

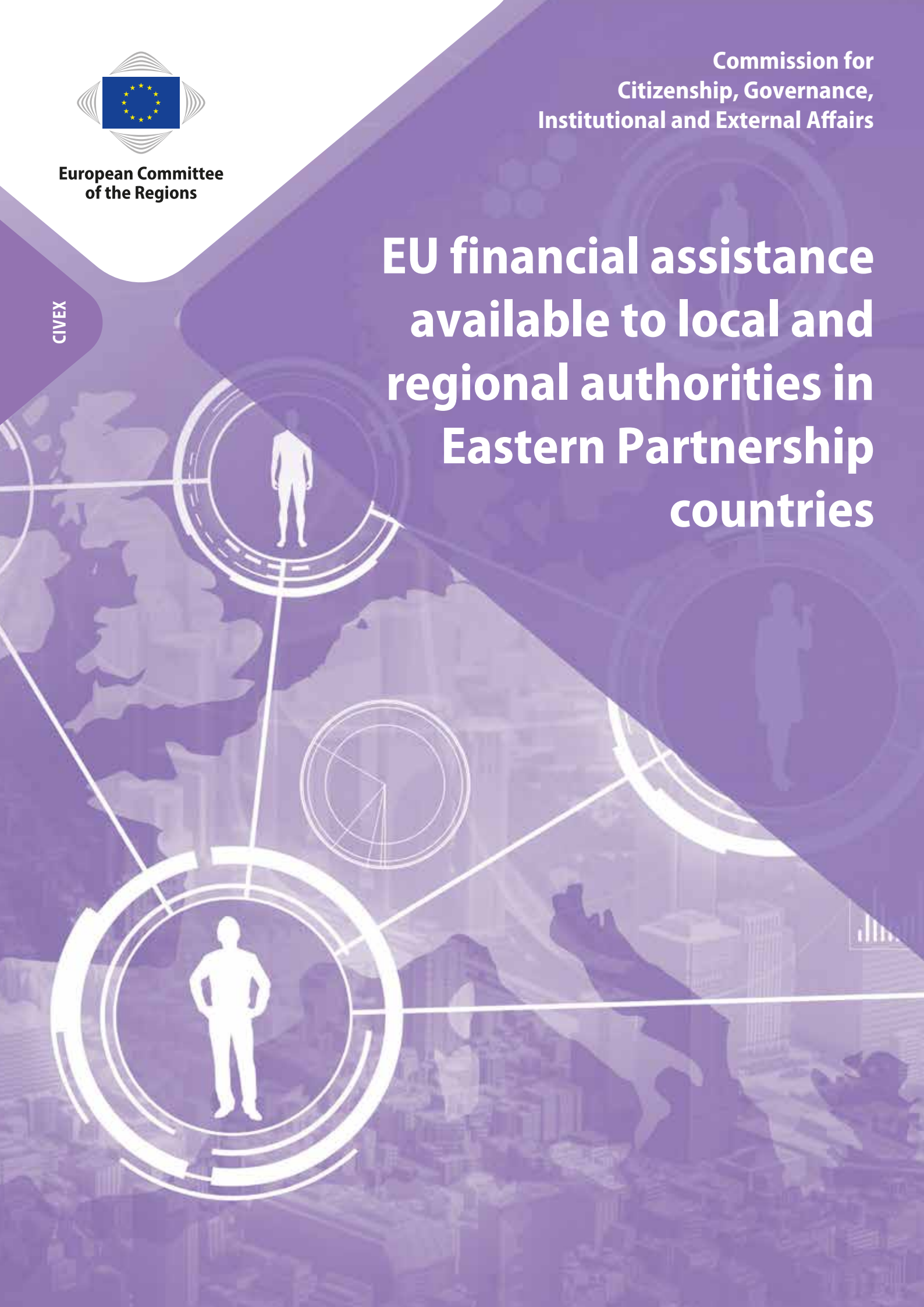


**European Committee
of the Regions**

**Commission for
Citizenship, Governance,
Institutional and External Affairs**

CIVEX

EU financial assistance available to local and regional authorities in Eastern Partnership countries



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**It does not represent the official views of the
European Committee of the Regions.**

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List of abbreviations

CALM	Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EPTATF	Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund
EU	European Union
E5P	Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership
FINTECC	Finance and Technology Transfer Centre for Climate Change
GCAP	Green City Action Plan
IEA	International Energy Agency
INOGATE	INterstate Oil and GAs Transportation to Europe
LEDPs	Local Economic Development Plans
LRAs	Local and Regional Authorities
PGG	Partnership for Good Governance
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MS	Member States
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument
NIP	Neighbourhood Investment Platform
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCF	Programmatic Cooperation Framework
PGG	Partnership for Good Governance
PRDP	Pilot Regional Development Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
U-LEAD	Ukraine – Local Empowerment, Accountability, and Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPSEEF	Ukraine Public Sector Energy Efficiency Framework

1.Introduction

The key policy areas outlined in the Joint Communication of the European Commission (EC) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*, on 18 March 2021, include, among others, sustainable development, rule of law, resilience, and the digital and green transition¹. According to the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), adopted by the Council on 17 December 2020, EU expenditures for 2021-2027 will cover the following areas²:

1. Single Market, Innovation, and Digital;
2. Cohesion, Resilience, and Values;
3. Natural Resources and Environment;
4. Migration and Border Management;
5. Security and Defence;
6. Neighbourhood and the World;
7. European Public Administration.

The main internal programmes and funds available to LRAs under the MFF include:

- Horizon Europe;
- Erasmus+;
- Creative Europe.

However, in the 2021-2027 MFF, funding for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) originates predominantly from the new comprehensive instrument for external programmes, namely the “Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument” (NDICI) – Global Europe. Therefore, this brochure takes into account the changes in the financial instrument covering cooperation with third countries.

