

Germany – Mapping of National and Thuringia and Saxony Regional Funding Routes

This section maps national funding routes available in Germany together with regional funding instruments specific to the federal states of Thuringia and Saxony that are relevant, or have previously been relevant, to digital cultural heritage, tourism innovation and related digital transformation activities.

The schemes presented may include permanent instruments, periodic programmes, previous calls or measures that may be renewed or replaced by successor initiatives. Their inclusion does not imply that funding is currently available or that future editions will apply the same conditions. Users should always verify the current status, eligibility criteria, budgets, deadlines and application procedures through the official sources before taking action.

National

BKM (Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media) | Monument protection special programmes

Level: National (Germany – Federal level / Bund)

Managing authority: Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), the federal authority responsible for cultural policy and support for cultural heritage at national level.

Type of support: Grants (project-based funding for cultural heritage conservation)

Objective: The Monument Protection Special Programmes support the **restoration, conservation and safeguarding of nationally significant cultural monuments** in Germany.

Target beneficiaries: Eligible monument owners, public authorities, foundations, cultural institutions and organisations involved in heritage conservation, depending on the specific call requirements.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must involve cultural monuments located in Germany that are considered to have national cultural significance.

Access and funding conditions: Project grants are awarded through federal funding procedures managed by BKM. Eligible monuments, conservation activities, funding rates, co-financing requirements and application procedures are defined in the relevant programme or call. Digital documentation or interpretation may be supported only where it is directly connected to the conservation project.

When to use it:

- ✓ When a project includes restoration or conservation of nationally significant heritage assets
- ✓ When built heritage protection is the core objective of the project
- ✓ When digital components (documentation, interpretation, etc.) are embedded within conservation activities

Official source: [BKM page on Denkmalschutz-Sonderprogramme](#).

BKM | INK – Investments in nationally significant cultural institutions

Level: National (Germany – Federal level / Bund)

Managing authority: Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), responsible for federal cultural policy and support for nationally significant cultural institutions.

Type of support: Grants (investment funding / Zuschuss)

Objective: The INK programme supports **investment in cultural institutions** of national

significance in Germany, enabling their preservation, development and modernisation, including infrastructure upgrades and equipment improvements.

Target beneficiaries: Primarily public cultural institutions and organisations of national cultural importance, such as museums, archives, heritage institutions and cultural foundations, subject to programme eligibility rules.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must involve cultural institutions located in Germany that are recognised as having national cultural relevance.

Access and funding conditions: Investment grants are awarded through federal funding procedures managed by BKM. Support may cover eligible renovation, infrastructure, equipment and technical-system costs, including digital infrastructure where it forms part of a broader institutional investment. Funding amounts, co-financing requirements and application procedures depend on the applicable programme conditions.

When to use it:

- ✓ When a museum or cultural institution requires investment funding
- ✓ When modernising cultural infrastructure (including digital equipment or systems)
- ✓ When projects focus on institutional development rather than individual cultural activities

Official source: [INK programme entry \(Federal funding database\).](#)

BKM + FFA (+ Länder) | Funding for digitisation of German film heritage (Filmerbe)

Level: National (Germany – Federal level / Bund)

Managing authority: The programme is supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) and implemented by the Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), with financial participation from the German Länder and industry stakeholders.

Type of support: Grants (project-based funding for film heritage digitisation and restoration)

Objective: The Filmerbe programme supports the **digitisation, restoration and long-term preservation of German film heritage**, enabling historical films to be preserved and made accessible for cultural, research and public use.

Target beneficiaries: Eligible rightsholders, film production companies, archives, distributors and other entities responsible for film heritage materials, subject to programme eligibility rules.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must concern films that are part of the German film heritage and typically involve rightsholders or institutions established in Germany.

Access and funding conditions: Grants are awarded through funding procedures administered by the Filmförderungsanstalt under the Filmerbe framework. Funding combines federal, Länder and film-sector resources and may support eligible digitisation, restoration, preservation and access-copy costs. Applicants must hold or manage the relevant rights or film materials and comply with the applicable programme rules.

