= the organization responsible for implementing the project). The application shall include an endorsement letter signed by the Managing Authority; a template and further details are available on the [REGIOSTARS website](#).

2.4 How do I access the application form for the first time?

The link to the application form opens the EUSurvey page. Here you can choose between “access via EU Login” or “Register”.

- **Register:** create an EU Login account, if you do not already have one; or
- **Access via EU Login:** sign in if you already have an EU Login (not necessarily associated with REGIOSTARS).

2.5 How to create EU Login account?

To be able to fill in the application form on EUSurvey tool, you need to have EU Login account. To create the one, click on the button “Register” on the first page of the EUSurvey. You will be forwarded to the website ([Create an account](#)) where you fill in your name, surname and e-mail address. Afterwards, you will be asked to verify your account through a link sent to the indicated email. Please follow the steps described in the email to set-up a password for your account.

To access your account, you will have to use the email address and the password created. Please select “password” as a verification method.

More information on how to create a new EU Login account and how to add a second factor can be found here: [How do I create my EU Login account? - European Union](#)

2.6 How do I save my draft application?

To save your draft, click “Save as Draft” button (on the top-right side of the page, in the column next to the application form). You will be given a personalised link to your draft application form.

To continue working on the draft during the same session, click the link.

To continue working on the draft during another session, save the link and log-out. To re-entre your draft application you can use the link created or use the general application form link and enter by using the same EU Login details.

Be aware of the attachments, we do not recommend keeping them in the draft versions, since they might not remain in the saved draft.

2.7 How do I submit the application?

The application will only be finalised once you click ‘submit’. After submission you will receive a confirmation email and cannot make further changes.

2.8 Can someone else modify my draft application?

No. The draft applications can be modified only by using the EU Login credentials used to create the survey.

To co-draft the application, we recommend using the application form template (word file) available on the REGIOSTARS website to prepare contributions, which can be inserted into the EUSurvey by the person, who has created the EU Login credentials.

2.9 What attachments are required for the application?

You need to upload the following two attachments:

- **Endorsement letter** signed by the managing authority confirming that your project is one of the maximum five projects that can be submitted for the operational programme. Endorsement letters may be the signed template available on the [REGIOSTARS website](#) or an equivalent email from the Head of Managing Authority, uploaded as a PDF file. We advise getting in contact with your Managing Authority in the early stage of your application.
- **2-3 images** that convey the main essence of the project for public communication (including, but not limited to, social media, public vote).

Please note that each attachment must be no larger than 1 MB. This may require you to reduce the size of the original file. Keep in mind, that there are allowed formats of the files listed. For the images, respect copyright and authorisation requirements in the application.

2.10 In which language can I submit the application?

Applications can be submitted in any official EU language. Applications submitted in languages other than English will be machine-translated into English for jury assessment.

2.11 How do I indicate the localisation of my project?

You either provide the geographical coordinates or the exact address of the building where the project is located.

For projects with several locations or projects without a fixed site (e.g. employment projects or SME funding), select the most emblematic one (e.g. where most important investment took place) or choose the location of the project promoter (e.g. the headquarters of the funding agency).

2.12 How to find a project ID on the Kohesio platform?

“**Kohesio**” platform is a comprehensive knowledge database that offers easy and transparent access to up-to-date information on beneficiaries and projects co-funded by EU Cohesion policy. If your project is listed in “Kohesio” platform, please provide the “Kohesio ID”.

To find your project on the Kohesio platform, visit <https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/projects>. You can change the language by clicking on the button at the top of the page. Use the available filters – such as keywords, country/region, theme and advanced options like funds, budget, and programme – to locate your project in the database. Alternatively, you can use the map for a visual search. Once you find your project, click on it to open the details page. The Kohesio ID can be found in the URL and starts with a "Q" followed by numbers (e.g. Q1234567). Copy this ID and paste it in the application form.

If your project is not yet included in the Kohesio platform, please provide a unique project number used for project identification in the list of operations by Managing Authority.

2.13 What is CCI number?

The CCI number, or Common Identification Code, serves as a unique reference identifier for each operational program funded by the European Union. The format of the number always starts with 2014 or 2021 (depending on the funding period), followed by a country code and other specific identifiers.

All operational programmes are listed [on this website](#). Once you know the name of the operational programme by which your project was funded, you can find the CCI number in the technical information section.

2.14 Can I resubmit a project that was submitted in an earlier edition of the REGIOSTARS?

Yes. Projects that were not finalists may be re-submitted once.

2.15 Can I send the application also by email?

No. The applications have to be submitted directly via the [EU Survey](#). Use the **Word application template** available on the [REGIOSTARS website](#) to prepare your responses.

2.16 Why are there two project description fields?

- **Part I: Short project description** will be used for communication purposes. Provide an easily understandable, concise and engaging description that explains to the wider public why your project is exceptional and how it improves the life of Europeans. This text will be used publicly without major alteration (e.g. for the Public Choice Award as a short description of your project).

- **Part II: Longer project description** is intended for the jury to assess the project. Provide a detailed, technical account of the project with all relevant information you deem necessary for the jury to evaluate your project.

2.17 What information is requested under “impact of the project”?

Describe the positive effects that would not have occurred without the project. Explain clearly the changes, improvements in the region resulting from the implementation of your project.

2.18 What happens once my project is submitted?

After the end of application period, all submissions undergo an eligibility check. Eligible applications will be submitted to the jury evaluation.

Projects will be informed about the results of the eligibility check by 5 June (as indicated in the timetable (annex 2)).

2.19 How does the public vote work?

An online voting system will run from 3 September to mid-October (tbc). During this period the public will have the possibility to vote for their favourite project among the finalists. The project, with the most votes, receives the Public Choice Award. Finalists and Managing Authorities are strongly encouraged to run communication campaigns to promote finalists and voting.

