

Public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment, research & innovation, SMEs and single market

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

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Introduction

'A stronger Union needs to be equipped with appropriate financial means to continue to deliver its policies. The Union has changed fundamentally in recent years, as have the challenges it faces. Our Union needs a budget that can help us achieve our ambitions. The Multiannual Financial Framework for the period after 2020 must reflect this.' (Commission Work Programme 2018)

The EU budget currently amounts to less than 1 euro per citizen per day. Although a modest budget, at around 1 % of the EU's gross national income or 2 % of all EU public spending, it supports the EU's shared goals by delivering essential public goods and tangible results for EU citizens. These include: investing in skills, innovation and infrastructure; ensuring sustainable food systems and developing rural areas; ensuring a clean and healthy environment and the protection of natural resources; promoting joint research and industrial projects; funding shared activities in the field of migration and security; and supporting development and humanitarian aid.

The current Multiannual Financial Framework — the EU's long-term budget — runs until the end of 2020. In 2018, the Commission will put forth comprehensive proposals for the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework and for the next generation of financial programmes that will receive funding. These programmes/funds provide financial support to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries such as regions, towns, NGOs, businesses, farmers, students, scientists, and many others.

The Commission's proposals will be designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the things that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. What should the priorities be for future policies and programmes/funds? And how can they be designed to best deliver results on the ground?

As an integral part of this process and following on from the [Reflection Paper on the Future of EU Finances](#), the Commission is launching a series of public consultations covering all the major spending areas to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget.

The EU has developed a variety of instruments to stimulate investment and entrepreneurship to create jobs and growth. The Investment Plan for Europe, the so-called Juncker Plan, aims to unlock investment throughout Europe through to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), which provides a EU guarantee to mobilise investment. The EFSI also complements other existing instruments like COSME that make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access finance in all phases of their lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer. Through EU support, businesses have easier access to guarantees, loans and equity capital.

Research and innovation are instrumental for addressing the EU's productivity gap and play a crucial role in providing solutions to many global challenges the EU and its citizens are facing today. In that context, the EU has made a major contribution with the Horizon 2020 programme.

The European Single Market is one of the EU's greatest achievements. It has fuelled economic growth and made the everyday life of European businesses and consumers easier. A well-functioning Single Market, including in its digital dimension, stimulates competition and trade, improves efficiency, raises quality, and helps cut prices. In that context, the EU has set up several programmes in a wide range of areas (health, food safety, customs...) to facilitate the free circulation of goods, services, capital and persons across the European continent.

Recent consultations already covered several policy areas, including on current performance and future challenges. The views already expressed by stakeholders in these consultations will be taken into account as part of the current process for the future MFF.

Link to portal for recent consultations:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations_en

Interim evaluation of the programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014-2020)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/interim-evaluation-programme-competitiveness-enterprises-and-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-cosme-2014-2020_en

Consultation on modernising and simplifying the common agricultural policy (CAP)

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/consultations/cap-modernising/2017_en

Public stakeholder consultation – interim evaluation of Horizon 2020

https://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/interim_h2020_2016/consultation_en.htm

Open Public Consultation of the mid-term evaluation of the 3rd Health Programme 2014-2020

https://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/consultations/midterm_evaluation_fr

Public stakeholder consultation – Interim evaluation of Joint Undertakings operating under Horizon 2020.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/interim_joint-undertakings_h2020/consultation_en.htm

About you

* 1 You are replying

- ☐ as an individual in your personal capacity
- ☒ in your professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation

* 8 Respondent's first name

* 9 Respondent's last name

* 10 Respondent's professional email address

* 11 Name of the organisation

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate (coordinated Dutch government position)

* 12 Postal address of the organisation

Bezuidenhoutseweg 73
2594 AC Den Haag

* 13 Type of organisation

Please select the answer option that fits best.

- ☐ Private enterprise
- ☐ Professional consultancy, law firm, self-employed consultant
- ☐ Trade, business or professional association
- ☐ Non-governmental organisation, platform or network
- ☐ Research and academia
- ☐ Churches and religious communities
- ☐ Regional or local authority (public or mixed)

- ☒ International or national public authority
- ☐ Other

*21 Please specify the type of organisation.

- ☐ Intergovernmental organisation
- ☐ EU institution, body or agency
- ☐ National parliament
- ☒ National government
- ☐ National public authority or agency

*22 Is your organisation included in the Transparency Register?

