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Commission



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REGIO**STARS**

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# Guide for Applicants

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[www.regiostarsawards.eu](http://www.regiostarsawards.eu)

Content

Award categories 2020

Eligibility and Award criteria

Practical guidance to the REGIOSTARS 2020

# The REGIOSTARS 2020

Since 2008, the European Commission hands out annual REGIOSTARS awards to EU-funded projects which demonstrate excellence and new approaches in regional development. With the goal of inspiring other regions and project managers across Europe, participating projects are in the spotlight of communication activities at European level.

The REGIOSTARS are awarded to projects in five thematic categories (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, urban development and a topic of the year).

In 2020, the REGIOSTARS focus on five areas that are crucial for the future of EU regional policy: industrial transition for a smart Europe, circular economy for a green Europe, skills & education for a digital Europe, citizens engagement for cohesive European cities and youth empowerment for cooperation across borders - 30 years of Interreg (the topic of the year). An independent jury of high-level academics will assess the submitted project applications and crown the winners.

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

The on-line application platform is open from 2 March until 9 May 2020.

The winners in the five categories, and the winner of the public choice, will receive their well-deserved prize at the festive REGIOSTARS awards ceremony, to take place in Brussels in October 2020.

**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, this Guide contains a practical handbook to guide you through the process.

We are looking forward to receiving your project application!

The REGIOSTARS team

# Award categories 2020

## Category 1 – SMART GROWTH: Industrial transition for a smart Europe

Globalisation, new technologies, digitalisation and the transition to a climate neutral, circular economy are radically changing our societies and economies. Tackling these challenges calls for urgent deployment of new solutions and requires profound, systemic transformations. The process of industrial transition provides enormous opportunities for Europe's cities and regions, but reaping them requires substantial investment in advanced manufacturing, people's skills and talents, as well as research and innovation, in particular for SMEs.

Many European regions are still addressing the challenges of job losses linked to the decline of traditional industries. These regions often have a strong heritage of carbon-intensive industries and can therefore face a lack of appropriate skills-base, high labour costs and deindustrialization. At the same time, they need to adapt their economies to the challenges of the ongoing fourth industrial revolution with its complex, digital and customised systems of production.

We are looking for good projects within smart specialisation strategies, driving industrial modernisation and/or transition and/or create new business opportunities through research & development of new products and processes. They shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

- (i) business innovation and technological change that is beneficial for the region, or
- (ii) transformation of the human capital and the skills base of a region with, supporting its smart specialisation priorities, or
- (iii) supporting an innovation eco-system in the region and fostering strategic business areas that emerged in the smart specialisation entrepreneurial discovery process.

### Useful references:

- EU – Smart specialisation platform: <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/industrial-transition>
- EU – Regions in Industrial Transition: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/brochure/Industrial\\_transition\\_no\\_region\\_left\\_behind\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/brochure/Industrial_transition_no_region_left_behind_en.pdf)
- OECD – Regions in Industrial Transition: <https://www.oecd.org/publications/regions-in-industrial-transition-c76ec2a1-en.htm>

## Category 2 – SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: Circular economy for a green Europe

The European Union has formulated ambitious long-term goals to achieve a climate-neutral and circular economy by 2050. These goals come with significant investment at the regional and local level, making cohesion policy a key tool to accompany Member States and regions in their transition to a climate-neutral and circular economy.

The EU has been a frontrunner in the circular economy transition, which is focused on making the European economy more sustainable while creating jobs, reducing our dependence on resource imports and contributing to tackling climate change. In 2015, the European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Action Plan, which aimed to stimulate Europe's transition and to support measures changing the full product lifecycle to go beyond the narrow focus on the end-of-life stage. The revised legislative framework on waste (2018) sets out new long-term targets for recycling. The von der Leyen Commission continues these efforts through the European Green Deal and committing to the adoption of a new Circular Economy Action Plan and an Industrial Strategy mobilising all sectors and value chains to develop more sustainable and inclusive growth models, ensuring efficient and clean resource cycles.

We are looking for good projects that target at better connecting systems to create an effective, growth and employment driven circular economy. This may involve designing better products, reducing process waste, optimizing product life cycles, improving waste collection, encouraging recycling, improving infrastructure, developing markets for recycled materials, while shifting investments away from potential lock-ins into unsustainable solutions. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

- (i) creating local and high-skilled jobs and supporting the build-up of new innovative, resource-efficient businesses involving local private, public, and civic actors in developing a more circular economy, or
- (ii) developing new efforts to reusing, repairing or recycling products and their components, restoring materials or preserving resources for clean products and services, or
- (iii) transferability of circular economy solutions to other cities and regions.

