European Commission

# REGIO**STARS**

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# Guide for Applicants

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# REGIOSTARS 2021

REGIOSTARS awards are the yearly competition organised by DG REGIO since 2008: it has become the Europe's label of excellence for EU-funded projects, which demonstrate innovative and inclusive approaches to regional development. Each year hundreds of projects compete in five categories: Smart Europe, Green Europe, Fair Europe, Urban Europe, and the topic of the year. By bringing about solutions to common challenges and tapping into the biggest opportunities, the REGIOSTARS have inspired regions to deliver evermore-impactful EU regional policy. We encourage applications from comparatively less-developed regions in Europe and from all programme areas. The on-line application platform is open from 9 February until 9 May 2021.

The REGIOSTARS are awarded to projects in five thematic categories (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, urban development and a topic of the year). In 2021, the REGIOSTARS are focussed on five areas that are crucial part of the EU's regional policy:

- **SMART Europe**: Increasing the competitiveness of local businesses in a digital world
- **GREEN Europe**: Green and resilient communities in urban and rural setting
- **FAIR Europe**: Fostering inclusion and anti-discrimination
- **URBAN Europe**: Promoting green, sustainable and circular food systems in functional urban areas
- **TOPIC OF THE YEAR**: Enhancing green mobility in the regions: European Year of Rail 2021

A panel of high-level academics in the respective fields will assess the submitted applications and select the winners.

In addition, the public will decide on its own winner among the finalists through a public on-line vote and award the Public choice award to one of the projects.

In 2021 the finalists are invited to training sessions on communication as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities in October. The winners in the five categories, and the winner of the public choice, will receive their well-deserved price at the festive REGIOSTARS ceremony, to take place in Dubrovnik, Croatia in December 2021.

The winners of the five categories will also get a paid media partnership worth EUR 5 000.

This Guide for Applicants provides you with all the necessary information to make your project a winner. Next to the detailed description of this year's award categories, the eligibility and award criteria, the guide contains practical information on the application process.

We are looking forward to receiving your project application!
The REGIOSTARS team

# Award categories 2021

## Category 1 – SMART EUROPE: Increasing the competitiveness of local businesses in a digital world

New technologies and increased global competitions call for deployment of new solutions in a digitalised world. Local businesses and SMEs more generally bring innovative solutions to challenges like climate change, resource efficiency and social cohesion and help spread this innovation throughout Europe's regions. The European Union, therefore, considers its 25 million small and medium enterprises as the backbone of the European economy and central in transitioning to a sustainable and digital economy.

The European Union is committed to become a global digital player, and to provide a fair and competitive digital economy, as laid out in the European Digital Strategy. A major objective is to provide a frictionless single market, where companies of all sizes and in any sector can compete on equal terms, and can develop, market and use digital technologies, products and services at a scale that boosts their productivity and global competitiveness, and where consumers can be confident that their rights are respected. With the EU SME strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe the EU has put forward three pillars for prioritisation: (1) Capacity-building and support for the transition to sustainability and digitalisation; (2) Reducing regulatory burden and improving market access; and (3) Improving access to financing. Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS 3) are one avenue to foster place-based economic transformation agendas.

We are looking for good projects that enhance digitalisation processes and are innovative approaches to implementing RIS strategies involving stakeholders. Projects that prepare European SMEs for competing in a globalised economy are welcome and may involve, for example, activities that develop new technology and products, improve innovation systems, build competitiveness through design and creative industries, foster social entrepreneurialism, enhance social and service innovation, support new business models and practice-based innovations. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of
> (i) reducing $CO_2$ (tons) per year through new business processes,
> (ii) contributing to relevant RIS 3
> (iii) increasing active presence of SME in non-European markets
> (iv) creating jobs in the digital industries.

Useful references
- S3 Platform: https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-guide
- Guide to RIS3
  https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/smart_specialisation/smart_ris3_2012.pdf
- European Digital Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/content/european-digital-strategy
- EU SME strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe:
  https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-sme-strategy-march-2020_en.pdf
- European Industrial Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-eu-industrial-strategy-march-2020_en.pdf

## Category 2 – GREEN EUROPE: Green and resilient communities in urban and rural settings

The European Union is acknowledging climate change and environmental degradation as existential threats to Europe and the world. In response, the European Green Deal prepares, a sustainable transition. Particularly, Europe needs a new growth strategy for a transformed, resource-efficient and competitive economy, avoiding net emissions of greenhouse gases and decoupling economic growth from resource use, while no person and no place is left behind.