When to use it:

- ✓ For digitisation of analogue film heritage
- ✓ For restoration and preservation of historical audiovisual works
- ✓ For projects involving archives, film collections or rightsholders responsible for German film heritage

Official source: [Federal funding database entry + FFA programme page.](#)

BMWK/BMWE (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs) | Tourism innovation funding (LIFT / “Innovationsförderung im Tourismus”)

Level: National (Germany – Federal level / Bund)

Managing authority: Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE), formerly BMWK. Programme activities are supported and coordinated by the Kompetenzzentrum Tourismus des Bundes.

Type of support: Grants for innovation and model projects in tourism.

Objective: The **LIFT programme (Leistungssteigerung & Innovationsförderung im Tourismus)** supports innovative pilot projects that strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability and digital transformation of the tourism sector in Germany.

Target beneficiaries: Primarily tourism SMEs, destination management organisations and tourism operators. Projects may also involve universities, research institutions or innovation partners depending on the call.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be organisations established in Germany, with projects addressing innovation or transformation in the German tourism sector.

Access and funding conditions: Funding is provided through the federal budget under tourism policy measures of the Ministry for Economic Affairs.

The programme typically finances model or pilot projects that test innovative solutions in areas such as:

- digital tourism services and platforms
- sustainable destination development
- new tourism business models
- tourism data and smart destination tools

Calls are usually measure-based, meaning funding windows open periodically for specific thematic priorities.

When to use it:

- ✓ When developing tourism-led innovation projects
- ✓ For digital services or smart destination solutions
- ✓ For pilot or model projects involving SMEs and destination partners
- ✓ For initiatives aiming to create scalable tourism innovation models

Official source: [Kompetenzzentrum Tourismus page describing the federal measures and LIFT status.](#) ;

Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz (DSD) | Nationwide heritage conservation grants (non-governmental but national coverage)

Level: National (Germany-wide, private foundation)

Managing authority: Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz, an independent nationwide foundation dedicated to the preservation of built cultural heritage in Germany.

Type of support: Grants for monument conservation and restoration projects.

Objective: The foundation supports the **preservation, restoration and safeguarding of cultural monuments across Germany**, contributing to the long-term protection of the country's built heritage.

Target beneficiaries: Eligible monument owners and project promoters, including private owners, municipalities, foundations, churches and heritage organisations, subject to the foundation's funding rules.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must involve protected monuments located in Germany. Eligibility depends on the heritage significance of the site and the conservation project proposed.

Access and funding conditions: Project grants are financed through donations,

endowments, lottery resources and fundraising activities. Applications are submitted directly to the foundation, generally within annual funding cycles. Eligible conservation works, grant amounts, required own contribution and selection conditions depend on the monument and proposed project.

When to use it:

- ✓ When a project involves restoration or conservation of historic monuments
- ✓ When seeking non-governmental co-funding for heritage conservation
- ✓ When digitalisation or interpretation components are secondary to the conservation project

Official source: [DSD “apply for funding” page.](#)

BMWE – ZIM (Central Innovation Programme for SMEs)

Level: National (Germany – Federal level / Bund)

Managing authority: Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWE), which oversees the programme and its implementation through authorised project management agencies.

Type of support: Grants (non-repayable funding for research and innovation projects).

Objective: The Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM) supports **research and development activities that strengthen the innovation capacity and competitiveness of German small and medium-sized enterprises.**

Target beneficiaries: Primarily SMEs, with participation from research institutions and universities in collaborative projects. In certain cases, larger companies may participate as partners in innovation networks.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be SMEs established in Germany. Collaborative projects may involve research organisations or international partners depending on programme rules.

Access and funding conditions: Non-repayable R&D grants are awarded through programme procedures managed by authorised project agencies. Support may cover individual SME projects, collaborative R&D projects and innovation networks. Funding rates and eligible costs depend on company size, project type and the applicable ZIM rules. Applications are assessed on technological novelty, feasibility and market potential.