2.20 Who can I contact if I have questions?

Please send your enquiries about the application process by email to:
REGIO-REGIOSTARS@ec.europa.eu

3 What is the Managing Authority's role?

3.1 What does a Managing Authority have to do?

The Managing Authority is responsible for the efficient management and implementation of a programme; this role is usually assigned to a national ministry or a regional authority.

In the context of the REGIOSTARS competition, the Managing Authority has the following role:

- Providing the applicant with a signed endorsement letter or an email with the equivalent information and ensuring that a maximum of five projects per programme are submitted;
- Promoting the REGIOSTARS Award at national level (e.g. organising a national REGIOSTARS competition); identifying and supporting suitable projects that apply; and assisting REGIOSTARS finalists and winners, once selected;
- Participating in the awards ceremony with finalist projects, if appropriate (travel and accommodation costs for up to two people are covered by the European Commission).

3.2 Why does the Managing Authority need to endorse the project application?

- Firstly, the Managing Authority ensures that no more than five applications are submitted per operational programme.
- Secondly, the Managing Authority provides an indication to the European Commission, whether the project has been subject to any investigation that could lead to a financial correction related to irregularities or fraud.

3.3 Can I submit a project without the endorsement of the Managing Authority?

No.

3.4 Are there any limits on the number of applications by category?

No, this is completely up to the programmes (programmes may submit up to 5 applications in a single category, if they wish). Managing Authorities may use any selection process they consider appropriate to choose the projects they endorse.

3.5 Can an intermediate body, or other representative sign the endorsement letter on behalf of the Managing Authority?

Yes, provided that this is coordinated with the Managing Authority. In most cases, the Head of the Managing Authority signs the letter, but it may be also the intermediate body, the programme manager or the communication officer (particularly in the case of larger programmes).

3.6 What if the Managing Authority has changed or ceased to exist?

If the Managing Authority responsible for the 2014-2020 programme no longer exists or has changed, the Managing Authority responsible for the succeeding 2021-2027 programme should endorse the application and sign the endorsement letter.

4 How is my project assessed – and what happens after?

4.1 How does the jury evaluation process work?

Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria will proceed to jury assessment, which has two phases:

- **Phase 1: Assessment of written applications:** The jury evaluates written applications against six award criteria: i) cohesion, ii) impact, iii) innovation, iv) sustainability, v) citizens, and vi) transferability. Up to five finalists per each category are selected; 25 projects in total across five categories.
- **Phase 2: Final selection of winners** (in person): Finalists presents their projects in person during the European Week of Regions and Cities in mid-October 2026 (tbc) in Brussels. The process includes project pitches organised by five categories, followed by jury interviews, during which the jury will have the opportunity to ask further questions about the project. The jury decides on five winners in a plenary meeting; results are announced at the REGIOSTARS Award Ceremony in mid-October (tbc) in Brussels.

*Please read **the Guide for Applicants** (sections on eligibility and award criteria) carefully before applying.*

4.2 Who sits on the jury?

The jury comprises 15 high-level experts, who are nominated by the European Commission. Jury members work in teams of three according to their expertise in each award category; finalists and winners are decided collectively by the full jury.

4.3 What happens if my project is selected as a finalist?

Congratulations! All applicants will be informed of the jury's decision on their project. The finalists will be publicly announced.

Following the announcement, the finalists are invited to nominate representatives to participate in the second evaluation phase and attend the REGIOSTARS award ceremony during the European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels in mid-October 2026 (tbc). Failure to participate in the second evaluation phase may lead the European Commission to withdraw a finalist nomination.

To help finalists prepare for projects pitches, the European Commission will organise a half day online communication training in mid-September. It is strongly recommended that up to two nominated representatives per project attend this training.

Please note that the second and final round (oral presentations) will be conducted in English. All finalists are automatically eligible for the online voting of the Public Choice Award.

Travel and accommodation costs for up to two project representatives for the above-mentioned event are covered by the European Commission. The two project representatives may both be from the project team, or one may represent the Managing Authority, if agreed upon. It is therefore important that the project promoter coordinates with the Managing Authority the participation at the final round and to the ceremony.

4.4 What happens if my project wins?

The winners of the REGIOSTARS will be announced at the award ceremony in mid-October (tbc). Project representative(s) will receive a REGIOSTARS trophy.

After the awards, the European Commission will organise follow-up promotion activities in collaboration with the winning project promoters and the Managing Authorities to publicise the awarded projects in their region.

4.5 When will the REGIOSTARS ceremony take place?

The REGIOSTARS Awards Ceremony will take place in mid-October 2026 in Brussels during the European Week of Regions and Cities (see annex 2).

Annexes

Annex 1. Conversion table

Thematic Objectives 2014-2020	Policy Objectives 2021-2027
TO 1; TO 2; TO3;	PO1- More competitive and smarter Europe
TO4; TO5; TO6	PO2- Greener and low carbon Europe
TO7	PO3- More connected Europe
TO8, TO9, TO10	PO4- More Social Europe
ITI, CLLD, UIA	PO5- Europe Closer to citizens

Projects from 2014-2020 falling under Thematic Objective 11 should be placed in one of the five categories according to their specific topic.

Annex 2. Timetable REGIOSTARS 2026

Event	Date
Competition launch	Tuesday 10 February
Deadline for applications	Friday 22 May
Information about the eligibility check	Friday 5 June
Announcement of the finalists	Tuesday 14 July
Start of the Public Vote	Thursday 3 September
Online training on pitching project to finalists	mid-September
End of the public vote	mid-October (tbc)
Finalists' pitch and panel discussion with jurors; REGIOSTARS Ceremony	mid-October, in Brussels (tbc)
Follow-up with winners	From 1 November on