In concretising the European Green Deal, the Commission has set out ambitious plans for a future energy system of a climate-neutral economy, which builds upon circular energy production and renewable energy sources and the potential of hydrogen as energy source. In line with that, the 2030 climate and energy framework targets at 40% cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, 32% share of renewable energy, and 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency. A key for meeting these targets is, how we reconstruct our cities – buildings, settlements, blue and green spaces, transport and energy infrastructure networks. Supportive measures include renovating single buildings and making them more energy-efficient; securing socially inclusive forms of energy provision in urban neighbourhoods, plugging renewable energy sources into urban energy grids, strategically planning for urban forms that minimise land consumption and soil sealing, and engineering CO2-efficient forms of regional transport and energy networks.

We are looking for good projects that contribute to architectural and energy efficiency as well as to green approaches for developing the built environment, transport and energy networks in Europe's regions and cities. These projects contribute to ecological sustainability, yet comply with the social and economic dimensions of sustainability alike. This may involve technological innovations but also innovative business and governance models to promoting green and resilient communities in urban as well as rural regions. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

(i) reducing $CO_2$ (tons) per year through energy efficiency measures in the built environment, including transport networks,
(ii) contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation, in urban or rural regions
(iii) impacting, through green measures, positively on social inclusion and cohesion
(iv) creating jobs in green industries
(v) increase energy efficiency in buildings.

Useful references:

- European Green Deal: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
- Green growth and circular economy: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/green-growth/index_en.htm
- EU 2030 Climate and Energy Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en

# Category 3 – FAIR EUROPE: Fostering inclusion and anti-discrimination

The European Union is based on the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. In line with that, the EU is taking huge efforts in combating discrimination of any kind and enhancing the equality of treatment of all Europeans, including gender equality, integration of migrants, and the accessibility for disabled persons.

Assured through the framework of the European Union Treaties and the Commission's policies for justice and fundamental rights (DG JUST), the EU is clear and sincere about fostering inclusion and condemns any form of discrimination and exclusion. Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights clarifies that any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation is against the values of a European Model of Society and shall be prohibited in the European Union.

We are looking for good projects that contribute to a more inclusive society at large, and non-discrimination of any person. These projects foster the fundamental rights of everybody in terms of inclusion and anti-discrimination. Particular importance is given to projects that support gender equality; thus, help closing the gender pay gap, advance gender balance in decision making, end gender-based violence and promote gender equality beyond the EU. This may involve activities on the labour market, in the education sector, in local communities and international networks. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

> (i) fostering active inclusion of discriminated persons or persons at the risk of discrimination
> (ii) easing the reintegration of disadvantaged persons into the labour market
> (iii) contributing to gender equality and diversity through management strategies
> (iv) creating jobs in course of integration work and anti-discrimination efforts.

Useful references:
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU: https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights_en
- DG JUST, Gender Equality: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality_en

## Category 4 – URBAN EUROPE: Promoting green and sustainable, circular food systems in functional urban areas

Resilient food systems are of fundamental importance to avoid loss of biodiversity, consumption of large amounts of natural resources and to avoid negative health impacts. In a globalised world the, European Union is committed to putting our food systems on a sustainable path and thereby to bring new opportunities for operators in the food value chain. The EUs Cohesion policy aims to make Europeans food systems fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly. European cities and their surroundings are leading urban food systems transformations.

With the Farm to Fork Strategy, which is at the heart of the European Green Deal, the European Commission puts effort into assuring a high level of food safety, and animal and plant health within the EU and ensures an effective internal market in support of local supply chains. The strategy further aims to raise demand for sustainable food and increase public awareness and develop new technologies. Annually around 88 million tonnes of food waste are generated. In a bid to address this the, EU calls in their EU waste legislation on member states to take action to reduce food waste on each stage of the supply chain. Transitioning to a sustainable food system means to have a neutral or positive environmental impact, to help to mitigate climate change, to reverse the loss of biodiversity, to ensure food security, nutrition and public health and to make sure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, sustainable food. It also aims to preserve affordability of food while generating fairer economic returns, fostering competitiveness of the EU supply sector and promoting fair trade. The three EU schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialities known as protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PDI) and traditional specialities guaranteed (TGS) are a further example of legal framework that support Europeans food industry and its original and organic agricultural products.