When to use it:

- ✓ When SMEs develop new digital technologies, platforms or tools relevant to sectors such as cultural heritage or tourism
- ✓ When SMEs collaborate with universities or research institutes on applied innovation projects
- ✓ When projects aim at market-oriented technological development

Official source: [Zentrales Innovationsprogramm Mittelstand \(ZIM\) | ZIM auf Englisch](#)

KfW | ERP Promotional Loan for Digitalisation (ERP-Förderkredit Digitalisierung)

Level: National (Germany)

Managing authority: KfW, the German development bank owned by the Federal Republic of Germany and the German federal states.

Type of support: Low-interest loans for business investment in digitalisation and innovation.

Objective: The ERP Digitalisation and Innovation Loan **supports companies investing in digital transformation, technological innovation and the development of new digital products, processes or services.**

Target beneficiaries: Primarily SMEs and mid-sized companies undertaking investments in digitalisation or innovation activities.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be companies established in

Germany carrying out investment projects related to digital transformation or innovation.

Access and funding conditions: Financing is provided as a subsidised loan through commercial partner banks. Companies apply through their bank, which assesses the project and submits the financing request to KfW. Loan amounts, interest conditions, repayment periods, collateral requirements and eligible investments depend on the applicable KfW product and company profile.

When to use it:

- ✓ When companies invest in digital infrastructure, platforms or AI-based solutions
- ✓ When scaling technology solutions in sectors such as tourism or heritage services
- ✓ When loan financing is needed to complement grant funding

Official source: <https://www.kfw.de/kfw.de.html>;

[Der KfW-Kredit für die Digitalisierung Ihres Unternehmens | KfW](#)

Regional – Thuringia and Saxony

Thuringia

Thüringer Aufbaubank (TAB) | Thuringian Development Bank

Level: Regional (Germany – State of Thuringia)

Managing authority: Thüringer Aufbaubank, the public development bank of the State of Thuringia responsible for implementing regional economic development and investment programmes.

Type of support: Grants and subsidised loans depending on the funding scheme.

Objective: TAB **supports economic development, innovation and regional competitiveness in Thuringia** by implementing funding programmes that promote SME growth, digitalisation, tourism development and infrastructure investment.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the programme, beneficiaries may include:

- SMEs and start-ups
- municipalities and public bodies
- tourism organisations
- research institutions or innovation actors

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be organisations or companies operating in the State of Thuringia.

Access and funding conditions: TAB administers multiple regional grant and subsidised-loan programmes financed through Thuringian, federal and EU resources. Applicants apply through the relevant programme procedure or TAB portal. Eligible applicants, funding form, rates, costs and application requirements depend on the specific scheme.

When to use it:

✓ When seeking a regional funding authority for SME digitalisation or tourism development projects

✓ When the project involves investment in equipment, software, services or infrastructure

✓ When regional or EU-cofinanced programmes are required to support implementation

Link to official source: <https://www.aufbaubank.de/oeffentliche-einrichtungen/foerderung-fuer-den-tourismus-in-thueringen>

TAB | Tourism funding lines (incl. GRW II tourism infrastructure + state tourism programmes)

Level: Regional (Germany – State of Thuringia)

Managing authority: Thüringer Aufbaubank, which administers tourism funding schemes on behalf of the State of Thuringia.

Type of support: Mainly grants supporting tourism infrastructure and destination development projects.

Objective: The tourism funding programmes implemented by TAB **aim to strengthen the competitiveness of tourism destinations in Thuringia** through investments in infrastructure, visitor services and destination development.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the scheme, beneficiaries may include:

- municipalities and public authorities
- municipal associations and regional development bodies
- tourism organisations or destination management entities

Some programmes may also support tourism businesses depending on the specific funding call.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must be located in the State of Thuringia and

typically relate to regional tourism development or infrastructure.

Access and funding conditions: Tourism projects are supported through programme-specific grants administered by TAB, including schemes financed through GRW resources and Thuringian state co-financing. Eligible applicants, infrastructure or service investments, funding rates and application procedures are defined in the relevant tourism funding guidelines or calls.

When to use it:

- ✓ When the project focuses on destination-based tourism infrastructure or public tourism services
- ✓ When developing visitor infrastructure, interpretation facilities or destination management systems
- ✓ When digitalisation is embedded within tourism service improvements (e.g., digital visitor information points, destination platforms)

Link to official source: [Thüringer Aufbaubank - Thüringer Aufbaubank;](https://wirtschaft.thueringen.de/tourismus/tourismusfoerderung)
<https://wirtschaft.thueringen.de/tourismus/tourismusfoerderung>

ERDF (EFRE) Programme Thuringia 2021–2027 | Managing Authority portal

Level: Regional (EU Cohesion Policy Programme – State of Thuringia)

Managing authority: The Thuringian Ministry for Economic Affairs, Science and Digital Society acts as the Managing Authority for the programme, with implementation of many funding schemes handled by bodies such as the Thüringer Aufbaubank.

Type of support: Grants and financial instruments funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF / EFRE) under programme priorities.

Objective: The programme supports **regional economic development, innovation, digitalisation and territorial competitiveness** in Thuringia as part of the EU Cohesion Policy framework for the 2021–2027 period.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the specific call or funding guideline, beneficiaries may include:

- SMEs and start-ups
- municipalities and public bodies
- research and innovation organisations
- universities and technology centres
- territorial partnerships and development initiatives

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must be located in the State of Thuringia and align with the priorities defined in the EFRE 2021–2027 programme.

Access and funding conditions: Support is awarded through programme-specific calls and funding guidelines combining ERDF resources with national or state co-financing. Applications are generally submitted through TAB or another designated implementing body. Eligible beneficiaries, costs, funding rates and selection criteria depend on the relevant measure.

When to use it:

- ✓ When the project requires larger budgets and strategic regional alignment
- ✓ When the project combines innovation and territorial development objectives
- ✓ When heritage or tourism is framed within regional economic development, digitalisation or innovation priorities

Link to official source: <https://www.efre-thueringen.de/efre-programm/programm/>

Kulturstiftung des Freistaats Thüringen | Cultural project grants (incl. digital culture projects)

Level: Regional (Germany – State of Thuringia)

Managing authority: Kulturstiftung des Freistaats Thüringen, a cultural foundation

supporting artistic and cultural projects across the State of Thuringia.

Type of support: Cultural grants (project funding) and stipends.

Objective: The foundation **supports cultural production, cultural heritage** initiatives and **artistic innovation** in Thuringia by funding projects that strengthen the cultural landscape and public engagement with culture.

Target beneficiaries: Cultural organisations, artists, cultural institutions and project-based initiatives in the cultural and heritage sectors, subject to the foundation's eligibility rules.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must be implemented in the State of Thuringia or demonstrate a strong cultural connection to the region.

Access and funding conditions: Cultural project grants and stipends are awarded through annual or periodic application rounds. Eligible applicants, cultural activities, funding amounts, required own contribution and deadlines are defined in the foundation's current guidelines. Digital components may be supported where they form part of an eligible cultural or heritage project.

When to use it:

✓ When the project is heritage or culture-led (e.g., museums, archives, cultural mediation)

✓ For digital cultural content, participation and dissemination initiatives

✓ For smaller pilot projects or public-facing cultural formats

Link to official source: [Kulturstiftung Thüringen – Förderung Kulturstiftung des Freistaats Thüringen](#)

LEADER Thuringia (ELER/EAFRD) | Local Action Groups (RAGs) funding rural heritage & tourism projects

Level: EU + Regional / Local (Rural Development – State of Thuringia)

Managing authority: The programme is part of the EU rural development policy financed through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, implemented in Thuringia through regional authorities and Local Action Groups (LAGs / RAGs).

Type of support: Grants for community-led rural development projects.

