



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY  
Operational Efficiency and Central Europe  
**Director**

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**INFORMATION NOTE  
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE EGESIF MEMBERS**

**Subject: Commission's position on small-scale infrastructure**

The 2014-2020 rules for the European Regulation Development Fund (ERDF)<sup>i</sup> limit support for cultural and tourism infrastructure to small-scale projects only. The legislator has thus decided to provide ERDF support not to any cultural and tourism infrastructure project, but only to those of small scale, without further definition and without a further request to the Commission to define such projects in a delegated or implementing act. However, in order to apply a consistent and transparent approach to all Member States, the Commission has quantified a cost ceiling for projects that, for objective reasons, could be considered small in scale.

The Commission considers that an infrastructure investment should be considered small-scale if its **total cost is below or equal to EUR 5 million**; this ceiling is raised to EUR 10 million in the case of infrastructure considered as world cultural heritage in the sense of Article 1 of the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage listed by UNESCO<sup>ii</sup>.

As an example, the conservation, protection, promotion, and development of natural and cultural heritage, as established in Article 5(6)(c) ERDF, might take the form of an integrated operation including complementary support actions<sup>iii</sup> that contribute to the objective of the relevant investment priority. This integrated operation can include several small-scale items of infrastructure and may even constitute a major project.

The enhancement of accessibility to, and development of, specific natural and cultural resources as part of a territorial or a community-led local development strategy to develop endogenous potential of specific areas as established in Article 5(8)(b) ERDF, can also include several small-scale items of infrastructure.

The EUR 5 million ceiling stems from discussions the Commission has had with Member States in the context of the closure of the 2007-2013 period, where Member States requested flexibility for the completion of large-scale and complex projects, including the permission to complete them in the next programming period or to extend their completion by national resources by additional 2 years. In the closure guidelines for 2007-2013, these exceptions have been granted to projects with total costs over EUR 5 million. The Commission considers it as consistent to use this threshold as a ceiling for small-scale infrastructure in the context of the new programmes.

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i The scope of the ERDF allows the ERDF to support "investment in the development of endogenous potential through fixed investment in equipment and small-scale infrastructure, including small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure..." (Article 3(1)(e) ERDF).

ii "Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting , elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;  
Groups of buildings: groups for separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;  
Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view."

iii Complementary support actions could include productive investment in the sense of Article 3(1)(a) contributing to creating and safeguarding sustainable jobs, through direct aid for investment in SMEs (for instance SMEs in the cultural and creative industries sector); development, testing and first deployment of innovative solutions for cultural heritage preservation which would fall under Article 3(1)(b) productive investment, irrespective of the size of the enterprise concerned, which contributes to the investment priorities set out in points (1) and (4) of Article 5; training centre for restorers of antiquities, for tourist guides, etc. that would be within the scope of Article 3(1)(d) investment in social, health, research, innovation, business and educational infrastructure; Article 3(1)(f) could also be considered with networking, cooperation and exchange of experience between competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities.