



# REGIOSTARS 2024

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

### **1.1. What is the Commission looking for in this competition?**

The Commission is looking for impactful EU-funded projects that contribute to Europe's cohesion. This year the awards scheme encompasses five categories, which are familiar from the cohesion policy objectives.

### **1.2. What are the competition categories?**

The five competition categories are:

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

A more detailed description of the categories and an indication of the projects that could be relevant for meeting the award criteria are presented in the Guide for Applicants available on the [competition platform](https://regiostarsawards.eu/) (<https://regiostarsawards.eu/>).

Projects should apply within the category that corresponds to the policy objective under which they have been funded. For the projects funded during the 2014-2020 period, the applicants should refer to the competition category corresponding to the thematic objective under which they have been funded as indicated in the conversion table (annex 1).

The same project cannot be submitted for several categories.

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

All projects which received funding from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (including Interreg), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Social Fund (ESF) and European Social Fund +, Just Transition Fund, and any Interreg strand.

In terms of funding periods, projects from both the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 period are eligible. Please note that only completed projects are eligible.

In addition, projects and initiatives that combine the aforementioned funds with other EU funds are welcome.

Eligibility criteria are presented in the Guide for Applicants available on the [competition platform](#).

### **1.4. Can I submit a project that started before 2014?**

No. The starting date of the project must be earliest 1 January 2014.

### **1.5. Can I submit a recently completed project?**

Yes. Only completed projects are eligible.

### **1.6. Is there a maximum number of applications?**

Yes. A maximum of five applications per programme can be submitted.  
The Managing Authority of the programme ensures with its endorsement that this maximum number is respected.

## **2. How do I submit my project?**

### **2.1. How does it work in a nutshell?**

You fill in the online application and upload an endorsement letter from your Managing Authority by the deadline indicated. Endorsement letters may be in the form of the filled-in template available on the [competition platform](#) or an e-mail with the equivalent information by the Head of the Managing Authority, uploaded as a PDF file. *That's it!*

### **2.2. Where do I submit the application?**

On the REGIOSTARS [competition platform](#).

### **2.3. When is the deadline for submission?**

31 May 2024 23:59:59 CET

### **2.4. Who should submit the application?**

Applications must be submitted by the project promoter (= the organization who was responsible for the implementation of the project). The application form shall be accompanied by the endorsement letter, signed by the Managing Authority. The form for the letter is available on the [competition platform](#). Also, an email with the equivalent information from the head of the Managing Authority confirming endorsement, uploaded on the platform as a PDF, can replace the endorsement letter.

### **2.5. In which language can I submit the application?**

Applications can be submitted in one of the official EU languages. All applications will be machine translated into English for the assessment of the jury.

### **2.6. How do I indicate the localisation of my project?**

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

For projects with several locations or no fixed location (e.g. employment projects or SME funding), please select the most emblematic one (e.g. where most important investment took place) or choose the location of the project promoter (e.g. the headquarters of the funding agency).

This information is used to display the locations of all projects on our website.

### **2.7. Can I submit a project that had already been submitted at an earlier edition of the REGIOSTARS?**

Yes, projects can be re-submitted once.

## **2.8. Can I send the application also by email?**

No. To help you prepare your application, we provide you with the application form in Microsoft Word format. However, applications have to be submitted directly via the [REGIOSTARS competition platform](#).

## **2.9. Does the application have to be submitted in one step? Or can the application be saved and completed at a later date?**

Applications can be saved at any stage of the process and completed later, until the deadline. The application will only be finalised once you click on 'submit', after which it cannot be modified anymore.

## **2.10. Why does the application form contain two points where project descriptions have to be submitted?**

The short project description will be used for communication purposes. Please provide here an easily understandable and catchy description, which demonstrates to the wider public why your project is exceptional and how it contributes to improving the life of Europeans. This section of your application form will be used without major alteration, e.g. for the purposes of the Public Choice Award as a short description of your project.

The longer "description of project" is intended for the jury to evaluate the project. Here you are invited to provide a longer, professional project description with all the relevant information you deem necessary for the jury to evaluate your project.

## **2.11. What is the information requested under "impact of the project"?**

We suggest writing this section of the application form while thinking of all the positive effects that would not have happened in case the project would not have been implemented.

## **2.12. Which technical requirements do the images have to meet?**

You are requested to submit high-resolution pictures that are going to be used on various communication channels, for instance in printed materials, online and for an exhibition, both during and after the competition. These pictures should be at least 300 dpi or 10 MB or more.

We also request you to declare that the organisation you represent is the copyright owner of the images and thus have all the relevant rights, including the authorisations of the identifiable persons in the image, and that the images can be used by the European Commission for the purposes of promoting the REGIOSTARS Awards and EU Regional Policy on all platforms (websites, print, social media and other).

## **2.13. What happens once my project is submitted?**

After the end of application period, all the project applications will go through an eligibility check. The eligible project applications will be submitted to the jury evaluation. All eligible projects will be highlighted in Kohesio. Projects will be informed about the results of the eligibility check as indicated in the timetable (annex 1).

