

How to Access EU Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative

Briefing - 13th April 2020

1. What is the European Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII)?

Page | 1

The CRII aims to help EU Member States address the consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic by mobilising €37 billion in the coming weeks: €8 billion of liquidity immediately available + €29 billion of unspent EU budget money for 2020 (ESF, ERDF, etc). The CRII is not new money but re-directing and frontloading existing money to focus on the consequences of the pandemic and in more flexible ways. It applies for expenditure launched as of 1 February 2020.

2. What can CRII be used for?

The CRII is [delivered through existing EU Funds such as the European Social Fund \(ESF\) or the European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#). As such, they are delivered through the same [Managing Authorities](#) (departments, agencies, etc) who implement such funds at national or regional level. CRII provides the Managing Authorities with [far more flexibility in the use of the funds](#): transfers between different funds and regions, thematic concentration levels and the possibility for EU funds to cover 100% (i.e. no need for national/regional co-financing) of projects funded. This allows Member States to be able to use the EU funds for their most urgent needs.

ESF and ERDF's scope already covers many types of investment which are relevant for care and support services for persons with disabilities and can be used to help you respond to the pandemic.

For instance, the [European Social Fund](#) can be used

- to help disability services purchase personal protective equipment and sanitising products for their staff and service users; or recruit
- to support the recruitment of additional staff to ensure the provision of care services during this pandemic. This can include, for instance, recruiting additional care staff, fast-tracking recruitment procedures, develop insertion programmes into social care services or recruit non-standard professionals to help sterilise facilities and reduce outbreak;
- to support the transition to new forms of services, such as tele-care, distance learning and distance support, as well as other new forms of working arrangements. This can include expenses related to training workers or buying/renting necessary equipment (computers, software, etc)
- to support the delivery of community-based services for the most vulnerable, covering costs such as homecare services, mental health support, counselling, etc (including covering salaries, travel costs, etc)

The [European Regional Development Fund](#) can be used

- to finance working capital in the broadest sense to help Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) maintain their productive capacities and investment levels. Many Disability Services are included in the [EU's definition of SME](#).
- to support health and social infrastructure,(...) reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services;
- to provide support for social enterprises
- to invest in education, training and vocational training projects

Page | 2

3. I'm interested. What should I do?

The European Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives allows managing authorities to re-allocate the EU funds -far quicker and far more flexibly- to the areas they consider to be a priority. Generally speaking, it remains up to the Managing Authorities to decide how they wish to use this instrument. Yet, the CRII also provides them with more budgetary capacity and flexibility to cover the short-term funding needs of social care and support services in the fields they wish to support. In short, Managing Authorities can -and are recommended by the European Commission- to use the CRII to provide funding to care and support services for persons with disabilities.

Step 1. Develop a clear “project” proposal : Identify precisely which areas you wish to ask for funding, why you need such funding, how much you would need and which EU funding programmes you believe would be suitable (see above examples re. ESF and ERDF). EASPD's helpdesk can provide advice.

Step 2. Identify and engage constructively with your Managing Authority with your project or projects proposals at the earliest stage possible. Managing Authorities will be overwhelmed with requests so it is important to already have as many proposals and solutions available to them as possible, as well as to refer to the flexibility and recommendations included in the [letters sent to all EU countries by European Commissioners Schmit and Ferreira](#) to inform them of the support they can get. The European Commission has also set-up a Helpdesk to support Managing Authorities in the use of the CRII.

Step 3. Continue negotiating and pushing to benefit from opportunities in both ESF and ERDF. For instance, don't forget to push for SME support from ERDF if you find yourself within the [EU's definition](#).

Step 4. Let us know of your experience so we can share what's feasible with others and request advice/support from the EU Commission; through our contacts with the national desks and experts

For more information, please contact EASPD's COVID Helpdesk: covidhelpdesk@easpd.eu