

FUNDING SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

Discover how the **Apulia** Regional Programme ERDF-ESF 2021-2027 is driving sustainable urban mobility and inclusive economic growth through strategic investments in zero-emission transport, digital solutions, and enhanced public transport services.

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As many know, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) are key components of the European Union's Cohesion Policy — a policy that aims to enhance the economic well-being of regions within the EU and reduce regional disparities.

The ERDF transfers money from wealthier European regions to invest in the infrastructure and services of underdeveloped areas. Meanwhile, the ESF+ supports the creation of more and better jobs across the EU by co-funding national, regional, and local projects that improve employment levels, job quality, and labour market inclusivity in member states and their regions.

Within this framework, the "Apulia Regional Programme ERDF-ESF+ 2021-2027" (CCI 2021IT16FFPR002) was approved.



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The Apulia Regional Programme

The Apulia Regional Programme ERDF-ESF 2021-2027 aligns with key European strategies that focus on ecological and digital transitions and the European Pillar of Social Rights. These strategies are the foundation for inclusive and sustainable economic growth that protects the environment and preserves opportunities for current and future generations.

At the national level, the Apulia Regional Programme embraces the priorities indicated by the Partnership Agreement (PA) 2021-2027 and works in synergy with the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and other national programmes financed by the Cohesion Policy. This coordination ensures maximum complementarity between interventions, prevents overlaps or gaps, fosters collaboration across various institutional levels, and encourages broad participation from potential beneficiaries and territories.

In the area of sustainable urban mobility, the Apulia Regional Programme ERDF-ESF 2021-2027 features Priority Axis III, "Sustainable Urban Mobility" (ERDF). This axis aims to improve air quality, particularly in urban areas, by promoting sustainable and zero-emission mobility forms, including collective, shared, cycling, pedestrian, and intermodal transport.

To achieve this, the specific objective "Promote sustainable multimodal urban mobility as part of the transition towards a net zero carbon economy (SO 2.8)" will be pursued through the following actions:

- 3.1 "Interventions to promote sustainable multimodal urban mobility"
- 3.2 "Infrastructural and technological interventions for traffic management and fare integration"

A multidimensional strategy

The Programme's strategy places a strong emphasis on developing urban mobility. The key actions to be implemented include:

- Upgrading public transport services (in Italian: TPL — Trasporto Pubblico Locale) by replacing vehicles with zero-emission ones in urban, suburban, and metropolitan areas, particularly through Bus Rapid Transit (BRT);
- Promoting soft mobility infrastructure and services, such as urban and suburban cycling and pedestrian paths;
- Expanding Mobility as a Service (MaaS) to better match travel options with demand;
- Modernising interchange nodes between urban and extra-urban mobility using digital solutions (Intelligent Transportation Systems — ITS).

Specifically, the Apulia Region plans to build on the strategy initiated with the previous ERDF 2014-2020 programming. This includes modernising rolling stock and creating networks of cycling and pedestrian paths. Additionally, efforts to enhance intermodal interchange nodes through digitalisation and the expansion of information services and MaaS will be supported.

As for cycling, the Region will support the extension and completion of cycle routes of regional and national interest within urban, suburban, and contiguous urban areas. It will also facilitate the creation of cycling and pedestrian paths connecting railway



Bike-friendly electric buses promote low-emission, multimodal transport

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cities in motion

stations and points of interest (e.g., hospitals, universities, schools, public markets).

The promotion and encouragement of using scheduled public transport will be stimulated by introducing an integrated single ticket, making it possible to simply and conveniently plan any type of itinerary.

Lastly, in the context of zero-emission mobility, the Apulia Region also intends to encourage the creation of a public charging network for electric public transport vehicles.

the liveability of urban areas and promoting sustainable mobility forms, the Region plans to allocate approximately 4,411,764.71 euros.

These systems will provide essential support for efficiently managing integrated services for regulation, control, information dissemination, and mobility planning.

The ultimate goal is to create a digital network to better monitor fleets and stops, allowing cities to keep citizens and end-users up-to-date on the timing and availability of public transport.

One of Apulia's newly-added urban bike lanes

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Interventions to come

Within Priority 3 "Sustainable Urban Mobility" of the PR Apulia ERDF 2021/2027, the Apulia Region plans to launch a public call with a financial allocation of 15,620,000.00 euros. This funding is aimed at municipalities within its territory, either individually or in association, to create networks of cycling and pedestrian paths within municipal or inter-municipal areas (neighbouring municipalities).

As for infrastructural and technological interventions for traffic management and fare integration, the Region intends to finance projects that make scheduled public transport more accessible and flexible. These interventions will allow users to know in real-time the various travel alternatives, from the fastest to the most economical, including the most environmentally sustainable options. The financial allocation for these projects is expected to be 4,411,764.71 euros.

Additionally, to modernise interchange nodes between urban and extra-urban mobility using digital solutions (ITS) for public transport stops, thereby enhancing