We are looking for good projects that contribute healthy, fair, environmentally-friendly, sustainable and resilient food systems across city-regions in Europe. We welcome projects that enhance local production cycles and incentivise innovative solutions in sustainable supply chain management in functional urban areas. This may involve innovations in urban food systems, promotion of sustainable organic food products, farm2fork concepts, food waste reduction and avoidance, local food services and markets, education and capacity building, marketing for organic and sustainable food. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

 (i) fostering active cooperation between urban and rural stakeholders
 (ii) contributing to the reduction of $CO_2$ emissions per year through food waste collection and green solutions in supply chain management
 (iii) impacting positively on rural or coastal communities in the urban functional area
 (iv) creating jobs in local food industries.

Useful references:
- Farm2Fork Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en
- Directive 2008/98/EC on waste: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018L0851
- European Union Food System:
  https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652058/EPRS_BRI(2020)652058_EN.pdf

# Category 5 – TOPIC OF THE YEAR: Enhancing green mobility in the regions: European Year of Rail 2021

The European Union acknowledges sustainable and safe modes of transport as a major pillar of Europe's future mobility and travel system. Rail is not only environmentally friendly and energy-efficient – it is also the only mode of transport to have almost continuously reduced its $CO_2$ emissions since 1990, at the same time as it increased transport volumes. The EU takes an effort in connecting people, regions and businesses across the EU and in supporting rail as a safe, energy-efficient, modern and sustainable modes of transport. It also showcases European engineering, heritage and culture.

2021 is the European Year of Rail, as it marks the first full year in which the rules agreed under the Fourth Railway Package will be implemented throughout the EU. The major goal of this package is to create a fully integrated European Railway Area in which the remaining institutional, legal and technical obstacles are removed. In essence, these rules are designed to open up the domestic passenger services market and reduce costs and the administrative burden for railway undertakings operating across the EU. Making 2021 the European Year of Rail is linked to the Europeans Commission's objective to achieve climate neutrality in 2050 as set out in the Green Deal. Today transport accounts for a quarter of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, making the sector instrumental in achieving climate neutrality. The ambition is to reduce emissions in the transport sector by 90% till 2050, through for example modernisation or shifting 75% of inland freight carried by road today onto rail and inland waterways as highlighted in the sustainable and smart mobility strategy. Rail plays a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions as it, emits far less $CO_2$ than equivalent travel by road or air. The TEN-T policies have contributed to largely electrifying the sectors, and thus reducing emissions.

We are looking for good projects that contribute to safer, and more sustainable mobility systems to improve European connectivity for its businesses and citizens. Particular importance is given to projects that improve regional and local mobility solutions through investment in new or upgraded rail connections. This may involve projects that support multi-modal nodes, support local eco-friendly connectivity or modernise services and infrastructure. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

    (i) impacting positively on local and regional mobility, in particular in areas that affect passengers directly

    (ii) contributing to regional mobility development plans

    (iii) reducing $CO_2$ emissions per year through mobility measures

    (iv) enhancing multi-modality by linking rail solutions to other green mobility modes.

Useful references
- European Year of Rail: https://europa.eu/year-of-rail/index_en
- European TEN-T Policy: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t_en
- Fourth Railway Package: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en
- European Green Deal: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

## Crosscutting theme – A EUROPE CLOSER TO THE CITIZENS:

In an effort to bring Europe closer to the citizens the selection of projects will also consider citizen engagement and empowerment strategies, with a special attention paid to youth involvement. The Regiostars Jury thus will examine projects against their design and implementation allowing for citizen's participation or allowing for bottom-up approaches that involve local communities. Projects are appreciated who can demonstrate a clear added-value directly or indirectly for Europe's citizens.

# Eligibility and Award Criteria

**Eligibility criteria**

All applications for the REGIOSTARS Awards shall meet the following **eligibility criteria**:

a) The application shall be submitted via the REGIOSTARS online platform no later than 9 May 2021, 23:59:59 CET.

b) Applications must be in one of the official EU languages.

c) The application shall include an endorsement letter of the relevant managing authority. The endorsement letter – a filled endorsement form signed by the Head of the Managing Authority or an email with the equivalent information from the Head of the Managing Authority confirming endorsement – should be uploaded as a PDF together with the application. (Please note that it is possible to submit up to five projects per programme, the Managing Authority is responsible for respecting the limit.)

d) The application shall refer to a project, which has received EU co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund, or a project which has received EU funding under Interreg IPA-CBC or Interreg ENI-CBC programmes, starting earliest at 1 January 2007.

e) The project must clearly refer to one of the five award categories of 2021. The same project cannot be submitted for several categories.

f) The project should be either fully implemented or should be in a sufficiently mature state for the jury to assess it (i.e. physical implementation should be progressed enough to demonstrate achievement of objectives).

