

Public consultation on the next MFF: Implementing EU funding with Member States and regions

Part 2- Questions related to EU funds implemented with Member States and regions

- 1) How important are the following policy challenges to you? (very important; important; moderately important; not at all important; don't know / no applicable)

	Very important	important	Moderately important	Not important at all	Don't know / not applicable
Limited public investment capacities to meet the needs of EU priorities (e.g. green and digital transitions, security, competitiveness)	X				
Persisting social, economic, regional and territorial disparities		X			
Limited capacity of regions and communities to benefit from the single market and new economic opportunities		X			
Demographic challenges		X			
Labour and skills shortages, need for upskilling and reskilling, and unpreparedness of education and training systems for the 21st century	X				
Decline in labour productivity and competitiveness		X			

Lack of progress in addressing poverty and social exclusion	X				
Barriers to the access to essential services, health, quality care, housing and social protection	X				
Digitalisation of the public administration, including public services and the justice systems	X				
Digital transformation in key sectors		X			
Lack of connectivity in Member States and regions (e.g. transport, energy and digital)	X				
Challenges related to the respect of the rule of law (e.g. independence of the judiciary, right to a fair trial, fight against corruption)		X			
Challenges related to the effective protection of EU funds against fraud, corruption and other illegal activity		X			
Security threats such as organised crime	X				
Challenges related to ensuring a complete and fully functioning Schengen area with the free movement of people		X			
Challenges related to migration and asylum management	X				
Increasing impacts of climate change and environmental degradation (e.g. natural	X				

disasters, loss of biodiversity)					
Decarbonising the economy		X			
Securing an affordable, sustainable and secure energy supply	X				
Maximising the potential of the circular economy	X				
Securing a stable supply of high-quality food at all times at reasonable prices		X			
Economic disparities and crises faced by the agricultural and fishery sectors			X		
Struggling cultural and creative sectors, precarity of artists, limited access to culture and preservation of heritage	X				
Other (please specify below)	X				

If you have identified other policy challenges or would like to elaborate on the challenges above, please specify (mentioning the policy area to which you refer in the latter case):

500 character(s) maximum

CEMR stresses the need for multi-level governance to align funds with local needs. Strong local governments require capacity and resources to implement reforms. Sustainable mobility is key to the Green Deal, but EU funding must better support urban transport. The CEF should expand funding for urban nodes, adopt a place-based approach, and strengthen collaboration with local governments to ensure effective TEN-T implementation and sustainable mobility solutions.

To what extent do you consider the following factors as obstacles to the EU budget achieving its objectives?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know / not applicable
Too many funds with overlapping objectives		X			
Different and often complex fund-specific rules on access to funding and compliance	X				
Administrative capacity at national, regional and local level			X		
Administrative burden for beneficiaries, regional and national authorities	X				
Overly complicated governance and distribution of funds			X		
Lack of flexibility to adapt to new and unforeseen developments		X			
Lack of consistency and effectiveness to deliver on EU policy priorities			X		
Insufficient alignment with national policies			X		
Low absorption of funds and insufficient number of high-quality projects			X		
Insufficient focus on projects with the highest EU added value (e.g. multi-country projects)			X		
Insufficient focus on achieving results			X		
Insufficient mobilisation of private financing (e.g. by de-risking private investment)			X		
National regulatory environment makes EU funding less effective		X			
Fraud, corruption and other illegal activities targeting EU funds			X		
Other (please specify below)	X				

If you have identified any other obstacles, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Overly complex rules, excessive fund fragmentation, and multiple audit layers that discourage the use of simplification tools are main obstacles. A missing main obstacle would be inadequate planning: effective programming with stakeholder involvement, especially local and regional governments, is essential to ensure investments are well-targeted and appealing to beneficiaries. Beyond lighter rules, we also need increasing trust in regional and local public authorities.

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Cohesion Policy?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including territorial, social and economic cohesion	X				
Support EU public goods (e.g. cross-border / multi-country projects)	X				
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. climate change)	X				

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Common agriculture policy?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including a fair standard of living for the farming community) and to making the agricultural sector attractive to new entrants					X

Support EU public goods (e.g. the provision of eco-system services, and cross-border cooperation)					X
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. climate change, food security)		X			

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Fisheries and maritime policies?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including fostering sustainable fisheries, and restoring and conserving aquatic biological resources					X
Support EU public goods (e.g. cross-border cooperation)					X
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. climate change)					X

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Home affairs?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including efficient management of migration, asylum and external borders		X			
Support EU public goods (e.g. cross-border / multi-country projects)		X			
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. security threats)					X

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies -
for Trans-European Networks?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including a smooth functioning single market, and territorial, social and economic cohesion	X				
Support EU cross-border / multi-country infrastructure projects	X				
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. military mobility and defence, climate change)	X				