On 18 December 2020, a political agreement on NDICI – Global Europe was reached, and on 8 June 2021, the instrument was adopted by the European Parliament. The NDICI – Global Europe will enter into force retroactively from 1 January 2021.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/joint-communication-eastern-partnership-policy-beyond-2020-reinforcing-resilience-eastern-partnership-delivers-all_pl

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/mff2021-2027-ngeu-final/>

The overall budget allocated for EU cooperation with third countries was set at EUR 79.5 billion, in current prices. The total allocation will be divided as follows³:

- EUR 60.38 billion for **geographic** programmes (at least EUR 19.32 billion for the Neighbourhood, at least EUR 29.18 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa, EUR 8.48 billion for Asia and the Pacific, and for the Americas and the Caribbean, EUR 3.39 billion); at least EUR 500 million of the geographic envelope should be dedicated towards supporting the empowerment of the local and regional authorities in EU partner countries⁴;
- EUR 6.36 billion for **thematic** programmes (human rights and democracy [EUR 1.36 billion], civil society organisations [EUR 1.36 billion], peace, stability, and peace conflict prevention [EUR 0.91 billion] and global challenges with four proposed priority areas: people, planet, prosperity, and partnerships (the latter including local authorities) [EUR 2.73 billion])⁵;
- EUR 3.18 billion for **rapid response actions**⁶.

Additionally, a EUR 9.53 billion flexibility cushion of unallocated funds was envisioned.

The NDICI – Global Europe will be implemented through the approval in 2021 of multi-annual indicative programmes for the 2021-2027 period for each region, partner country, and thematic programme, to be prepared by the services of the Commission and the European External Action Service, which will frame the subsequent financial implementation of actions⁷.

Table 1 Overview of EU financial instruments available to LRAs in EaP countries under the new MFF8

Dimension	Programme / Instrument
Regional (geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes: prolonged, to be defined under NDICI http://www.eaptc.eu/en/eni-cbc-programmes.html • Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Facility: ongoing https://www.m4eg.eu • Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P): ongoing https://e5p.eu/ • European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD): ongoing https://eu4georgia.eu/enpard/ • EU4Energy Programme: ongoing https://www.eu4energy.iea.org

³ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/factsheet-global-europe-ndici-june-2021_en.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_21_2885/IP_21_2885_EN.pdf

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/factsheet-global-europe-ndici-june-2021_en.pdf

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2453

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/eu-external-action-budget-2021-2027-final-adoption_en

⁸ Descriptions of active programmes are provided in the main body of the report. Whenever possible, links are also provided for programmes that are yet to be specified under the new MFF.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership for Good Governance (PGG): ongoing https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pgg2 • Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF): to be defined under NDICI https://www.eib.org/en/products/mandates-partnerships/nip/index.htm • EU4Culture: ongoing since 1 January 2021 https://www.goethe.de/ins/ua/en/kul/sup/e4c.html
Bilateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Support Framework for EU Support to Moldova (Programming of the ENI): to be defined under NDICI • Ukraine – Local Empowerment, Accountability, and Development Programme (U-LEAD, 2016-2023) https://tsnap.ulead.org.ua/en/ • Pilot Regional Development Programmes (PRDP): to be defined under NDICI https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/pl/policy/cooperation/international/neighbourhood-policy/
Thematic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR): to be defined under NDICI • Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP): to be defined under NDICI • Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA): to be defined under NDICI https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/evaluation-civil-society-organisations-and-local-authorities-thematic-programme-2014-2019_en • Human Development and Migration & Asylum (HDMA): to be defined under NDICI • Creative Europe: renewed (2021-2027) https://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/creative-europe-2021-2027-programme-launch • Erasmus+: renewed (2021-2027) https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/ • Horizon Europe: (2021-2027) https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en • Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) http://www.sigmaweb.org • Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/taiox_en • Twinning http://ec.europa.eu/twinning

Source: Own elaboration.

COVID-19-related assistance

The EU is set to support the post-COVID-19 recovery of the most vulnerable neighbouring countries. The EU relief measures focus on addressing short-term needs and mitigating the immediate socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, as well as strengthening water, sanitation, and healthcare systems.

About EUR 20 billion will thus be provided by the EU, its Member States, and relevant financial institutions (i.e., the EIB and EBRD) through the dedicated “Team Europe” package⁹. A total of EUR 962 billion will be addressed to Eastern Partnership countries. However, the majority of these funds are delivered to national authorities, with LRAs benefiting from them in an indirect way.

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_604

2.EU financial assistance available to local and regional authorities in Eastern Partnership countries

Regional (geographic) instruments

Geographic programmes will focus on good governance, democracy, and rule of law promotion; human rights, poverty eradication, the fight against inequalities, and human development; migration and mobility; the environment and climate change; inclusive and sustainable growth and decent employment; and security, stability, and peace. Additionally, European Neighbourhood Partnership (ENP) countries will be eligible for some additional support for the implementation of association agreements, the promotion of people-to-people contacts, support for regional cooperation and progressive integration into the Union's internal market, and enhanced sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation, among others.

Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

European Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) is also known as Interreg A and it builds on the achievements of its predecessor, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) CBC. It was a key priority of the ENI, and it appears it will constitute an equally significant pillar of the NDICI¹⁰. From 1 January 2020, the ENI (and hence the NDICI) CBC programmes are managed by DG REGIO as they enhance cooperation between bordering regions from at least two different countries while aiming to tackle mutually agreed upon common challenges in order to reinforce the regions' steady growth potential, while reinforcing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall development of the EU and its neighbourhood¹¹. Moreover, it is believed that this transfer of competences will unify cooperation procedures and synergies between different funding instruments¹².

The land border programmes for the EaP include Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova and the sea basin programmes are open to Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Moldova (Black Sea Programme), and Belarus (Baltic Sea Region Programme). All LRAs and non-governmental actors from the regions at stake are eligible to participate

¹⁰ <https://tesim-enicbc.eu/events/eni-cbc-conference-2020/>

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/cross-border/#4

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/informing/events/2711-ghent/8c_tesim.pdf

in the ENI CBC programme, with the exception of those from Azerbaijan, as the country decided to opt out from the programme¹³.

Each of the individual projects is managed separately. The relevant project documents can be found in the respective footnotes; however, more detailed requirements with regards to the new NDICI CBC will follow in late November 2021.