Objective: LEADER supports **bottom-up rural development initiatives** by financing projects that strengthen local economies, cultural heritage, tourism and community innovation in rural areas.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the Local Action Group strategy, beneficiaries may include:

- municipalities and local public bodies
- associations and community organisations
- SMEs and tourism operators
- local partnerships and cultural initiatives

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must be located within the territory of a LEADER region in Thuringia and align with the local development strategy defined by the Local Action Group.

Access and funding conditions: Grants are awarded through calls issued by the Local Action Groups responsible for each LEADER territory. Projects must align with the relevant local development strategy. Eligible applicants, project costs, funding rates and selection procedures vary by region and call, with financing combining EAFRD resources and Thuringian co-financing.

When to use it:

✓ When the project is rural and community-based

✓ For heritage trails, small museums or local visitor experiences

- ✓ For place-based digital pilots, such as interpretation apps or local tourism platforms
- ✓ For small-scale digitisation projects linked to rural tourism or cultural heritage

Link to official source: [LEADER | TLLLR](#)

[Startseite | Thüringer Vernetzungsstelle LEADER](#)

Saxony

Sächsische Aufbaubank (SAB) | Saxon Development Bank

Level: Regional (Germany – State of Saxony)

Managing authority: Sächsische Aufbaubank – Förderbank, the publicly owned development bank responsible for implementing many regional funding programmes in Saxony.

Type of support: Mainly grants (Zuschuss), with some programmes also offering subsidised loans depending on the scheme.

Objective: SAB supports **economic development, digital transformation and regional competitiveness** in Saxony by implementing funding programmes financed by the Saxon state and EU cohesion policy funds.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the specific funding guideline, beneficiaries may include:

- SMEs and start-ups
- tourism organisations and destination actors
- municipalities or regional partnerships
- other eligible entities defined in programme guidelines

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must generally be implemented in the State of Saxony and comply with the eligibility rules of the specific programme.

Access and funding conditions: SAB administers regional grants and, depending on the scheme, subsidised loans financed through Saxon, federal and EU resources. Applications are submitted under the relevant programme guideline. Eligible applicants, costs, funding rates and procedures depend on the specific digitalisation, innovation, tourism or investment scheme.

When to use it:

- ✓ When an SME-led digital transformation project is developed (heritage-tech, tourism-tech, digital services)
- ✓ For destination-level digital projects such as marketing platforms or product development
- ✓ When seeking regional programme-based grants rather than research funding

Link to official source:

<https://www.sab.sachsen.de/f%C3%B6rderrichtlinie-digitalisierung-zuschuss-efre-2021-bis-2027>

[Tourismusmarketing und Destinationsentwicklung - sab.sachsen.de](https://www.sab.sachsen.de/tourismusmarketing-und-destinationsentwicklung)

SAB | ERDF/JTF “R&D / Technology Funding”

Level: Regional (Germany – State of Saxony, ERDF/JTF-backed)

Managing authority: The programme framework is defined by the Free State of Saxony under the EFRE/JTF Programme 2021–2027, with many funding schemes implemented by the Sächsische Aufbaubank – Förderbank (SAB).

Type of support: Project grants for research, development, innovation and technology transfer activities.

Objective: These funding schemes aim to strengthen innovation capacity and technological development in Saxony, supporting projects that develop new technologies, products, processes or digital solutions with economic potential **or that**

support the acquisition and transfer of technological knowledge for process or organisational innovation in SMEs.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the specific funding guideline or call, beneficiaries may include:

- SMEs and companies developing innovative technologies
- research institutions and universities
- innovation consortia combining companies and research partners
- for the Technology Transfer line in particular, SMEs with a registered office or establishment in Saxony

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must be implemented in the State of Saxony and align with the innovation priorities defined under the EFRE/JTF programme.

Access and funding conditions: Project grants are awarded through ERDF/JTF-backed research, development and technology-transfer programmes administered by SAB. Eligible costs, funding rates and applicant requirements depend on the specific line, such as R&D project funding or technology-transfer support. Applications are assessed against the relevant innovation, feasibility and regional-impact criteria.