To what extent do you agree that the following options could help the EU budget become more effective and efficient?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Applying common rules, timelines and eligibility criteria to all relevant EU funds	X				
Fewer, clearer and simpler rules	X				
Reduce the number of EU funding programmes		X			
Simplify the management of EU funding programmes at national and regional level		X			
Prioritise projects with high EU added value, such as multi-country projects and projects that contribute to the EU's strategic priorities		X			
Introduce more flexibility into resource allocation to react to crises and emerging needs		X			

Use funds to promote both reforms and investments		X			
Simplify access to funding for beneficiaries	X				
Use more EU funds to stimulate private and national investment, including through financial instruments (e.g. loans, guarantees, equity)		X			
Place greater focus on achieving results, including via performance-based funding (such as financing not linked to costs)		X			
Prevent and combat fraud and corruption better, as well as other illegal activities targeting EU funds		X			
Other (please specify below)	X				

If you have identified other ways to make the EU budget more effective, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Co-creating investment and reform programs with multi-level governance ensures EU funds are effective, attractive, and spent faster. Linking investments to reforms can help meet enabling conditions. For instance: strong local governments are key for implementation, requiring capacity and resources. The Commission should assess subnational capacities and recommend EU funding or reforms to address gaps in human, financial, and legal resources.

Do you agree that the policies covered by the EU budget should continue to support all types of regions and communities in the future?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

Yes

No

If you selected 'yes', please explain why:

500 character(s) maximum

Cohesion is central to the EU, balancing the Single Market and addressing regional inequalities—key to countering euroscepticism. It also unlocks opportunities across all territories, from the most developed to those in a development trap. Each region, province, or municipality faces unique challenges to achieve EU's objectives of competitiveness, green and digital transitions, and resilience. The EU must provide tailored support to ensure all territories can meet these objectives.

If you have any concrete suggestions for improvement, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Empower local governments as planners, not just implementers: Make the Partnership Principle mandatory in EU-funded programs to reflect real local needs. Decentralize Cohesion Policy by strengthening local capacity to manage funds for balanced development. Diversify EU instruments, combining shared management and direct funding for all territories. Simplify funding rules (single rule for beneficiaries), reduce admin burdens, and enhance synergies between EU funds to maximize territorial impact.

If you think that these stakeholders could be involved more effectively, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

We have good examples of the Partnership Principle with Cohesion Policy. Monitoring Committees with voting rights for key stakeholders, especially local and regional governments, should continue. The reform component can ensure Member States establish effective multi-level governance processes for decision-making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of EU-funded programs.

Which of the following aspects do you consider the most important for improving the administrative and institutional capacity of public administrations in Member States?

Predictability of the programming cycle associated with EU-funded investments

Flexibility to address a wide variety of Member States' needs

Focus on key EU priorities with more EU added value

Helping Member States to identify the areas where technical support would be more impactful

Sustainability of capacity over time

Support a wide range of beneficiaries in public administrations at different levels

Support and information about funding opportunities to potential beneficiaries/applicants

Addressing skills needs of national, regional and local authorities

Other (please specify below)

Don't know / unable to answer

If you have identified any another aspects, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Predictable funding enables beneficiaries to create strong projects and ensures EU fund disbursement. Flexibility should apply at all levels, also at subnational level. In this regard, strict national thematic concentration prevents flexibility. The EU should support decentralised fund management where local governments have the capacity and help build capacity where necessary.

Part 3 - Closing questions

If you would like to add further information – within the scope of this questionnaire – please feel free to do so here.

2000 character(s) maximum

Local and regional governments across Europe, represented by CEMR, call for a decentralised, inclusive EU budget that aligns with the needs of cities, municipalities, and regions. National plans and investment priorities should be shaped through consultations with local and regional governments, as ensured by the Partnership Principle in Cohesion Policy. This guarantees that EU investments are fit for purpose and benefit citizens.

CEMR advocates for a reformed EU budget post-2027, strengthening multi-level governance and empowering local and regional governments as key partners in the

effective use of EU funds. With rising inequalities, climate adaptation needs, and geopolitical instability, Europe cannot afford to sideline local governments, which implement over 70% of EU policies.

CEMR warns that the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) model failed due to the lack of mandatory consultations with local governments, which led to their exclusion in many Member States. CEMR urges the Commission to make such consultations mandatory, ensuring EU investments meet real local needs.

CEMR's priorities for the post-2027 EU budget include empowering local and regional governments as both planners and implementers, decentralising the Cohesion Policy, and diversifying EU instruments to reach all territories, urban and rural. Simplifying funding mechanisms to reduce administrative burdens also essential, as well as increasing trust in the action and good financial management of local and regional public authorities. CEMR advocates for a single set of rules for beneficiaries, flexibility in thematic concentration, and efficient auditing processes. Lastly, the next MFF must improve synergies between EU funding instruments to maximise territorial impact.

Attachment:

<https://ccre-cemr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Proposal-MFF-post-2027-CEMR-Position-Paper-2025.pdf>