Land Borders and Sea Crossing Programmes:

1. Latvia / Lithuania / Belarus¹⁴: to be defined under NDICI¹⁵;
2. Poland / Belarus / Ukraine¹⁶: prolonged¹⁷;
3. Hungary / Slovakia / Romania / Ukraine¹⁸: prolonged¹⁹;
4. Romania / Ukraine²⁰: prolonged²¹;
5. Romania / Moldova²²: prolonged²³.

Sea-Basin Programmes:

1. Baltic Sea Programme (Belarus is fully covered)²⁴: prolonged²⁵;
2. Black Sea Programme (Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia, as well as some parts of Ukraine: Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Sevastopol²⁶, Zaporosh'ye, and Donetsk Oblasts)²⁷: prolonged²⁸.

Contact point:

Contact information differs depending on the programme; all details are provided on the respective programme websites.

¹³ List of all 2014-2020 ENI CBC Programmes: <http://www.eaptc.eu/en/eni-cbc-programmes.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.eni-cbc.eu/llb/en>

¹⁵ <http://www.eni-cbc.eu/llb/en>

¹⁶ <https://www.pbu2020.eu/en>

¹⁷ <https://www.pbu2020.eu/en/events/263>

¹⁸ <https://huskroua-cbc.eu/>

¹⁹ <https://huskroua-cbc.eu/news/programme-news/webinar-for-discussion-of-the-territorial-analysis-for-the-future-interreg-next-hungary-slovakia-romania-ukraine-programme-2021-2027>

²⁰ <http://ro-ua.net/en/>

²¹ <https://www.ro-ua.net/en/2021-2027-en.html>

²² <http://www.ro-md.ro-ua-md.net/en/>

²³ <https://ro-md.net/en/2021-2027-en>

²⁴ <https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/home.html>

²⁵ <https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/post2020.html>

²⁶ All activities are restricted as of 2014 because of the temporary occupation by the Russian Federation.

²⁷ <http://blacksea-cbc.net/>

²⁸ <https://blacksea-cbc.net/news/archive-news/have-your-say-on-the-interreg-next-black-sea-basin-programme-2021-2027/>

Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Facility

The Facility, which is expected to run until 2024²⁹, is a follow-up of the M4EG initiative created in 2017 by the EU to support local authorities from the EaP region in making their respective cities greener, healthier, more prosperous, and inclusive. The updated Facility is now managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and will focus predominately on ensuring that secondary cities in the region are also governed through a tailored approach of systems innovation. Participating cities will gain, among others: (i) access to the newly-created Urban Learning Centre; (ii) help preparing local economic development plans (LEDPs); (iii) the opportunity to apply for grants published on an annual basis – for portfolio activation (approximately EUR 2.8 million) and for calls for innovation (approximately EUR 1.2 million); and (iv) invitations for participation in the Annual M4EG Forum and respective networking events³⁰.

Calls for proposals are available on the project website: <https://www.m4eg.eu/en/grants/>

LRA that worked on their LEDPs will be able to acquire up to EUR 14 million in various calls through EU and EU & UNDP M4EG funding opportunities³¹.

Contact point:

eu.m4eg@undp.org and for country-specific information: <https://www.m4eg.eu/en/contact>

Example of a project successfully funded in an Eastern Partnership country: Georgia

Active Mayors for Economic Growth

EU contribution: EUR 600,000 (Gori) & EUR 320,000 (Bolnisi)

Duration: 01.02.2018-31.01.2021

Beneficiary: Gori and Bolnisi municipalities

Description: In Gori, new tourism infrastructure was created. In Bolnisi, investments in infrastructure were made and promotional activities held in order to improve the local business environment and support local entrepreneurs.

For more information see:

<https://eu4georgia.ge/establishing-a-platform-for-efficient-flow-of-business-activities-in-bolnisi/>; <https://eu4georgia.ge/empowering-local-economic-opportunities-for-sustainable-growth/>

²⁹ <https://www1.undp.org/content/brussels/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2021/new-eu-undp-partnership-to-promote-inclusive-economic-growth-and.html>

³⁰ <https://www.m4eg.eu/media/5569/mayors-for-economic-growth-facility.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.m4eg.eu/en/news/the-eu-in-partnership-with-undp-promotes-inclusive-economic-growth-and-innovation-in-the-municipalities-of-the-eap-countries/>

Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P)

The Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) commenced in 2009. This multi-donor fund helping local authorities in securing efficient funds and pursuing investments in sustainable energy and environmental projects began in Ukraine and was extended to Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, and Azerbaijan. Grant allocation depends on the given country's needs, resources, and priorities. Apart from actual infrastructure, policy-related tasks such as local communication campaigns as well as legislative works can be financially backed³².

The sectors most likely to benefit from the E5P include local infrastructure such as district heating modernisation, water and wastewater treatment, projects to improve energy efficiency in public buildings, and projects to improve sustainability in local transportation infrastructure. Additional information on the E5P can be found in the EBRD section below.

Budget: Under this EUR 242 million multi-donor fund, current investments are close to EUR 1.24 million. The fund merges financial contributions from the EU, EaP countries, and a group of 24 countries (including beneficiaries of the fund)³³.

Contact point:

e5p@ebrd.com

<https://e5p.eu/>

European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD)

ENPARD is a policy initiative that is part of the EU's commitment to inclusive growth and stability in its neighbourhood, aiming to create economic and social opportunities for people beyond agricultural activities. The programme recognises the importance of agriculture in terms of food security, sustainable production, and rural employment.

Operational in the EaP since June 2012²⁴, it is currently being implemented in Georgia. Under Phase III (2018-2022) and Phase IV (2021-2025), EUR 77.5 million and EUR 55 million are available respectively for projects aimed at strengthening the capacities of authorities.

³² <https://e5p.eu/about>

³³ <http://www.ebrd.com/news/2017/ebrd-and-multidonor-e5p-fund-to-finance-electric-green-buses-for-batumi.html>

Contact point:

<https://eu4georgia.eu/fao-grants-faqs-and-contact/>

EU4Energy Programme

EU4Energy is a regionally focused programme implemented by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the EU, along with the Energy Community and the Energy Charter, which focuses on six countries from the EaP and five from Central Asia. The programme builds on the success of the long running the INterstate Oil and GAs Transportation to Europe programme (INOGATE) and follows the objectives for regional cooperation agreed between the EU and the beneficiary countries – the EU’s Platform on Energy Security and the Energy Flagship Initiative. The first phase commenced on 1 July 2016 and lasted until 30 June 2021. The current one is expected to last until 2024³⁴. The programme was established to ensure an appropriate quality of energy data and statistics collection at the local level, shape regional policy-making discussions, strengthen legislative and regulatory frameworks, and improve access to information³⁵.