### Useful references

- Sustainability and circular economy: [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/sustainability/circular-economy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/sustainability/circular-economy_en)
- Green growth and circular economy: [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/green-growth/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/green-growth/index_en.htm)
- Implementation of the circular economy action plan: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>
- Report on the Circular Economy Action Plan implementation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0190&from=EN>
- Circular economy – new action plan to increase recycling and reuse of products in the EU: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12095-A-new-Circular-Economy-Action-Plan>

## Category 3 - INCLUSIVE GROWTH: Skills & education for a digital Europe

EU Cohesion Policy makes a key contribution to making Europe fit for the digital age, in particular through significant financial allocations from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), totalling around EUR 20 billion over the current investment period 2014-2020. Investments in digitalisation should also contribute to reducing social and territorial inequalities, so to overcome the digital divide both socially and geographically. They should include support to the improvement of access to e-government, e-services, digital skills, fostering the roll-out of broadband in disadvantaged, remote and rural areas neighbourhoods with a particular focus on marginalised communities.

In 2018, the European Commission adopted a Digital Education Action Plan including 11 actions which are aimed at supporting the use of new technologies and supporting digital competences in education. These comprise the areas of first, making better use of technology for teaching and learning, e.g. by supporting connectivity of schools or qualifications, second, developing digital competences and skills in higher education, open science, cyber security and entrepreneurial skills. Third, the plan targets the improvement of education through better data analysis and foresight by studying ICT and building on Artificial Intelligence. The broader goals of digitalisation are also reflected in the European data strategy and the Digital Single Market strategy.

We are looking for good projects that showcase efforts to prepare European citizens and businesses for the digital age. Projects of interests include local and regional initiatives that focus on skills development for the digital era, contributing to a more cohesive, inclusive and equal society. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

- (i) using digital technology for teaching, training and learning to create new job opportunities in disadvantaged, remote and rural areas, or
- (ii) developing digital competencies and skills for marginalised communities with limited access to training facilities, so to overcome digital divide, or
- (iii) developing capacity for the use of digital technologies in government, services of general interest and businesses aiming to improve access to e-services for marginalised communities.

Useful references:

- Digital Education Plan: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en) ; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0022&from=EN>
- European Data Strategy: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy_en)
- Digital Single Market Strategy: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/shaping-digital-single-market>

## Category 4 – URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Citizens engagement for cohesive European cities

In her political guidelines for the new Commission, President Ursula von der Leyen underlined the importance of European citizens to play a leading and active part in building the future of our Union. Building on the experiences with integrated and place-based approaches in 2014-2020, the Commission proposed a new crosscutting policy objective: 'Policy Objective 5 - Europe closer to citizens', to support tailor-made investment strategies of regions, cities and local communities addressing their diverse challenges and tapping into their unique development potentials.

In Cohesion Policy, the partnership principle is part of its DNA but there is a growing consensus on the need to “do more” towards involving citizens. The recent Eurobarometer from April 2019 suggests that 77 % of respondents consider that social accountability in their country can be improved. The quality of institutions and administrative capacity are crucial for furthering inclusive societies in cities and regions. Citizen engagement is an important tool to improve institutional quality, trust and ownership. On the local level many project examples across the EU e.g. integrated territorial investments in cities, Urban Innovative Actions or Interreg cross-border cooperation have shown the relevance of Cohesion Policy to achieve good governance. Citizens can play a crucial role in identifying development challenges or actively intervening in urban development.

We are looking for good projects that set measures aiming at the involvement of citizens in development projects with an inclusive approach. Projects of interest include those that address the communicative/participatory elements accompanying urban transformation projects, including multi-level governance models to involve citizens and stakeholders. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

- (i) co-creative and citizen-self-responsible elements of urban and regional development and planning, or
- (ii) facilitating involvement of citizens and civil society in Cohesion Policy and integrating disadvantaged groups of any kind in participatory activities, or
- (iii) improving social accountability and creating constructive dialogue with citizens in thriving for good and participatory governance.

### Useful references:

- Citizen Engagement Festival: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/news/2019/12/12-06-2019-cohesion-policy-showcasing-at-the-2nd-citizen-engagement-festival](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2019/12/12-06-2019-cohesion-policy-showcasing-at-the-2nd-citizen-engagement-festival)
- Engaging Citizens for Good Governance in Cohesion Policy: Narrative of the high-level conference: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/conferences/citizens\\_good\\_governance/narrative.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/conferences/citizens_good_governance/narrative.pdf)
- Europe for Citizens: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/citizenship-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/citizenship-programme_en)
- The citizen's city: <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/thefutureofcities/the-citizens-city#the-chapter>

## Category 5 – TOPIC OF THE YEAR 2020: Youth empowerment for cooperation across borders - 30 years of Interreg

Thirty years of Interreg are reason to celebrate for the European Union and its citizens. Interreg helped to overcome borders in Europe. One of the main achievements has been to bring together people of cities, regions, Member States and neighbouring states closer to each other. Interreg projects have contributed to the initiation of new initiatives and collaborations across borders and supported trust-building between citizens and institutions. Interreg particularly opened new horizons for the most mobile European citizens: the young people. More than during any other life-course than when becoming adult and founding family, people intensively switch their place of living; also across borders. Young generations are the future of the European Union, and through various EU initiatives have profited from intercultural experiences, such as through the Interreg Volunteer Youth Initiative. In Europe, this is for seeking new options of (higher) education, employment, or life experiences with a European spirit.