When to use it:

- ✓ When the project is technology-development intensive (e.g., new tools, platforms, AI applications or technical methods)
- ✓ When cultural heritage or tourism acts as an application domain for technological innovation
- ✓ When project activities can be structured as R&D work packages with measurable innovation outcomes
- ✓ When an SME needs to acquire external technological knowledge, licences, patents or transfer support to introduce improved products, services or processes

Link to official source: <https://www.sab.sachsen.de/efre/jtf-technologietransferf%C3%B6rderung-2021-bis-2027>;
<https://www.sab.sachsen.de/efre/jtf-forschung-und-entwicklung-projekt%C3%B6rderung-fue-projekt%C3%B6rderung-2021-bis-2027>

Saxon Cultural Areas (Kulturräume) | Funding under the Saxon Cultural Areas Act (SächsKRG)

Level: Regional / Local (State of Saxony)

Managing authority: Cultural funding is administered by the regional Cultural Areas (Kulturräume) established under the Saxon Cultural Areas Act, with governance shared between the Free State of Saxony and participating municipalities.

Type of support: Cultural grants, including:

- operating funding for cultural institutions
- project-based cultural grants

Objective: The Kulturräume system **aims to strengthen regional cultural infrastructure and decentralise cultural funding**, ensuring that cultural institutions and initiatives of regional importance are supported across Saxony.

Target beneficiaries: Depending on the specific Kulturraum guidelines, beneficiaries may include:

- museums and cultural heritage institutions
- cultural associations and non-profit organisations
- local cultural initiatives and projects
- regional cultural networks

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Projects must be located within one of the eight Saxon Cultural Areas and demonstrate regional cultural relevance.

Access and funding conditions: Operating and project grants are awarded by the

relevant Kulturreich using state and municipal resources. Applicants apply directly to the competent cultural-area administration. Eligible organisations, activities, funding amounts, co-financing requirements and deadlines vary according to each Kulturreich's guidelines.

When to use it:

- ✓ When the project is led by a cultural or heritage institution
- ✓ For museum activities, cultural heritage projects or cultural mediation initiatives
- ✓ For heritage digitisation and public engagement projects with strong regional relevance
- ✓ When the project is culture-driven rather than SME-led

Link to official source:

[Förderung über das Kulturreichgesetz - Kulturland Sachsen - sachsen.de](https://www.kulturland.sachsen.de/foerderung-3903.html)
[REVOSax Landesrecht Sachsen - Sächsisches Kulturreichgesetz – SächsKRG](https://www.kulturland.sachsen.de/foerderung-3903.html)
<https://www.kulturland.sachsen.de/foerderung-3903.html>

The **German Federal Funding Database (Förderdatenbank)** serves as the central national portal for identifying public funding opportunities in Germany. It provides a comprehensive overview of programmes available at the federal level (Bund), the Länder, and, where relevant, EU-linked instruments, covering a wide range of sectors including innovation, digitalisation, culture, tourism and SME support. As such, it represents the main entry point for screening available public funding schemes across the country.

For tourism-specific opportunities, the **Förderwegweiser Tourismus** functions as a complementary sectoral funding map that helps tourism stakeholders identify relevant programmes and open calls across governance levels.

Additional specialised databases can further support the search for funding opportunities. For example, the **BMBF Funding Catalogue (Förderkatalog)** provides access to federally funded research programmes and projects, including initiatives related to digitalisation and cultural heritage, while platforms such as **Kulturförderung.org** compile funding opportunities specifically for the cultural sector.

Official sources:

German Federal Funding Database – <https://www.foerderdatenbank.de>
Förderwegweiser Tourismus – <https://foerderwegweiser-tourismus.de>
BMBF Funding Catalogue – <https://foerderportal.bund.de/foekat>
Kulturförderung.org – <https://www.kulturfoerderung.org>