Objectives of the programme include transforming the region’s approach to green energy, fostering sustainable economic development, job creation, and further infrastructure investment, as well as contributing to greater resilience and significantly reducing their carbon footprint.

Contact point:

IEAforEU4Energy.web@iea.org
<https://www.eu4energy.iea.org/about>

Partnership for Good Governance (PGG)

Building on the experiences of the previous joint initiatives towards the region, in April 2014, the EU and the CoE agreed that targeted cooperation activities with EaP countries would be implemented under a Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF) – renamed the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) in June 2017. Since then, the partnership has included the provision of legislative and technical assistance (workshops, legislative reviews, and training sessions, among others) so that the beneficiary countries can make them more similar to the European standards³⁶. Four priority areas of cooperation were identified for the

³⁴ <https://www.energy-community.org/regionalinitiatives/EU4EnergyII.html>

³⁵ <https://energycharter.org/partners/eu4energy/overview/>

³⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/european-union-and-council-of-europe-partnership-for-good-governance-2/1680973a03>

PGG II: anti-corruption, anti-discrimination, judicial reforms, and a quick response mechanism.

Contact point:

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/eap-pcf/contact>

**Example of a project successfully funded in an Eastern Partnership country:
Republic of Moldova**

Reinforcing the culture of dialogue and consultation of local authorities in the Republic of Moldova

Beneficiary: The Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM), LRAs in Moldova

Description: Supporting CALM in building capacity to foster policy dialogue and provide support to its members in the provision of quality services to its citizens, strengthening good governance, and improving municipal management standards.

For more information see:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/-/enhancing-advocacy-of-local-authorities-in-the-republic-of-moldova>

EU4Culture

Building on the experiences of the previous EU-EaP Culture and Creativity Programme³⁷ implemented between 2015 and 2018, EU4Culture aims to strengthen the cultural and creative sector so that it becomes a stimulus of inclusive growth across the EaP region. For example, the recent call within the project targets non-capital cities and towns from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine willing to share their “vision for a culture development strategy in the respective city/town” in accordance with the approach of the European Capitals of Culture³⁸. The most interesting ideas will be financially supported with grants from the cultural institutes of the EU, including Goethe Institut e.V. (Lead), Czech Centres, Danish Cultural Institute, and Institut Français.

Budget: The budget for the 2021-2024 period will reach EUR 7.85 million³⁹.

Contact point:

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/ua/en/kul/sup/e4c.html>

³⁷ <https://www.culturepartnership.eu/en>

³⁸ https://euneighbourseast.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/eu4culture-info-about-the-call_0.pdf

³⁹ <https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2020/10/07/eu4culture-programme/>

Bilateral programmes

Bilateral programmes are one of the main tools helping to ensure the implementation of a tailor-made approach towards cooperation between the EU and EaP countries. Under the new programming period, bilateral assistance will be in the framework of the ENP through the NDICI.

The *Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020* will inform the preparation of bilateral political frameworks jointly agreed with the partners and the multi-annual programming under the NDICI for the period 2021-2027, building on consultations with partner countries and other relevant stakeholders. The EU Delegations will be instrumental in facilitating this process⁴⁰.

Ukraine: U-LEAD with Europe – Local Empowerment, Accountability, and Development Programme (U-LEAD, 2016-2023)

In 2015, Ukraine adopted legislation to provide an enabling environment for decentralisation reforms and to consolidate units of local governance. External support for this process is needed in particular in areas such as improving service delivery, community security, and social cohesion on local, regional, and national levels⁴¹. Against this background, the overall objective of the U-LEAD programme is to contribute to the establishment of multi-level governance which is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of the population in Ukraine. Currently, under Stage 4 of the programme, activities are under implementation in selected hromadas.

Contact point:

ulead@sklinternational.se
<https://tsnap.ulead.org.ua/en/>

Pilot Regional Development Programmes (PRDPs, 2018-2022)

Pilot Regional Development Programmes (PRDPs) constitute an additional way for the EU to further its objectives in regional development in the neighbourhood countries. As previous successful rounds of PRDPs show⁴², such initiatives not only support the development of regions but also foster entrepreneurship and

⁴⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhoodenlargement/sites/default/files/joint_communication_on_the_eap_policy_beyond_2020.pdf

⁴¹ See more: <https://component2.ulead.org.ua>

⁴² Particularly cases from Ukraine where the Support to Ukraine's Regional Development Policy (SURDP) project proved extremely successful: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180831124341/http://surdp.eu/en/Project-activities>

innovative infrastructural projects at the local level. In this context, the EU currently collaborates through the implementation of ambitious regional development reforms and related programmes with partners from Armenia and Georgia. Belarus does not participate in the programme.

In Armenia, given the significant socio-economic differences between Yerevan and other municipalities in Armenia, the overall objective of the programme is to minimise these differences and contribute to the sustainable development of the regions across the country based on the best practices from EU cohesion policy-related initiatives and previous PRDPs.

In Georgia, 11 municipalities in the regions of Kakheti, Imereti, Guria, and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti received grants of a total worth of GEL 5 million for the development of local infrastructure and businesses under the first phase of the Pilot Integrated Regional Development Programme, which commenced in June 2020.

Contact point:

Delegation of the European Union to Armenia

<https://www.mfa.am/en/by-country/eu>

Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia

<https://mrdi.gov.ge/en/contact>

Example of a project successfully funded in an Eastern Partnership country:

Ukraine

EGOV4Ukraine

EU contribution: EUR 9.4 million

Duration: 11.2016-08.2021

Beneficiary: Ukrainian LRAs and administrative service centres

Description: The project improved the efficiency and transparency of public services at different levels in Ukraine through the development and implementation of the Trembita and Vulyk data exchange and information systems for administrative service centres. It also supported decentralisation and digitalisation efforts in the country.