**Award criteria**

All eligible applications will be assessed by the REGIOSTARS jury against the following **award criteria**:

a) Innovative character of the project in the selected award category. Projects shall not be "business as usual", but should demonstrate new approaches, new organisational methods or the development of new (or significantly) improved goods or services. The criteria for measuring the innovative character for each category are better detailed in the dedicated section of the category.

b) Good results and impact of the project in relation to its initial objectives and regional context. Projects shall demonstrate their impact on the thematic area, territory and programme area concerned. They should show their results against the initially set targets and objectives, and especially the state of play in the regional context in which they have been developed. Projects, which are not yet fully finalised, shall describe the results achieved and expected impacts, based on measurable forward planning.

c) Financial sustainability of the project. Projects shall demonstrate their financial sustainability beyond the lifespan of the (initial) EU-funded project period and their future as a self-standing initiative or project.

d) Transferability and possibility to replicate the project in other regions, especially lesser developed ones. The project shall demonstrate that it represents good practice in a wider (EU) context and that it inspired/inspires other regions. The project should also show good ways of communicating its goals and results.

e) Citizen engagement & involvement. The project shall demonstrate that during its design and/or implementation it has involved civil society and citizens, with a special attention to young people, in a meaningful manner. The project should show the benefits that derived from the involvement.

# Practical Guide to the REGIOSTARS 2021

## 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 innovative, EU-funded projects, which demonstrate new approaches in regional development. The awards scheme encompasses five different thematic topics that change every year. Submitted projects shall fall under this thematic focus.

### 1.2. What is this year's thematic focus?
The five thematic award categories for 2021 are:
- **Category 1) SMART Europe**: Increasing the competitiveness of local businesses in a digital world
- **Category 2) GREEN Europe**: Green and resilient communities in urban and rural setting
- **Category 3) FAIR Europe**: Fostering inclusion and anti-discrimination
- **Category 4) URBAN Europe**: Promoting green, sustainable and circular food systems in functional urban areas
- **Category 5) TOPIC OF THE YEAR**: Enhancing green mobility in the regions: European Year of Rail 2021

A more detailed description of the categories and an indication of the projects that could be relevant for meeting the award criteria are presented at the beginning of this Guide. Projects shall thematically refer to one of these categories. 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), the Interreg IPA-CBC or Interreg ENI-CBC programmes (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, European Neighbourhood Instrument).
In terms of funding periods, projects from both the 2007-2013 and the 2014-2020 period are eligible.
In addition, projects and initiatives that combine ERDF or CF with the other ESI funds (ESF or EMFF or EAFRD) with directly managed EU funds (e.g. Horizon 2020, LIFE, COSME, CEF, EaSI, etc.) or with EFSI are welcome.

Eligibility criteria are presented in the second section of this Guide ('Eligibility and Award Criteria').

**1.4. Can I submit a project that started before 2007?**
No. The starting date of the project must be earliest 1 January 2007.

**1.5. Can I submit a recently completed project?**
Yes. However, please consider that the project should be sufficiently mature (i.e. in order for it to demonstrate progress in the achievement of the original objectives).

**1.6. Is there a maximum number of applications?**
Yes. A maximum of five applications per operational programme can be submitted.
The managing authority of the operational programme ensures with its endorsement that this maximum number is respected.

**1.7. Is my project mature enough to be submitted?**
The independent jury is going to assess your project based on results already achieved. They will not be able to award your innovative ideas in case you cannot provide evidence they work. If, for example, your project is still in the phase of public procurements, we recommend you to wait with your submission for a next edition of the REGIOSTARS with an appropriate category.


