

2020

JASPERS

JOINT ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT PROJECTS IN EUROPEAN REGIONS



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Our investments support sustainability everywhere, including in the oceans, where the rich diversity of coral reefs is threatened by human activity and climate change. Coral reefs are an essential ecosystem. About 25% of all ocean fish depend on them. They protect the coasts and provide a source of income for millions of people. For a long time, their degradation was ignored. Now they symbolise the shift in thinking needed to stop climate change. That's why they deserve a place on the covers of our major reports this year.

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JASPERS (JOINT ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT PROJECTS IN EUROPEAN REGIONS) is a partnership between the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The Commission's policy expertise and the EIB's project experience, combined in JASPERS, are available as a free resource for beneficiaries of:

- European Structural and Investment Funds;
- Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funds;
- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds.

JASPERS advises on strategies, programmes and projects with the aim of promoting growth and paving the way to a smarter, greener and more connected Europe.

JASPERS is managed by the EIB, and supervised by a steering committee of representatives of its partner institutions. This committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction for JASPERS, deciding on major policy issues relating to JASPERS and providing guidance on significant operational issues.

AN EXCEPTIONAL YEAR OF CRISIS RESPONSE FOR JASPERS

Upon the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, **JASPERS' staff of 115 people**—based in Luxembourg, Brussels, Bucharest, Vienna, Warsaw and Sofia—**worked with public authorities in beneficiary countries** to identify the areas where JASPERS support could enhance capacity to adapt to the exceptional circumstances.

Projects addressing health, emergency response, energy, research, environment and climate change witnessed (and will likely continue witnessing) an increase in demand for assistance.

90% of JASPERS counterparts gave a positive assessment of JASPERS support in 2020, a year in which **JASPERS' achievements were particularly noteworthy against the backdrop of an extremely difficult global situation.**

TABLE 1: **JASPERS PERFORMANCE IN 2020**

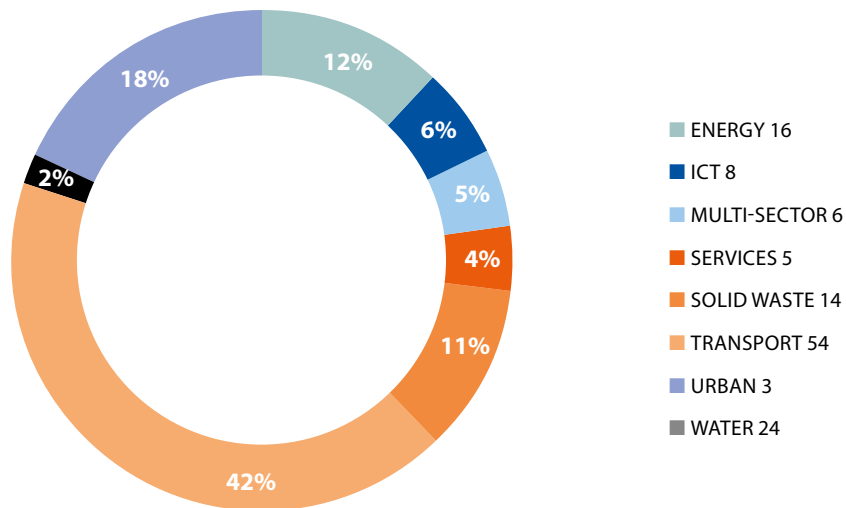
	Completed assignments	Ongoing assignments	Grand total	Assignments created in 2020
Advisory	88	398	486	111
CEF 2-Blending	3	16	19	9
ESIF	74	328	402	94
IPA II	6	25	31	4
Serbia NP	4	29	33	4
SRSS*	1		1	
Appraisal	43	9	52	39
ESIF	43	9	52	39
Grand total	131	407	538	150

*During the year, JASPERS also completed one advisory assignment for the EC Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS).

JASPERS made progress in identifying a pipeline of projects for the coming years: **143 of the assignments in its portfolio as at 31 December 2020 support initiatives belonging to the 2021–2027 programming period.**

In 2020, the European Commission approved financial contributions to 49 major projects supported by JASPERS at project preparation stage or appraised by JASPERS, with total project costs of €19.2 billion and €7.1 billion of EU grant support

FIGURE 1: ASSIGNMENTS COMPLETED BY JASPERS IN 2020 DISTRIBUTION BY SECTOR





MODERNISATION AND REHABILITATION OF HOSPITALS

JASPERS supported the preparation of a project for modernising and constructing a group of hospital units, respecting the tight deadlines and building on its experience in the health sector and in emergency health projects in Romania.