For more information see: https://ega.ee/project/u_lead/

Thematic programmes

A number of thematic actions from the previous programming under NDICI – Global Europe will instead be covered under geographic programmes. The remaining thematic actions should be complementary to the geographic actions and should address global and trans-regional initiatives supporting internationally agreed goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or global public goods and challenges. The thematic actions would only be undertaken where there is no geographic programme (to ensure no overlaps), where there is no agreement on the action with the partner country concerned, or where the action cannot be adequately addressed by geographic programmes.

In particular, actions under the thematic component should address actions linked to the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level in the following areas:

- (i) human rights and democracy;
- (ii) civil society organisations (including actions formerly covered by EIDHR and the CSOs part of the CSOs/Local Authorities programme);
- (iii) peace, stability, and conflict prevention;
- (iv) global challenges, for issues such as “health, education, empowering women and children, migration and forced displacement, inclusive growth, decent work, social protection, food security and local authorities”⁴³.

Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)⁴⁴

Outlook for the 2021-2027 period

Under the new MFF and as proposed by a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council, the current activities of the IcSP will be continued under NDICI – Global Europe. According to the proposal, actions currently under Article 3 (Assistance in response to situations of crisis or emerging crisis to prevent conflicts) will be financed under the envelope “Rapid Response Actions” (Art. 6.c of the NDICI), while actions under Articles 4 (Assistance for conflict prevention, peace building, and crisis preparedness) and 5 (Assistance to address global and trans-regional threats) will be financed under the Envelope “Thematic Programmes – Stability and Peace” (Art. 6.b of the NDICI).

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/factsheet-global-europe-ndici-june-2021_en.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2020/10/09/instrument-contributing-to-stability-and-peace-icsp/>

Contact point:

https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/instrument-contributing-stability-and-peace-icsp/3020/contact-eeas_en

Creative Europe

The Creative Europe 2021-2027 programme supports the cultural and creative sectors, including audio-visual initiatives. Funding is available under three strands: culture, media, and a cross-sectoral strand. A list of opportunities for each strand can be found on the Creative Europe website: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/funding-creative-europe/about-creative-europe-programme>.

Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are fully eligible for the culture sub-programme and the media programme (e.g., film education, festivals, training, and market access activities). Organisations from Azerbaijan and Belarus can participate in any consortium that has the minimum required number of partners from fully eligible countries.

Budget: EUR 2.4 million (2021-2027)

Contact point:

Creative Europe Desks <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/resources/creative-europe-desks>

“Support to European Cooperation Projects” is part of the EU-funded programme Creative Europe. In June 2020, five Ukrainian projects received EUR 1 million to implement cultural initiatives. The funds were given to Internews Ukraine for the project “ARTIFAKE: Art Invaded Fakes”. The main purpose of this project is to study the propaganda and disinformation phenomena with a case study: the war in Donbas. The artists will reflect on media manipulation.

Erasmus+

With EUR 2.26 billion for the 2021-2027 MFF (out of which EUR 2.2 billion comes from NDICI-Global Europe and the Pre-Accession Assistance Instrument IPA-III⁴⁵), the Erasmus+ programme is the EU's largest programme supporting the mobility of learners and staff in the fields of education, training, youth, and sport. EaP partners can participate, falling into the Region 2 category. As partner countries, they can only participate in select programme actions, subject to specific criteria or conditions.

The programme guide available online offers information on individual actions and procedures for grant applications, as well as the selection process: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/introduction_en. The “how to apply” section contains useful information for prospective participants: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/how-to-apply_en.

Contact point:

An up-to-date list of National Agencies and national Erasmus+ offices is available here: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact_en

Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is the EU's most ambitious research and innovation programme to-date, with around EUR 95.5 billion of funding available over seven years between 2021 and 2027, a 30% increase compared to the former MFF. This large financial allocation will secure innovative and ground-breaking research⁴⁶.

Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are associated to the framework programme and Belarus and Azerbaijan as non-associated third countries are eligible to participate as well.

Contact points:

An up-to-date list of national contact points is available at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html.

⁴⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ff1edfdf-8bca-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁴⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-horizon-2020>

Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA)

Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) is a joint initiative of the EU and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), principally financed by the EU. SIGMA was initiated in 1992 and since then it has accumulated 25+ years of experience advising countries in transition on various public policy reforms and has developed long-term relationships with several in-country partners. SIGMA relies on experts from EU national public administrations and provides practitioner-to-practitioner support within projects of great flexibility in terms of design and implementation. It also supports and oftentimes complements other EU institution building instruments. During 2021, SIGMA has been helping administrations in the partner countries to respond effectively and efficiently to the crisis. It also works with individual countries on mutually agreed priorities, which, for many EaP countries, have been set for the period until June 2022⁴⁷.

Contact point:

SIGMA Office: +33 (0)1 45 24 82 00 or sigmaweb@oecd.org

TAIEX

TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission⁴⁸. It is a demand-driven tool offering peer-to-peer technical assistance and policy support from experts in EU Member States to the beneficiary countries. The TAIEX mandate covers all EaP countries. Its technical assistance targets public administrations, among others. It provides the following types of activities: study visits, expert missions, and workshops (single or multi-beneficiary).

Application form:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/TMSWebRestrict/resources/js/app/#/applicationform/home>

Contact point:

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taiex_en

⁴⁷ <http://www.sigmaweb.org/countries/>

⁴⁸ <http://taiex.ec.europa.eu>

Twining

Twining is a policy-driven platform supporting regular and in-depth cooperation between public administrations in EU Member States and partner countries, including those from the EaP. The platform was tasked with providing peer-to-peer support for the transition, implementation, and enforcement of EU legislation. Its main goal is to improve the capacities of partner countries' administrations.⁴⁹

Calls for proposals and support for applicants:
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/taix/taix-25-years-moving-forward-eu-expertise_en

Contact point:

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/twining_en
NEAR-TWINNING@ec.europa.eu

⁴⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/twining_en

3. Financing through the European Investment Bank (EIB)

Institutional overview

The European Investment Bank (EIB) focuses on social and economic infrastructure, contributes to the development of the private sector, and supports climate actions. The EIB offers the experience and expertise of economists and engineers to assist in the development and realisation of a wide range of projects. In terms of financial assistance, the EIB offers loans with competitive interest rates and grants for the further improvement of supported projects. In 2020, the EIB increased its borrowing authorisation by EUR 5 billion and assigned EUR 70 billion to support investment across Europe and around the world⁵⁰.