## 2. How do I submit my project?

**2.1. How does it work in a nutshell?**
You fill in the on-line application and upload an endorsement letter from your managing authority by the below deadline. Endorsement letter may be in the form of the filled in template available on the online 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 online platform: http://www.regiostarsawards.eu

**2.3. When is the deadline for submission?**
9 May 2021 23:59:59 CET

**2.4. Who should submit the application?**
Applications must be submitted by the project promoter (= the organization who is/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 online platform. Also, an e-mail 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?**
The application form is available in English. However, you can submit your project in any other official EU language.
If needed, you can get free of charge a machine translation into English via this web page: https://ec.europa.eu/info/resources-partners/machine-translation-public-administrations-mtec_en. Please be also aware that in case a translation from the original language to English is not provided the jury will work based on a simple machine translation.

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

You give either the geo-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). For rail projects simply give the address of the project promoter.

We will use this information 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 Awards?**

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 Word format. However, applications have to be submitted directly via the REGIOSTARS online platform: www.regiostarsawards.eu

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

Every applicant can save his or her progress at any stage in order to complete or correct the application at any time before submitting the application or before the end of the deadline. The application will only be finalised once you click on 'submit'.

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

The short, catchy project description requested under STEP 1 - summary of information on the application platform or under point I/3 in the Word application form will be used for communication purposes. Please provide here a description which demonstrates to the wider public in an easily understandable way why your project is exceptional and how it contributes to improving the life of European citizens. This section of your application form is going to be used without alteration, e.g. for the purposes of the Public choice award as a short description of your project.

Under STEP 3 - description of project on the application platform or point II/1 in the Word application form you can 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 itself. These pictures should not be less than 300 dpi or 10 MB.

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

After the end of application period, 9 May, all the project applications will go through an eligibility check. Only the non-eligible projects will be informed about the results of the eligibility check no later than 15 July. All projects passing the eligibility check will be published on the REGIOSTARS

online platform. Finalists will be announced in early September, and winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

**2.14. How does the public vote work?**
Once the jury as made the selection of the finalists for each category, an online voting tool will appear on the competition platform. You then have the chance to vote for your favourite project among the finalists. The project with the most votes receives the Public choice award.

**2.15. Who can I contact if I have questions?**
Please send your enquiries about the application process by e-mail to: contact@regiostarsawards.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 the Commissioner for regional policy with all finalist projects in December (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. Secondly, 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 (programme 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. 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 2007-2013 programme has ceased to exist or changed, the managing authority that is in charge of the 2014-2020 programme (that succeeds the 2007-2013 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 (2007-2013 and 2014-2020) cover the same territory and in essence the same themes, there should nevertheless be only five projects presented for the entire timespan since 2007.

### 3.8. Is there a list of all managing authorities?
Yes: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/managing-authorities/

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

### 4.1. How does the jury evaluation process look like?
Applications will be examined by an independent jury taking into account the award criteria. Only applications which satisfy the first phase of the evaluation (eligibility) will be admitted to the second phase (pre-selection of finalists/award by the jury).
Please carefully read also the guide for applicants in the sections related to the eligibility criteria and award criteria for further details.

### 4.2. Who sits in the jury?
The jury is composed of 15 high-level academic members, which are nominated by the Commission. Members work in teams of three (based on their expertise in a 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?
To start, all finalists will be asked to create a promotional video of their project. More detailed information on how to create the video and the timeline will be provided to the finalists. This video will be presented during the ceremony and published online. Non-responsiveness or unavailability to cooperate can be a reason for the European Commission to retract the awarding decision.

All finalists are invited to take part in
- the training session and communication opportunities during the European Week of Regions and Cities in October; and
- the Award Ceremony in December, in Dubrovnik.

All finalists will automatically take part in the online voting for the public choice award.

Also, project descriptions will become part of the online database of best practices on the InfoRegio website (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects). This database is used when selecting projects for Commissioners visits, interviews, good practice examples in magazines or press articles, communication campaigns on social media, etc.

Costs for the participation in the above mentioned events are borne by the Commission.

### 4.4. What happens if my project wins?
Winners will receive the REGIOSTARS awards at the Award Ceremony in Dubrovnik in December. The project manager and a representative from the managing authority will receive a REGIOSTARS trophy and a certificate from the European Commissioner for Regional Policy.

The project promoters are encouraged to host small, celebratory events at local level following the Awards ceremony.

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

This year's REGIOSTARS award ceremony will take place on 2$^{nd}$ December during the annual INFORM EU meeting.

***Please note that due to the current COVID-19 crisis, any event referred in this Guide may be organised in an online format.***