## **2.14. How does the public vote work?**

An online voting system will be open from 2 September to 8 October. During this period the public will have the possibility to vote for their favourite project among the finalists. The project with the most votes receives the Public Choice Award. We highly recommend the finalist

projects and their Managing Authorities to organise a communication campaign/action in order to promote their participation in the public vote.

### **2.15. Who can I contact if I have questions?**

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

## **3. What is the Managing Authority's role?**

### **3.1. What does a Managing Authority have to do?**

The Managing Authority has a two-fold role:

- Providing the applicant with a signed endorsement form or an email with the equivalent information and ensuring that a maximum of 5 projects per programme are submitted;
- Participating in the awards ceremony with all finalist projects (costs are borne by the Commission).

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

First, the Managing Authority ensures that no more than five applications per operational programme are submitted. Second, the Managing Authority provides an indication to the Commission, whether or not the project been subject to any type of investigation, which could lead to a financial correction linked to irregularities or fraud.

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

No.

### **3.4. Are there any limitations concerning the number of applications by category?**

No, this is completely up to the programmes (programmes may even have 5 applications in one single category). Overall, Managing Authorities are free to use whatever selection process they deem appropriate to identify the endorsed projects for their programme.

### **3.5. Can an intermediate body sign on behalf of the Managing Authority?**

Yes. However, the intermediate body shall ensure coordination with the Managing Authority.

### **3.6. What is meant by 'the representative' of the Managing Authority in the application form?**

It is up to the Managing Authority to decide who signs the endorsement letter. In some cases, it may be the head of the Managing Authority itself, in other cases it could also be the programme manager or the communication officer (particularly in the case of larger programmes).

### **3.7. What if the Managing Authority...?**

If the Managing Authority in charge of the 2014-2020 programme has ceased to exist or changed, the Managing Authority in charge of the 2021-2027 programme (that succeeds the 2014-2020 programme) should endorse the application.

If the same Managing Authority is in charge of several programmes, it can endorse up to five projects per programme. If successive programmes (2014-2020 and 2021-2027) cover the same territory and in essence the same themes, there should nevertheless be only five projects presented for the entire timespan since 2014.

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

### **4.1. How does the jury evaluation process look like?**

Only applications which satisfy the eligibility criteria will be admitted to the jury. In the first phase of the evaluation, the jury will assess the applications taking into account the award criteria and select up to five finalists for each category. In the second stage, the jury will meet the finalists for a project pitch and a panel discussion, during which they will have the opportunity to ask further questions about the project, based on which they will take their decision on the winners.

Please read the sections in the Guide for Applicants related to the eligibility and award criteria carefully before submitting the application.

### **4.2. Who sits in the jury?**

The jury is composed of 15 high-level academic members, which are nominated by the Commission. Members of the jury work in teams of three (based on their expertise in the given award category) but take the final decision on the finalists and winners together as a group.

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

Congratulations! All applicants will be informed about the jury's decision on their project. The finalists will be announced to the public consequently.

Following the announcement, the finalists are invited to nominate representative(s) to join the second evaluation phase and the REGIOSTARS award ceremony as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels in October. Failure to participate to the second evaluation phase can be a reason for the European Commission to retract finalist nomination.

A half a day communication training will be organised prior to the project pitches as a preparation. It is therefore strongly encouraged that the representative nominated to participate in the second selection phase also takes part in the training.

Please note that this second and final round of the selection process will be carried out in English.

All finalists will automatically take part in the online voting for the Public Choice Award.

Cost for the participation of the two project representatives in the above-mentioned event is borne by the Commission. The project representatives may both come from the project, or it can be decided that one of the two representatives is from the Managing Authority. It is therefore important that the project coordinates with the Managing Authority the participation at the final round and to the ceremony.

### **4.4. What happens if my project wins?**

The winners of the REGIOSTARS will be announced at the award ceremony. The project representative(s) will receive a REGIOSTARS trophy.

Following the ceremony, the Commission will organise local mini campaigns with the collaboration of the winning project promoters and the Managing Authorities.

#### **4.5. When will the REGIOSTARS ceremony take place?**

Please refer to the timetable in the annex 2.

# Annexes

## Annex 1. Conversion table

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

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

## Annex 2. Timetable REGIOSTARS 2024

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Competition launch	mid-February
Deadline for applications	Friday 31 May
Information about the eligibility check	Monday 17 June
Announcement of the finalists	mid-July (exact date to be confirmed)
Start of the Public Vote	Monday 2 September
Online training on pitching project to finalists	During week 38 (16-20 September)
Finalists' pitch and panel discussion with jurors	Tuesday 8 October
End of the public vote	Tuesday 8 October
REGIOSTARS Ceremony	Wednesday 9 October (in Brussels)
Local campaigns with winners	From 1 <sup>st</sup> December on