Policy context and objectives

In the Eastern Partnership countries, the EIB is mainly operating under the EU External Lending Mandate, which aims at the development of the public and private sectors. Between 2007 and 2019, the EIB provided EUR 93 million worth of technical assistance to the region (38% through the EPTATF – Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund, 60% through the Neighbourhood Investment Platform [NIP], and 2% through in-house technical assistance)⁵¹. Within the External Lending Mandate for 2014-2020, it invested EUR 6.65 billion in various initiatives in the EaP countries and Russia⁵². Moreover, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the EIB has provided emergency support to the EaP region in order to support a faster recovery of their economies.

Among the EaP countries, Ukraine has been the main beneficiary of EIB support, accounting for more than 50% of EIB lending assistance in the region. The main areas of EIB activity in Ukraine are social and economic infrastructure, transport and connectivity, energy efficiency, local private development, and green and innovation actions. On 12 December 2020, the Ukrainian government and the EIB signed an agreement on a EUR 640 million loan to develop infrastructure and public transport in eastern Ukraine⁵³. In addition, the resources will improve

⁵⁰ https://www.eib.org/en/investor_relations/press/2020/fi-2020-35-eib-increases-borrowing-authorization.htm

⁵¹ Evaluation of the Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund (2010-2019), available at [Evaluation of the Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund \(2010-2019\) \(eib.org\)](#)

⁵² See more: <https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2020-347-the-eib-invests-eur640-million-to-improve-infrastructure-resilience-public-transport-and-road-connections-in-ukraine>

⁵³ More information: <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/news/european-investment-bank-invests-eu640-million-improve-infrastructure-and>

living and business conditions in the conflict-affected regions of eastern Ukraine, including regions with large numbers of internally displaced persons. Local and regional authorities are eligible to apply for specific projects under the financial assistance, redistributed by central authorities.

Support instruments available

The EIB offers lending, blending, and advisory services to public and private sector representatives.

Lending is by far the EIB's principal activity, consisting of 90% of its total financial commitment⁵⁴. At the same time, the EIB stays committed to financially supporting investment projects presented by other partners and private and public promoters, including LRAs. This is reflected in loans that might be individual, multi-sector, and multi-component. The EIB also provides guarantees (trade financing) and equity participation (investment funds) to meet all the client's and partner's expectations.

For investments in the public sector, lending is possible to national, regional, and local authorities as well as to public enterprises or institutions. Loans can be made either directly to the relevant authority, or indirectly as a credit line which the EIB channels to LRAs for infrastructure investment, for instance in partnership with a national ministry or a local intermediary financial institution. All loans must reflect the EU and EIB's priorities.

Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund (EPTATF)⁵⁵

The EPTATF is a multi-year standing trust fund that provides technical assistance resources within the EIB services in order to overcome capacity constraints and align with stakeholders' needs and goals.

Priority sectors:

- development of social and economic infrastructure, urban infrastructure, transport, environmental protection, energy, water, sanitation, education and research, and communications technology;
- climate change mitigation;
- support of small and medium-sized enterprises.

⁵⁴ https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-investment-bank_en

⁵⁵ <https://www.eib.org/en/products/mandates-partnerships/donor-partnerships/trust-funds/eastern-partnership-technical-assistance-trust-fund.htm>

Types of support:

- capacity-building activities for local and regional officials and internships at the EIB;
- conducting feasibility studies, including technical, economic, and financial evaluations, social and environmental impact assessments, gender analysis;
- developing projects plans;
- building capacity in the areas of project management and operational skills.

Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP)⁵⁶

The NIP (previously Neighbourhood Investment Facility) is a facility that combines EU financial instruments and grant contributions with other public and private resources (e.g., equity and loans) in order to provide additional financial assistance on top of technical assistance.

The NIP supports initiatives under the following objectives:

- developing more sustainable connections between EU Member States and neighbourhood countries in energy and transport, improving energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy sources, and improving energy security through diversifying energy supplies;
- managing climate change and threats to the environment;
- creating sustainable and smart growth, including municipal infrastructure development, by supporting SMEs and the social sector.

Public authorities from the EaP countries can apply to the EIB for loans either above or below the EUR 25 million threshold.

Guide to applying for a loan:

https://www.eib.org/en/projects/cycle/applying_loan/index.htm

Frequently asked questions: <https://www.eib.org/en/infocentre/faq/index.htm>

Contact point:

Public authorities wishing to obtain a loan from the EIB should contact:

- EIB local offices for loans over EUR 25 million:
<https://www.eib.org/en/infocentre/contact/offices/index.htm>
- EIB local partners for loans below EUR 25 million:
<https://www.eib.org/intermediarieslist/search/index>

Information desk: <https://www.eib.org/en/infocentre/contact-form.htm>

⁵⁶ <https://www.eib.org/en/products/mandates-partnerships/nip/index.htm>

4. Financing through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)⁵⁷

Institutional overview

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was created in the early 1990s to support the development of market economies in Central and Eastern European and Central Asian countries after the widespread collapse of their respective communist regimes. Since then, the EBRD has been a major actor in fostering changes related not only to economic transition, but also to environmental and societal ones, investing around 150 billion in more than 6,000 projects⁵⁸. The EBRD list of shareholders consists of 69 countries, as well as the EU and the EIB⁵⁹.

The EBRD supports all six economies in the EaP region. Through the end of 2020, it invested almost EUR 28 billion in more than 1,300 projects in the countries at stake.⁶⁰ This is on top of the technical assistance (including through policy dialogue and capacity building) provided by the EBRD and financed by various donors and stakeholders.