The EU conceives its young people and their talents as the most precious resource. To achieve the EU's Youth Strategy goals the Commission from 2010-2018 cooperated closely with Member States. With the New Youth Strategy the Commission continues its efforts through promoting mutual learning experiences, Future National Activities Planners, EU Youth Dialogue, EU Youth Platform and by setting up the position of an EU Youth Coordinator. Interreg contributed to the implementation of this broader goals by facilitating youth mobility, promoting transnational networks, educating young people and building trust and confidence across borders.

We are looking for good projects that demonstrate the unique strengths of Interreg in bringing people, business and local and regional communities together, be it on cross-border, transnational, or pan-European scale. This involves voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity, and mutual understanding. In the light of 30 years of Interreg, projects that build upon a long history of cooperation across borders are particularly welcome. Explicitly, projects shall demonstrate innovation in terms of

- (i) establishing contacts and long-term relationships between the youth across borders and contributing to intercultural exchange through language and cultural learning, or
- (ii) empowering young people to collaborate across borders reducing obstacles of a social, economic, or territorial dimension (for young people), or
- (iii) arriving at integrative solutions that would not be possible solely within national, regional, or local borders and fostering people-to-people contact for the youth.

### Useful references

- 30 years of INTEREG: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/interreg30years/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/interreg30years/)
- EU Youth Strategy: [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en)
- Interreg Volunteer Youth: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/interreg-volunteers-initiative/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/interreg-volunteers-initiative/)
- Interreg Youth: <https://www.interregyouth.com/interreg>



# Eligibility and Award Criteria

1. 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 2020, 23:59:59 CET.
- b) Applications must be in one of the official EU languages.
- c) The maximum number of applications per operational or cooperation programme is 5.
- d) The application shall include an endorsement letter of the relevant managing authority.
- e) 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.
- f) The project must clearly refer to one of the five award categories of 2020. The same project cannot be submitted for several categories.
- g) 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).

2. 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 impacts. Projects shall demonstrate their impact on the thematic area and territory concerned and show their results against the initially set targets and objectives, as well as against 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. 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.

# Practical Guide to the REGIOSTARS 2020

## **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 2020 are:

- Category 1 (Smart growth) – Industrial transition for a smart Europe
- Category 2 (Sustainable growth) – Circular economy for a green Europe
- Category 3 (Inclusive growth) – Skills & education for a digital Europe
- Category 4 (Urban development) – Citizens engagement for cohesive European cities
- Category 5 (Topic of the year 2020) – Youth empowerment for cooperation across borders - 30 years of Interreg

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 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. *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 2020 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 form, to be filled in by the managing authority. It is available on the application platform or in part III of the Word application form.

### **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](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 rivers, simply give the name of the river without coordinates.

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](http://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?**

Yes. Every applicant can save his or her progress at any stage in order to complete or correct the application at any time 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 the “impact of the project” under STEP 4 - description of the project on the application platform or point II/5 in the Word application form?**

Please submit here a description of the activities and results that can be attributed to your submitted 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?**

Within a few days after submission, your project (title, short project description, photo) will appear on our website. We will then inform you about the results about the eligibility check. After the jury meeting, we will contact all finalists and winners. If you haven't heard from us by end of July, your project didn't make it into the final.

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

Once we receive the list of finalists from the jury (July), an online voting tool will appear on our website. You then have the chance to vote for your favorite project. 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](mailto: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 and ensuring that a maximum of 5 projects per programme are submitted;
- Participating in a meeting of the Commissioner for regional policy with all finalist projects in July and at the awards ceremony in October (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/](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 eligibility and 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?**

All finalists are invited to participate in

- a meeting of the finalists with the Commissioner for regional policy combined with a training (July); and
- the Award Ceremony in Brussels (October).

Both finalists and winners will also 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](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.

A representative for each of the finalist projects and the communication officers of the respective programmes (= the programmes with finalist projects) will be invited to a special training session in July.

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

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

All winners will be contacted during July-August by us. To start, we will produce a promotional video for their project. Please note that, in this case, close cooperation with the production company will be required, as well as on site presence for two days of filming between the period of July and September. This video will be presented during the ceremony and published online, followed by a promotional campaign. Non-responsiveness or unavailability to cooperate can be a reason for the European Commission to retract the awarding decision.

Winners will receive the REGIOSTARS awards at the Award Ceremony in Brussels in October. 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 Commission will also invite the winners to present their project during a dedicated press-event.

Last, but not least, project promoters are encouraged to host small, celebratory events on the day of the awards ceremony. If film crews are sent to your local event to be featured during the ceremony in Brussels, close cooperation and support will be required.

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

This year's REGIOSTARS award ceremony will take place during the annual European Week of Regions and Cities ([www.regions-and-cities.europa.eu](http://www.regions-and-cities.europa.eu)). The exact date will be announced on this site and the REGIOSTARS website as well.