

National and Regional Partnership Plans

EU long-term budget: Infosheet

National and Regional Partnership Plans

What are the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP)?

The new European Union (EU) long-term budget for the 2028–2034 period aims to be more flexible, more efficient, and less bureaucratic. For this reason, the European Commission is proposing to bring together EU funds implemented by EU Member States and regions under a single new instrument, known as the NRPPs. The money is to be spent through one plan, per country: a National and Regional Partnership Plan (NRPP).

Each NRPP replaces the separate programmes that exist today for regional development, agriculture, fisheries, social policy, migration and border management, internal security and the Social Climate Fund. Think of it as each country negotiating a single investment and reform plan with the European Commission for the next seven years, with objectives and minimum allocations agreed at EU level. In total, 27 such plans will be drawn up; while cross-border European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) will maintain a separate EU-wide plan. The Commission proposed around €865 billion for the NRPP Regulation as a whole (current prices), of which some €783 billion would go to the 27 national plans.¹

Why does it matter?

The current system is complicated. If you're a region, a local authority, or an organisation trying to access EU funding, you may have to navigate multiple different funds, each with its own rules, deadlines, and application procedures. This takes time, costs money, and often means smaller actors miss out.

The Commission is proposing to reduce the number of programmes in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) budget, from more than 50 to 16, and to establish more harmonised rules. The NRPPs are the main vehicle for this simplification: one fund, one plan, and one set of rules per country.

EU context

For decades, EU cohesion policy, which is the main tool for reducing inequality between richer and poorer regions, operated through dozens of separate regional programmes. That system gave regions significant control over their own priorities. The NRPP model shifts that balance: national governments are responsible for drafting each NRPP and, following assessment by the Commission and approval by the Council of the EU, implementing it. **National governments decide much of what to fund.**

¹

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/whats-new/newsroom/17-07-2025-commission-prop-oses-more-flexible-and-performance-based-cohesion-policy-for-2028-2034_en and <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/future-esf>

This is a deliberate choice. The EU wants to make its budget easier to use, faster to deploy in a crisis, and better aligned with shared goals like the green transition and digital transformation. Payments are released only once agreed milestones and targets are met, and remain subject to conditions on EU fundamental rights and the rule of law. But it also means a significant shift in power: from regions to national governments.

What does this mean for you?

For **regions and local authorities**:

- Regional authorities are treated as one stakeholder among others rather than as co-managers of the funds, and it is largely left to EU Member States on whether to include a regional or territorial chapter in their plan.
- The partnership principle and the European Code of Conduct on Partnership continue to apply to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plans. What the proposal does not set out is a clear procedure or timeline for involving regions when plans are revised.
- There is a minimum allocation of €218 billion for less developed regions – the same amount set in the 2021–2027 funding period. Only this category is protected: there are no minimum allocations for more developed regions, and no specific earmarking for urban areas as under the current the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF).
- In its negotiating position of June 2026, the Council of the EU said it wants to reinforce the role of regions and to build on existing national and regional governance structures. How far this goes will be settled in the negotiations with the European Parliament.

For **organisations and civil society**:

- Environmental priorities will no longer sit in protected funding streams, but will compete directly with other national priorities within a single plan. Overall targets remain: 43% of NRPP funding should contribute to climate objectives, and at least 35% of the EU budget as a whole.
- Simplified access should mean fewer bureaucratic hurdles for local authorities and beneficiaries, thanks to harmonised rules and a single funding instrument.
- The success of the new framework will depend heavily on genuine stakeholder involvement, including with civil society. The partnership principle formally covers civil society organisations, but how meaningful the consultation is in practice will depend on national arrangements – one of the main open points in the negotiations.

For **citizens**:

- If you live in a less developed region, your region's funding is protected by a minimum guarantee.
- The plan covering your country must be made public, giving citizens a chance to track how the money is being spent.
- A mid-term review will be required, meaning EU Member States will need to review and update their plans around the midpoint of the period. Part of each country's envelope is deliberately left unprogrammed so that it can be redirected at that point.

What happens next?

The NRPP Regulation is still a proposal, but negotiations have advanced.

- **May 2026** – The European Parliament adopted its interim report on the MFF and has been the most critical of merging cohesion and agriculture into a single fund.
- **June 2026** – The Council of the EU agreed on its partial negotiating position on the NRPP Regulation, followed by positions on the Cohesion Funds and on migration, border management and internal security.
- EU leaders discussed the revised negotiating box and asked the Irish Presidency to take the work forward by the European Council of 15 October 2026.
- The Parliament's position on the NRPP Regulation is expected towards the end of 2026.

The aim is to reach a political agreement before the end of 2026, so that the sectoral legislation can be adopted in 2027, and funding reaches beneficiaries from January 2028.

Key decisions still need to be made:

- The overall size of the budget and new own resources;
- How much say regions will actually have in shaping and revising their national plan;
- Whether civil society organisations will have a guaranteed seat at the table;
- How competing priorities (i.e. cohesion, agriculture, migration and climate) will be balanced within each country's envelope.

The NRPP Regulation is still under negotiation; figures and provisions may still change. For the latest state of play, see the [Council of the EU's timeline of the 2028–2034 budget negotiations](#).

Want to learn more?

- [European Commission's page on the EU budget](#)
- [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) – for project applications
- Your [EUROPE DIRECT](#) centre
- [Bruegel explainer on NRPPs](#)
- Institut Jacques Delors: "[Navigating the European Commission's MFF Proposal for 2028–2034](#)"
- [Energy cities on the NRPPs](#)

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