The Romanian Ministry of National Defence requested support on key aspects of the application for non-major-project financing from the European Regional Development Fund. JASPERS provided advice on the eligibility, justification and feasibility criteria, thus boosting the ministry's capacity to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

In Romania, JASPERS provided support for rehabilitating Tulcea Hospital, in the Danube Delta. Assistance ensured compliance with existing health regulations and the best quality standards

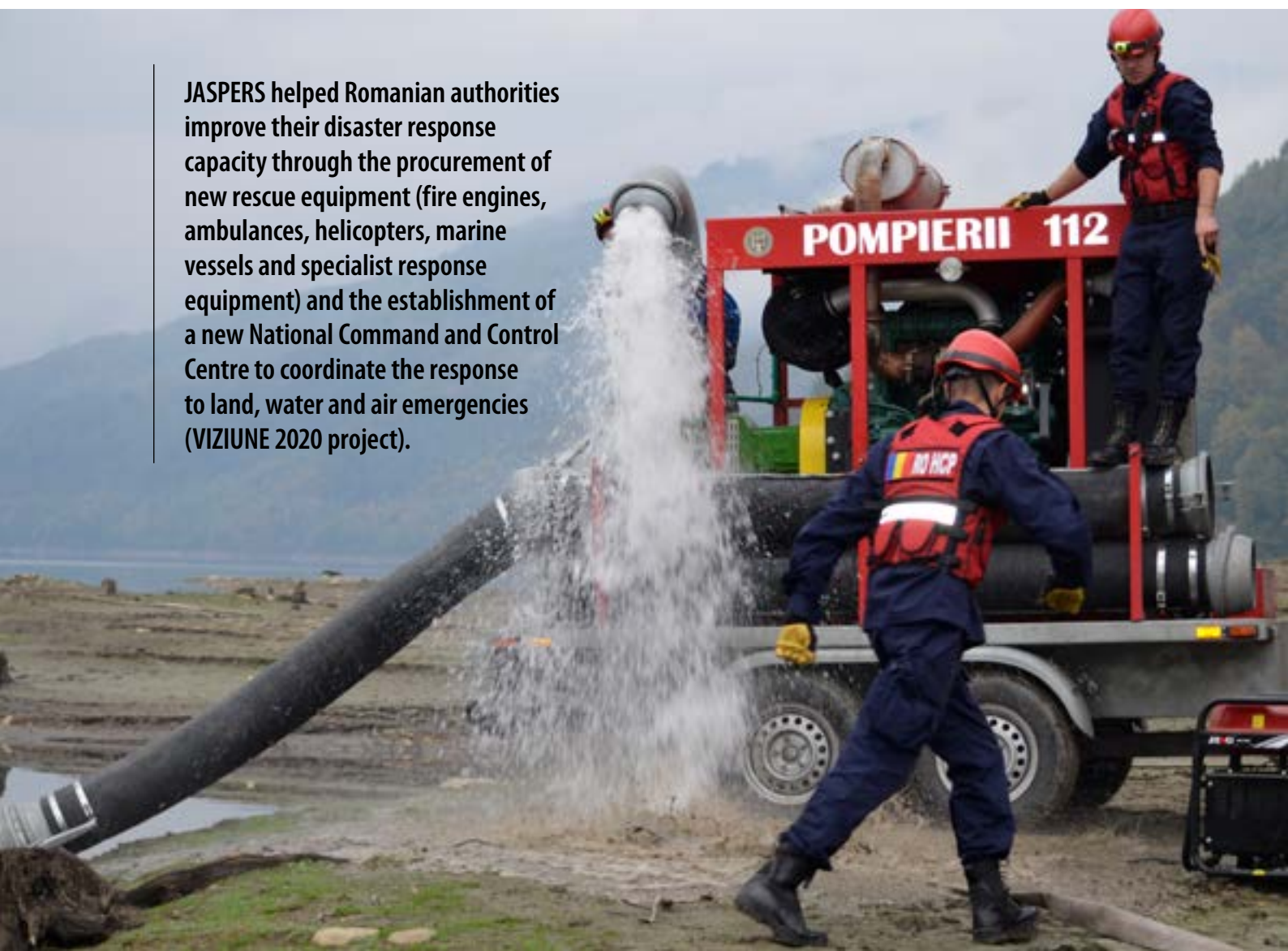
Increasing capacity for medical intervention and testing to limit coronavirus infections was a key objective for the Romanian government in 2020

IMPROVING DISASTER RESPONSE CAPACITY

J ASPERS is committed to the European Green Deal, aiming at a carbon-neutral Europe. In Slovakia, JASPERS assisted in identifying, preparing and appraising investments to replace coal in district heating generation for the Upper Nitra Region (Novaky and Prievidza areas) as of the 2023-2024 heating season.