Policy context and objectives

The EBRD's focus has been on making the economies in the EaP more competitive and resilient, fostering the expansion of the private sector, and promoting regional integration. In line with the newly adopted Green Economy Transition (GET) strategy 2021-2025, the Bank is helping build green, low carbon, and resilient economies. Through the new GET approach, the EBRD will increase green financing to more than 50% of its annual business volume by 2025. It also aims to reach net annual GHG emission reductions of at least 25 million tonnes over the five-year period. Furthermore, economic inclusion, the opening up of economic opportunities to under-served social groups, is integral to achieving a transition towards sustainable market economies. Through its private sector inclusion model, the EBRD builds inclusion elements directly into its investments across all sectors and regions, creating pathways into jobs and

⁵⁷ <https://www.ebrd.com/home>

⁵⁸ <https://www.ebrd.com/who-we-are/history-of-the-ebrd.html>

⁵⁹ <https://www.ebrd.com/shareholders-and-board-of-governors.html>

⁶⁰ <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2020/ebrd-and-eu-scale-up-small-business-support-in-eastern-partnership-countries.html>

training for young people, women, and rural populations while addressing challenges in providing basic services for all.

The Bank is specialising in the provision of financial investments and technical and business support and is well-known for its involvement in high-level policy reforms. Financial products span from loans (direct or through financial intermediaries) to equity investments and guarantees to promote trade.

Support instruments available

Within the varied portfolio of EBRD's products and services, LRAs in EaP countries are a key partner for the EBRD's Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure ("MEI") sector-oriented loans and grants (technical cooperation grant funds and investment grants)⁶¹. EBRD's MEI strategy supports local governments, municipal utilities and private operators in the delivery of essential services through investments in sustainable infrastructure, notably in water and wastewater, public transport, urban roads and street lighting, solid waste management, district heating and energy efficiency in buildings.

EBRD's partnership with donors is a crucial component of the Bank's business model. Donor-funded technical cooperation grants promote high standards of project preparation and implementation as well as capacity building and reform initiatives. In certain markets, EBRD also mobilises donor co-financing in the form of investment grants or other concessional instruments to address affordability constraints by reducing the need for extensive tariff increases and/or to attain EU standards more quickly.

Under the Small Business Initiative, the EBRD helps small and medium-sized businesses gain access to business advice. As SME development has a significant impact on local and regional economies, LRAs are an important stakeholder for many of these actions, but not a direct beneficiary.

In the EaP region specifically, the EBRD also acts as the fund manager of the E5P, a EUR 242 million multi-donor fund developed in 2009 to encourage municipal investments in energy efficiency and environmental projects in the EaP region (see more details in Section 2 above).

⁶¹ <https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/sectors-and-topics/municipal-and-environmental-infrastructure/mei-overview.html>

Green Cities Programme⁶²

The EBRD Green Cities flagship programme supporting urban climate- and environment-friendly endeavours was launched in 2016. With a budget of EUR 3 billion, it is well-suited to finance not only technical but also significant, yet expensive infrastructural projects in: (i) urban transport; (ii) solid waste; (iii) water and wastewater; (iv) energy and buildings; (v) land planning, green space, and biodiversity; as well as cross-sectoral policy areas: (vi) governance and (vii) finance. The Green Cities programme consists of three different components: (i) Green City Action Plans (GCAPs) in which local-specific diagnoses are prepared; (ii) sustainable infrastructure investment where specific project costs are secured; (iii) and capacity building which provides technical support for project implementation. The major aims of the programme are to preserve the environment and local biodiversity, to enable both climate mitigation and adaptation actions, and to ensure that green policies are inclusive for local citizens. All cities with a population of at least 100,000 (cities with a population of 50,000 can be eligible in special cases) from EaP countries are eligible to become part of the network if they are willing to conduct GCAPs⁶³. As of 31 August 2021, 15 cities from the EaP region participate in the programme: two from Armenia; one from Azerbaijan; two from Belarus; two from Georgia; two from Moldova; and six from Ukraine⁶⁴.

An example worth mentioning concerns public transportation in Moldova's second largest city, Balti, where new trolleybuses were added to the city's fleet. Thanks to this, densely populated areas gained access to cheap, comfortable, and accessible transportation, connecting remote neighbourhoods with the city centre⁶⁵.

Solid Waste Management Projects in Georgia⁶⁶

Although the EBRD estimates that 79% of the Bank's investments in Georgia are acquired by the private sector, some municipal projects are worth mentioning. In mid-2021, Tbilisi municipal solid waste company received a EUR 3.03 million sovereign loan extension which "applies to drainage collection of the liquid generated from rainfall and the natural decomposition of waste, so that it is properly removed from the landfill", effectively improving the environmental footprint and quality of solid waste services for approximately 1.1 million

⁶² <https://www.ebrdgreencities.com>

⁶³ <https://www.ebrdgreencities.com/eligibility>

⁶⁴ <https://www.ebrdgreencities.com/our-cities>

⁶⁵ <https://www.ebrdgreencities.com/news-events-and-publications/new-trolleybuses-hit-the-road-in-balti-moldova/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-supports-solid-waste-management-in-tbilisi.html>

residents of Tbilisi. The project is a follow-up of a successful initiative from 2018 where the Bank extended a EUR 15 million loan for the modernisation of the capital's solid waste collection fleet.

Ukraine Public Transport Framework (UPTF)⁶⁷

In Ukraine, 400 new trolleybuses for 12 cities (Dnipro, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kremenchuk, Kryvyi Rih, Lviv, Mariupol, Mykolaiv, Odessa, Poltava, and Zhytomyr) as well as relevant infrastructure works – such as maintenance and modernisation of tractions – were financed under the EBRD's Ukraine Public Transport Frameworks (UPTF) I and II agreements, signed respectively in 2015 and 2019 and worth EUR 350 million. The new climate-friendly fleet is set to improve the comfort of the passengers as well as road safety and the overall efficiency of public transportation across the country, where oftentimes old private minibuses were the single transportation option. Along similar lines, the Ukraine Public Transport Frameworks received an additional EUR 10 million from Clean Technology Fund (CTF) loans and grants totalling EUR 2.6 million, including technical assistance from the E5P (see below).

Ukraine Public Sector Energy Efficiency Framework (“UPSEEF”)⁶⁸

UPSEEF was established in 2017 with a budget of EUR 100 million and a goal of providing loans to municipal energy management companies in Ukraine to finance energy saving improvements in public buildings and street lighting infrastructure through energy performance contracts (EnPC) implemented by private construction, engineering, or energy service companies selected by competitive tender. Under this framework, each loan is expected to be guaranteed by the respective municipality.

The investments are expected to significantly improve energy efficiency in public buildings and thereby lead to energy savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions as well as improved comfort levels at the kindergartens, schools, and hospitals included into the sub-projects under the framework. Each sub-project under the Framework is benefiting from a tailored technical support.

⁶⁷ <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2020/ebdrs-ukraine-public-transport-framework-reaches-important-milestone-.html>

⁶⁸ https://www.energy-community.org/regionalinitiatives/infrastructure/donors/National/EBRD_UE_EE.html

As of September 2021, the EBRD has signed four sub-projects under the UPSEEF Framework that are currently at various stages of implementation. One of these projects (Dnipro Public Buildings Energy Efficiency) is co-financed with an E5P investment grant.

Examples of recent EBRD Municipal and Environment Infrastructure projects under signing, development, and/or review:

- **Georgia:** a EUR 9.6 million sovereign loan has been extended to upgrade public transportation in Tbilisi. The new vehicles will be environmentally friendly and hence city's air pollution will be reduced and the urban green transition further improved. Apart from environmental benefits, the new fleet will also ensure higher safety standards. See more: <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-supports-upgrade-of-municipal-vehicle-fleet-in-tbilisi.html>
- **Ukraine:** a EUR 140 million loan will be given to Kyivteploenergo – the heating and hot water utility company in Kyiv to improve district heating and water supplies in accordance with the EU Industrial Emissions Directive⁶⁹. The project, which is a key element of Kyiv's Green City Action Plan (GCAP), will additionally be supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through audits and technical support on operational performance. See more: <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-helps-upgrade-kyiv-district-heating-system.html>
- **Moldova:** in May 2021, the EBRD became the sole legal owner of the operator of Giurgiulești Port, which is one of the country's key strategic assets and in which the Bank has been investing since 1995. The decision was made to enable smooth operations, which will eventually bring in international investors who will develop this major regional trade hub further. See more: <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-details-investment-in-giurgiulesti-international-free-port.html>

Contact point:

EBRD Project enquiries: +44 20 7338 7168
or <https://www.ebrd.com/enquiries.html>

EBRD Municipal and Environment Infrastructure projects: +44 207 338 8539 or <https://www.ebrd.com/municipal-and-environmental-infrastructure.html>

⁶⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/industry/stationary/ied/legislation.htm>

EBRD Country teams:

- **Armenia:** <https://www.ebrd.com/armenia.html>
- **Azerbaijan:** <https://www.ebrd.com/azerbaijan.html>
- **Belarus:** <https://www.ebrd.com/belarus.html>
- **Georgia:** <https://www.ebrd.com/georgia.html>
- **Moldova:** <https://www.ebrd.com/moldova.html>
- **Ukraine:** <https://www.ebrd.com/ukraine.html>

5. Where to find information about new and upcoming funding opportunities?

When searching for new financing opportunities, it is useful to maintain a list of websites that publish information on upcoming opportunities on regular bases. Signing up for their newsletters and/or following them on social media is the most efficient way of staying informed.

A first step could be to sign up for the European Committee of the Regions newsletter to receive updates on policy updates relevant to LRAs as well as new publications and events:

https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/enewsletter.aspx?utm_source=SharedLink&utm_medium=ShortURL&utm_campaign=newsletter-

Delegations of the European Union:

- **Ukraine** https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine_en
Contact point: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/area/contacts_en
- **Belarus** https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus_en
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- **Armenia** https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia_en
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- **Moldova** https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova_en
Contact point: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/area/contacts_en
- **Azerbaijan** https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan_en
Contact point: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/area/contacts_en

European Union External Action Service – Eastern Partnership and Russia

More information: https://eeas.europa.eu/regions/eastern-europe_en

EU Neighbours portal

Part of the EU Neighbourhood Communication Programme.

More information: <https://euneighbours.eu/en>

Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership

CORPLEAP is a political forum of LRAs from the EU and EaP countries.

More information: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/CORLEAP.aspx>

PLATFORMA

A coalition of local and regional governments and their associations active in development cooperation. Some municipalities from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are active partners already.

More information: <https://platforma-dev.eu>

Covenant of Mayors (CoM)

The 2020 EU Climate and Energy Package – adopted in 2008 – prompted the EC to endorse and support the efforts deployed by LRAs in the implementation of sustainable and energy efficiency (EE) policies by launching the Covenant of Mayors (CoM) initiative. The CoM is a unique bottom-up movement focused on reinforcing wider national efforts in carbon dioxide (CO₂) reduction which has resulted in a great number of local and regional climate change mitigation projects and green investments. While the CoM does not provide direct financing to the signatory LRAs, the latter can participate in the dedicated peer-learning and twinning programmes⁷⁰ organised by the Covenant.

More information: <https://www.eumayors.eu>

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, aimed at strengthening cooperation between 47 member states and promoting civic rights and liberties at the local and regional level.

More information: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress>

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a regional civil society platform, which was established to promote European values, facilitate reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

More information: <https://eap-csf.eu/>

⁷⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/launch-eu-covenant-mayors-peer-learning-programme-2021-jan-20_en.

Tips & tricks

- Reach out to the LRAs mentioned in the brochure or on the programme websites as participants of successfully implemented projects to learn about their experiences in both applying for and implementing projects;
- Make use of the assistance given by contact points and do not hesitate to contact your local EU Delegation for information and assistance;
- Take part in events organised by the CoR, EU Delegations, individual programme management teams, and other institutions, such as: info days, brokerage events, and training sessions, among others;
- Read eligibility criteria carefully;
- Be proactive in reaching out to potential partners.

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**European Committee
of the Regions**

Created in 1994, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's political assembly of 329 regional and local representatives such as regional presidents or city-mayors from all 27 Member States, representing over 446 million Europeans.

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