



JASPERS - Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions

Factsheet

An online course (MOOC) for regional and local authorities



JASPERS at a glance

JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions) is a technical assistance initiative aimed at **improving the quality of investments supported by EU funds** (the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance - IPA). It is a partnership between the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

JASPERS provides **independent expert advice and capacity building support** to public authorities and final beneficiaries on how to plan, develop and implement high quality large investment projects to be co-financed by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), as well as programmes and sector strategies that deliver EU policy objectives.

Mandates

JASPERS assists beneficiary countries under three separate mandates:

1. Under **its largest and oldest mandate from DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)**, JASPERS provides independent expert advice

and capacity-building support to public authorities and final beneficiaries of projects to be funded by the ESIF. This mandate covers the EU Member States that have received JASPERS support in the programming period 2007-2013 (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), and it is now extended to eligible regions in all EU Member States, with priority given to less developed and transition regions.

JASPERS has already extended its advisory and capacity building support to eligible regions in France, Italy and UK, and is in discussions to expand activities to Ireland, Spain and Portugal.



In addition to this, JASPERS has developed procedures to provide an Independent Quality Review service, according to the requirements of the Common Provisions Regulation Nr. 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013 (CPR), and relevant Commissions' implementing acts. The CPR provides Member States with a new option for the approval of major projects, involving appraisal (Independent Quality Review - IQR) by independent experts. The Commission has indicated that JASPERS is an appropriate body to undertake the IQR. This service is available for all Member States intending to use European Structural and Investment Funds to support major projects.

Since 2015, at the request of the European Commission, JASPERS also carries out an appraisal of all major projects submitted directly by the Member States to the Commission which do not follow the IQR procedure. Thereby, JASPERS screens all major projects submitted directly to the Commission.

2. The **JASPERS IPA mandate supports 'enlargement countries'** in developing investments to be funded by the IPA funds, and JASPERS' assistance is available to all IPA Beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

3. Alongside the DG REGIO and IPA mandates, a new mandate was agreed with DG Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) in 2015 on **JASPERS assistance for transport projects to be financed by the Connecting Europe Facility**.

Priority areas in 2014-2020

In the 2014-2020 programming period, JASPERS offers three types of services:

- **Project preparation support and strategic advice:** JASPERS' experts provide project preparation support, from the identification of projects to the submission of the request for EU Finance. Advisory services are now available to eligible regions in all EU Member States and in pre-accession countries.
- **Training, thematic support and knowledge sharing:** JASPERS provides capacity building support and advice on horizontal issues, such as cost-benefit analysis (CBA), climate change, state aid or environmental issues, relevant to more than one project or more than one country. This is delivered by the [JASPERS Networking](#)

Improvement of Gdańsk Sea Port rail connection, Poland

This project concerns the modernisation of the railway section between Pruszcz Gdański and the Gdańsk Northern Port, with a total length of 12 km. Apart from track modernisation, the main part of the project is the construction of a new bridge over the Martwa Wisła River that will allow an almost threefold increase in capacity.

This section provides rail access to the eastern banks of the Gdańsk Sea Port and improved links to major freight railway lines in Poland. JASPERS reviewed the feasibility study, the traffic forecasts, the economic

and financial analysis, the project structure and scope, engineering and environmental aspects of the project, and the application for grant funding. This assignment was completed in July 2015.





Platform and Competence Centre by means of training, seminars, webinars, videos, an electronic library, facilitated discussion fora, Communities of Practice, and any other actions and events that promote knowledge sharing and capacity building.

- **Independent Quality Review:** JASPERS can provide the independent quality review of major projects made available as an option for Member States envisaged by the Common Provisions Regulation for ESI funds (Regulation No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013). The IQR function is available to all Member States which intend to use EU Structural and Investment Funds to support major projects.

Governance and organisation

JASPERS is managed by the **EIB** and supervised by a **Steering Committee** comprising representatives from its partner institutions. The Steering Committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction, deciding on major policy issues relating to JASPERS and approving its work programme at a general level.

JASPERS is organised into divisions on the basis of sectors and functions, with experts from each division located across the **regional offices** according to their main countries of focus. JASPERS' headquarters are in Luxembourg, with offices in Brussels, Bucharest, Vienna, Warsaw and Sofia, close to clients and counterparts.

Vilnius City Western Bypass (Lithuania)



The Vilnius City Western Bypass Stage III project, located along the North-South TEN-T corridor in the west of Vilnius (Lithuania), contributes to strengthening the local economy and its competitiveness and supports the development of the city. JASPERS reviewed and assisted with the preparation of the grant application and its annexes in order to ensure its completeness, consistency and quality. This assignment was completed in December 2015.

JASPERS potentially works with all stakeholders involved in planning, preparing and delivering investment projects using EU grant funds.

The primary recipients of JASPERS' advice are final beneficiaries acting as project promoters, but advice can also be requested by managing authorities and intermediate bodies. JASPERS assistance is made available **free of charge**.

Examples of JASPERS support

JASPERS provides a range of advisory services that include, but is not limited to:



- Advice on preparing **sector strategies and upstream project screening** to assess their viability and suitability for EU co-financing
- Support for the preparation of **grouped investment schemes** to meet particular policy objectives, such as the energy efficiency of buildings
- Review of project **feasibility studies and other project-related documentation** (e.g. CBA, EIA, etc), and recommendations for improvement
- Sector-specific knowledge of **best practices** in engineering, economics, the environment and related EU policies and directives
- Review of the **project application and annexes** before submission to the European Commission

Apart from its traditional advisory function, JASPERS provides a range of **capacity building services**, both during project preparation assignments and through its dedicated Networking and Competence Centre.

For more information

- [JASPERS main website](#)
- [JASPERS Annual Report 2015](#)
- [JASPERS Networking and Competence Centre](#)

This web-portal provides comprehensive information on capacity building activities past and planned, and access to JASPERS guidance documents, publications and learning materials, including e-presentations and proceedings

- [Data and statistics about JASPERS activities](#)
- [European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy](#)

For background on EU Regional Policy supported by JASPERS

Solid Waste BIKARAC II project (Croatia)



The Bikarac II project will improve waste management for the 110 000 people living in Sibenik-Knin County in Croatia, located in central part of northern Dalmatia. This will significantly improve the quality of life of local communities affected by the continued operation of uncontrolled waste disposal sites and will also bring the county in line with the requirements of the European Union.

JASPERS helped Croatia's Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund in preparing the project and the application for funding by providing timely methodological guidance, participating in technical discussions and reviewing the intermediate and final versions of the project documents. This assignment was completed in September 2015.



Workshop on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in projects

This international workshop was organised by the JASPERS Networking and Competence Centre and involved over 100 officials from 20 EU Member States, representatives of the European Commission and JASPERS partners.

The aim of the workshop, held in June 2015, was to present concrete experiences, highlight good practices and discuss challenges for the attainment of environmental objectives under the Water Framework Directive when preparing new projects for the 2014-2020 financial perspective.



The workshop was organised in close cooperation with DG Environment and DG Regional Policy and presented concrete case studies and good practices from selected Member States related to hydropower, river navigation, floods management and river restoration projects.

Disclaimer

The content of this document and any opinions expressed therein do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). It is addressed to the participants of the online course (MOOC) of the CoR on "EU budget and funding for EU regions and cities". Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the CoR is given prior notice and sent a copy.

Manuscript completed in October 2016

European Committee of the Regions | Directorate for Communication
Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99-101 | 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel | Belgium

www.cor.europa.eu

© European Union, 2016