The objective was to support investment decisions in 2020, aimed at achieving compliance with Slovak and EU environmental targets without creating a “lock-in” effect that would exclude other potential sustainable energy options in a development phase going beyond the end of 2023.

JASPERS helped Romanian authorities improve their disaster response capacity through the procurement of new rescue equipment (fire engines, ambulances, helicopters, marine vessels and specialist response equipment) and the establishment of a new National Command and Control Centre to coordinate the response to land, water and air emergencies (VIZIUNE 2020 project).





MULTI-SECTOR ACTIVITIES / JUST TRANSITION FUND

During 2020, JASPERS supported assignments related to the **Coal Regions in Transition initiative**.

At the core of the process is the **socioeconomic transition from a fossil fuel-based to a climate-neutral economy**, an economic and social transformation in which nobody should be left behind.

As from 2021, JASPERS is providing support for the identification and preparation of projects to be funded by the Just Transition Fund, which is part of the **Just Transition Mechanism** being set up by the European Commission.

Poland was the first Member State to benefit from JASPERS support under the Coal Regions in Transition initiative, receiving guidance on project collection and screening, dedicated project advice, and help with pipeline generation and prioritisation.

Responding to demand from the European Commission and Member States, **JASPERS is launching similar assignments for the Just Transition Fund in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.**



SUPPORTING INNOVATION FOR A SMART FUTURE

In Croatia, JASPERS provided advisory support to ensure the necessary **quality standards for investment of the Open Scientific Infrastructural Platforms for Innovative Applications in Economy and Society project**. The project's objective is to enhance the research infrastructure of the Ruđer Bošković Institute in Zagreb, creating a multidisciplinary research and development environment in line with Europe's top research institutions.

Poland's PIONIER-LAB project supports research and innovation by using "living laboratories" as a bridge to future innovation—research meets users' demand in a space for joint research and development activities by research entities and enterprises.

JASPERS reviewed the project's technical, financial and economic aspects and provided guidance on the definition of project objectives, presentation of laboratories' profiles, demand and needs analysis, option analysis, justification of investment costs, state aid and cost–benefit analysis.

JASPERS assisted Hungary's Ministry of Innovation and Technology with options to improve the efficiency of the extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging waste, ensuring compliance with EU directives (Circular Economy Package). The extended producer responsibility is a policy approach under which producers are given significant responsibility for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products.



In Portugal, JASPERS supported the modernisation of the double-track Cascais railway line, located in the Lisbon-Oeiras-Cascais functional urban area.

URBAN REGENERATION AND ROAD SAFETY UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

The Development Strategy 2020+ of the Lodz metropolitan area in Poland sets the strategic objective of regenerating degraded areas to build friendly and safe spaces. Such regeneration will increase economic activity, and the development of a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy will protect the environment.

Economic impact analysis during construction was important for the **construction of the A1 motorway section from the end of the Częstochowa bypass to Tuszyn. This project aims to increase road capacity in response to traffic growth, thus reducing travel times and operating costs while also improving accessibility and road safety.** The new 80-kilometre section of motorway will form part of the Trans-European Transport Network Baltic-Adriatic core network corridor, which is a key backbone of the Polish road network, with high levels of transit and freight traffic. **Construction of this section will significantly improve road safety,** compared to the existing road with single-level crossings and direct road accesses.

The main objectives of this project are to promote territorial development and environment-friendly sustainable urban mobility; to make public transport more attractive for local commuting needs; and to assist policies to decarbonise transport in the country, by providing high-quality public transport with zero direct CO₂ emissions.

Between 2018 and 2020, **JASPERS advised and supported Poland's transport authorities on a critical review and screening of key project documents and issues,** particularly the feasibility studies, environmental studies, economic and financial justification, climate change, state aid, and the EU grant application process.

JASPERS provided guidance on the urban strategy, state aid and environmental aspects of the project.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC AUTHORITIES' CAPACITY

J ASPERS supports **strengthening capacity and transferring knowledge** about project planning and preparation, climate and environmental proofing of investments, project compliance with EU legislation and related needs. In 2020, JASPERS continued **supporting the European Commission in the preparation of technical documents and collection of good practices relevant to the 2021–2027 programming period** (*Economic Appraisal Vademecum*; *European Commission's Guidance on climate proofing of infrastructure 2021–2027*; *InvestEU's Sustainability proofing guidance*; and European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund results indicators in the field of transport post-2020).

Highlights of capacity-building events in 2020 included:

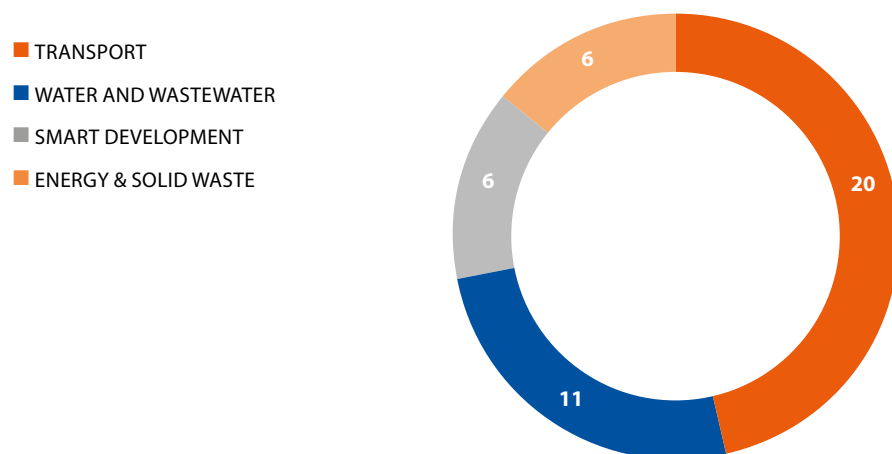
- A two-day training programme in Zagreb on cost–benefit analysis methodologies for research, development and innovation infrastructure investments, targeting expert staff responsible for evaluating project proposals;
- Two training sessions in Warsaw on water project assessment;
- Three webinars on project preparation under the Coal Regions in Transition initiative in the Czech Republic;
- Two webinars on the Habitats Directive, focusing on the importance of site-specific conservation objectives for project preparation;
- In cooperation with the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy and the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, a webinar for exchanging experiences on use of EU or national grants for energy-efficiency investments in residential buildings;
- A virtual workshop presenting how JASPERS can advise on projects for circular economy and smart cities during the European Week for Regions and Cities;
- A webinar on good practices for developing digital projects in the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance region during the Western Balkan Digital Summit.

Information and proceedings are available on the [JASPERS Knowledge and Learning Center](#).

APPRAISAL ACTIVITY IN 2020

JASPERS can carry out an independent project quality review on behalf of Member States, thus preparing the ground for the European Commission's decision (**independent project appraisal support**). **In 2020, JASPERS completed appraisals for 43 projects and reappraised nine projects** interrupted by the European Commission due to previously raised issues. JASPERS also appraised its first UK-based project, completed just before the end of the Brexit transition period.

FIGURE 2: **APPRAISALS COMPLETED BY JASPERS IN 2020**
DISTRIBUTION BY SECTOR



JASPERS BUDGET IN 2020

The JASPERS budget under the European Structural and Investment Funds, Connecting Europe Facility and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance mandates comprises eligible costs, co-financed by the technical assistance budget managed by the Directorates-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Mobility and Transport, and Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, and the EIB. **Overall 2020 spending was approximately €28 million for the European Structural and Investment Funds mandate, €1 million for the Connecting Europe Facility mandate, and €0.5 million for the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance mandate, co-financed by the European Commission and the EIB.**

In the 2021-27 programming period, JASPERS' advisory budget will come from **different funding streams: the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, CEF and IPA.**

A STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR THE FUTURE

In the 2021–2027 programming period, **JASPERS will continue to work with national authorities and assist them in producing mature project proposals that meet EU requirements and in identifying potential projects for implementation. JASPERS will focus particularly on sustainable projects that deliver high socioeconomic benefits for the population, address market failures or suboptimal investment situations, and deliver results contributing to regional development.**



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