If your organisation is not registered, we invite you to register [here](#), although it is not compulsory to be registered to reply to this consultation. [Why a transparency register?](#)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Not applicable

*24 Country of organisation's headquarters

- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czech Republic
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Malta
- ☒ Netherlands
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Slovak Republic
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ United Kingdom

☐ Other

* 26 Your contribution,

Note that, whatever option chosen, your answers may be subject to a request for public access to documents under [Regulation \(EC\) N° 1049/2001](#)

- ☐ **can be published with your organisation's information** (I consent the publication of all information in my contribution in whole or in part including the name of my organisation, and I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication)
- ☒ **can be published provided that your organisation remains anonymous** (I consent to the publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part (which may include quotes or opinions I express) provided that it is done anonymously. I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent the publication.

* 27 Please let us know whether you have experience with one or more of the following funds and programmes.

at least 1 choice(s)

- ☒ European Fund for Strategic Investments (Investment Plan for Europe)
- ☒ Horizon 2020
- ☐ European Structural and Investment funds
- ☒ COSME
- ☐ EU Health Programme
- ☐ EU Food and Feed Programme
- ☐ Customs 2020
- ☐ Fiscalis
- ☐ Anti-Fraud Information System
- ☐ EURES
- ☐ Employment and Social Innovation Programme
- ☐ Standards in the field of financial reporting Programme
- ☐ Implementation of single market for financial services
- ☐ Enhancing consumers involvement in EU policy-making in the field of financial services
- ☐ Consumer Programme
- ☐ European statistical programme
- ☐ Interoperability solutions and common frameworks for European public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA2 programme) as a means for modernising the public sector
- ☐ Support for the functioning of various aspects of the single market (including goods, services, taxation, company law) – standardisation, assistance to citizens and businesses, enforcement
- ☐ Digital Single Market support programme
- ☐ EEEF (European energy efficiency fund)
- ☐ PF4EE (private finance for energy efficiency)
- ☐ None of the above

* 28 Please let us know to which of the following topics your replies to this questionnaire will refer.

- ☒ EU support for Investment
- ☐ EU support for research and innovation
- ☐ EU support for SME and entrepreneurship
- ☐ EU support for the Single Market

EU funds in the area of investment, research & innovation, SMEs and single market

29 The Commission has preliminarily identified a number of policy challenges which programmes/funds in this area of investment, research & innovation, SMEs and single market could address. How important are these policy challenges in your view?

	Very important	Rather important	Neither important nor unimportant	Rather not important	Not important at all	No opinion
Facilitate transition to low carbon and circular economy and resilience to climate change, support security of supply	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Foster research and innovation across the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support industrial development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support education, skills and training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure a clean and healthy environment and the protection of natural resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Facilitate digital transition of the economy, industry, services and society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Ensure that existing rules are applied and enforced consistently across the EU						
Ensure smooth circulation of goods both within EU and at EU borders						
Ensure fair conditions of competition in the EU						
Promote security of citizens						
Support labour mobility						
Support capital flows and investment						
Facilitate access to finance, in particular to SMEs						
Promote financial stability						
Improve quality of public institutions (including digitalisation)						
Reduce unemployment and social disparities						

Ensure safe, sustainable transport and mobility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Promote and protect public health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Promote a safe and sustainable food chain	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support social investment and social innovation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure a high level of consumer protection and effective redress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Provide reliable and comparable statistics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other (Please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

31 To what extent do the current policies successfully address these challenges?

	Fully addressed	Fairly well addressed	Addressed to some extent only	Not addressed at all	No opinion
Facilitate transition to low carbon and circular economy and resilience to climate change; support security of supply	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Foster research and innovation across the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support industrial development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support education, skills and training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure a clean and healthy environment and the protection of natural resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Facilitate digital transition of the economy, industry, services and society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure that existing rules are applied and enforced consistently across the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure smooth circulation of goods both within EU and at EU borders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure fair conditions of competition in the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Promote security of citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support labour mobility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support capital flows and investment	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Facilitate access to finance, in particular to SMEs	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Promote financial stability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Improve quality of public institutions (including digitalisation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Reduce unemployment and social disparities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Ensure safe, sustainable transport and mobility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Promote and protect public health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Promote a safe and sustainable food chain	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Support social investment and social innovation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Ensure a high level of consumer protection and effective redress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Provide reliable and comparable statistics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other (please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 33 To what extent do the current programmes/funds add value, compared to what Member States could achieve at national, regional and/or local levels?

- ☐ To a large extent
☐ To a fairly good extent
☒ To some extent only
☐ Not at all
☐ Don't know

34 Please specify how the current programmes/funds add value compared to what Member States could achieve at national, regional and/or local levels. Please clearly indicate to which policies, programmes and funds your answer refer.

1500 character(s) maximum

Programmes/funds related to access to finance and innovation can add value to the interventions executed at the other geographical levels: especially when they are additional to national programmes. An effective approach is the cofinancing through EIF and EIB. For instance EIF/EIB and the Dutch government invest together in the Dutch Venture Initiative (DVI), a pan-european fund of funds of venture capital for fast growing innovative companies. This approach contributes to operating at a European geographical level. And it enables joint operations at fund level with other EU Member States and international private investors; in that way it tackles fragmentation. In some programmes f.i. Innovfin and EFSI we observe crowding out of successful national programmes and private investors.

35 Is there a need to modify or add to the objectives of the programmes/funds in this policy area? If yes, which changes would be necessary or desirable? Please clearly indicate to which policies, programmes and funds your answer refer.

1500 character(s) maximum

Yes, not the objectives policy/content wise, but the way the governance is organised. The role of other actors in the field of national (NPI's) and regional levels should be recognised and taken more into account. Also the speed and ease of procedures should be improved drastically. Overall access could be simplified

and more easy to find/transparent.

SME's and especially startups and scaleups can hardly benefit from programmes due to very long lead times, complexity and long decision making processes. This applies to almost all direct finance/funding programmes. The programmes operating through financial intermediaries are less accessible, when there are not many financial inter-mediaries selected f.i. for COSME in a country, not known to beneficiaries or the demands to be selected as intermediary are not easily fulfilled.

36 The Commission has preliminarily identified a number of possible obstacles, which could prevent the current programmes/funds from achieving their objectives. To what extent do possible obstacles prevent the current programme/funds from achieving their objectives?

	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent only	Not at all	Don't know
Too complex procedures leading to high administrative burden and delays	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Insufficient administrative capacity to manage programmes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lack of flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Insufficient synergies between the EU programmes/funds	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Difficulty of combining EU action with other public interventions and private finance	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Insufficient critical mass	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Insufficient use of financial instruments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lack of information/communication	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Insufficient scope	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lack of EU standards and EU rules	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Inadequate facilities to support enhanced cooperation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Out of date and inadequate IT capabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Insufficient involvement of citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other (Please specify below)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

* 37 If you have identified another obstacle, please specify it here:

1000 character(s) maximum

We observe that the risk aversity of financial intermediaries and in the present instruments is an obstacle for startups and scaleups in getting the finance they need for growth. Secondly the instruments could be more

accommodating for scaling up and (large) demonstration phase. Thirdly more opportunities in EU facilities and instruments are needed for disruptive and breakthrough developments in order to strengthen the competitive position of business. Four: more (easy) blending opportunities of finance.

38 The Commission has preliminarily identified a number of steps that could help to further simplify and reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries under current programmes/funds. To what extent would these steps be helpful in your view?

	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent only	Not at all	Don't know
Alignment of rules between EU funds	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Fewer, clearer, shorter rules	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
More reliance on national rules	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
A stable but flexible framework between programming periods	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Extension of the single audit principle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Better feedback to applicants	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
More structured reporting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
User-friendly IT tools	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
E-governance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Adequate administrative capacity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other (Please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

40 How could synergies among programmes/funds in this area be further strengthened to avoid possible overlaps/duplication? For example, would you consider grouping/merging some programmes? Please clearly indicate to which policies, programmes and funds your answer refers.

1500 character(s) maximum

Synergies among programmes/funds related to access to finance and innovation could be further strengthened to avoid possible overlaps, duplication and even existing crowding out. There is no one size fits all. An effective way of creating synergies between programmes of EC and national programmes and programmes between Member States is the use of investment platforms. The EFSI EIF-NPI Equity platform is a good example.

41 Please feel free to upload a concise document, such as a position paper. The maximum file size is 1MB.

Please note that the uploaded document will be published alongside your response to the questionnaire which is the essential input to this public consultation. The document is optional and serves as additional background reading to better understand your position.

42 If you wish to add further information — within the scope of this questionnaire — please feel free to do so here.

1500 character(s) maximum

Above answers are without prejudice to the overall position of the Netherlands on the MFF. The Netherlands advocates a future proof, flexible and financially sustainable budget; modernization should go hand in hand with increasing effectiveness and efficiency. Focus should be on those areas where EU timely and adequate response creates added value. Individual programmes and objectives should support this overall objective and allow for an integrated evaluation of the future MFF.

Contact

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