

Portugal – Mapping of National and North Portugal and the Azores Regional Funding Routes

This section maps national funding routes available in Portugal together with regional funding instruments specific to North Portugal and the Azores 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

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT)

Level: National

Managing authority: Government of Portugal – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), the national agency responsible for funding scientific research and innovation.

Type of support: Grants (non-repayable funding for research and scientific collaboration)

Objective: FCT supports **scientific research, technological development and knowledge creation in Portugal** by financing research projects, infrastructures, scientific careers and collaboration between academia and industry

Target beneficiaries: Universities, research centres, public research organisations and, in some programmes, companies as partners.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be research organisations established in Portugal, although companies may participate as partners in collaborative research projects.

Access and funding conditions: Non-repayable research grants are awarded through competitive calls published by FCT. Eligible applicants, project costs, funding rates, duration and evaluation criteria depend on the specific programme. Applications are assessed primarily on scientific quality, expected impact and feasibility.

When to use it:

- ✓ For research on digital heritage technologies (e.g., AI, 3D digitisation, digital preservation, digital humanities)
- ✓ For research and early-stage technological development, depending on the specific programme
- ✓ For university-led research projects or academic–industry collaboration

Link to official source: [Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia - FCT](#)
[Programas de Financiamento - FCT](#)

Agência para a Competitividade e Inovação (IAPMEI)

Level: National

Managing authority: Government of Portugal – IAPMEI – Agência para a Competitividade e Inovação, the national agency responsible for supporting SME competitiveness, entrepreneurship and industrial development.

Type of support: Grants, financial instruments, innovation vouchers and blended support schemes for business development and innovation.

Objective: IAPMEI promotes the **competitiveness and growth of Portuguese**

companies by supporting innovation, digital transformation, entrepreneurship and access to finance for SMEs.

Target beneficiaries: SMEs, start-ups, business clusters, industrial companies and collaborative business consortia.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be companies established in Portugal, particularly SMEs and start-ups operating in innovation-driven sectors.

Access and funding conditions: IAPMEI manages several business support programmes financed through:

- [Portugal 2030 programmes](#) (ERDF / ESF+)
- The **Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR)**
- The [national state budget](#)

Competitive calls and support programmes are published on the IAPMEI portal and the Portugal 2030 funding platforms.

[IAPMEI - Incentivos e financiamento](#)

When to use it?

- ✓ For SME digital adoption and digital transformation projects
- ✓ For innovation pilots and applied technology projects
- ✓ For tourism-tech or cultural innovation solutions
- ✓ For market-ready deployment and business scaling

Link to official source: [IAPMEI - Página Inicial](#)

Turismo de Portugal

Level: National

Managing authority: Government of Portugal – **Turismo de Portugal**, the national authority responsible for tourism development, destination management and international promotion of Portugal as a tourism destination.

Type of support: Grants, incentive schemes and financial instruments supporting tourism modernisation, sustainability and innovation.

Objective: Turismo de Portugal **promotes the competitiveness, sustainability and digital transformation of the Portuguese** tourism sector by supporting innovation, infrastructure development and tourism ecosystem modernisation.

Target beneficiaries: Tourism SMEs, municipalities, destination management organisations, tourism operators and cultural-tourism initiatives.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be **organisations or companies established in Portugal**. Eligibility depends on the specific programme or funding scheme.

Access and funding conditions: Support is awarded through national tourism programmes, incentive schemes and financial instruments published by Turismo de Portugal, including measures linked to Portugal 2030 and the PRR. Eligible applicants, project costs, funding rates, co-financing requirements and application procedures depend on the relevant programme.

When to use it:

- ✓ For smart tourism destination development
- ✓ For digital visitor experience and interpretation tools
- ✓ For cultural heritage valorisation within tourism ecosystems
- ✓ For sustainable tourism infrastructure and destination management projects

Link to official source: [Turismo de Portugal](#); [Programas de apoio e incentivos](#)

Banco Português de Fomento (BPF)

Level: National

Managing authority: Government of Portugal – Banco Português de Fomento (BPF), the national promotional bank supporting investment, innovation and business growth.

Type of support: Financial instruments including loans, guarantees, venture capital and co-investment funds.

Objective: BPF **supports economic development and business competitiveness** in Portugal by improving access to finance for companies, promoting investment and facilitating the scaling of innovative enterprises.

Target beneficiaries: SMEs, start-ups, scale-ups and mid-cap companies seeking financing for investment, innovation and growth.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be companies established in Portugal, particularly SMEs and mid-caps requiring access to financing for business expansion or investment projects.

Access and funding conditions: Financing is provided directly or through participating financial intermediaries and may take the form of loans, guarantees, equity, venture capital or co-investment instruments. Conditions are assessed according to the company profile, investment project, financial viability and applicable product rules.

When to use it:

- ✓ For scaling business operations and expansion projects
- ✓ For investment-intensive projects requiring financial leverage
- ✓ For complementing grants with debt or equity financing
- ✓ For growth of heritage-tech, tourism-tech or digital innovation companies

Link to official source: [Banco Português de Fomento](#)

Regional – North Portugal and the Azores

North Portugal

CCDR-N / Norte 2030 | Regional Development and Cohesion Funding

Level: Regional (North Portugal)

Managing authority: Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (CCDR-N), the regional authority responsible for territorial development and management of European Structural Funds in Northern Portugal.

Type of support: Grants (non-repayable funding primarily financed through ERDF and ESF+ under regional programmes).

Objective: CCDR-N implements regional development policies in Northern Portugal and manages the [Norte 2030 Programme](#), supporting economic competitiveness, territorial cohesion, innovation and sustainable development.

Target beneficiaries: SMEs, municipalities, cultural institutions, local partnerships, research organisations and regional development actors.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be established in the North of Portugal and operate within the territorial scope of the Norte 2030 programme.

Access and funding conditions: Non-repayable grants are awarded through calls under the Norte 2030 Programme, combining ERDF or ESF+ resources with national public co-financing. Eligible applicants, project categories, funding rates, costs and submission procedures are defined in each call

When to use it:

- ✓ For regional heritage digitisation projects
- ✓ For local tourism infrastructure development
- ✓ For SME digitalisation initiatives
- ✓ For municipal smart services and digital public infrastructure
- ✓ For small and medium-scale investment projects with territorial impact

Link to official source: [Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte, IP - Home](#);

[Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte, IP - Subvenções](#)

The Azores

Direção Regional do Empreendedorismo e Competitividade (DREC)

Level: Regional (Azores – Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores)

Managing authority: Direção Regional do Empreendedorismo e Competitividade (DREC), the regional authority responsible for entrepreneurship, business competitiveness and innovation policy in the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

Type of support: Regional grants, incentive schemes and financial instruments supporting business investment, digitalisation, innovation, entrepreneurship and competitiveness.

Objective: DREC promotes entrepreneurship, business development and regional economic competitiveness in the Azores by implementing incentive systems and investment support programmes aligned with regional development strategies.

Target beneficiaries: SMEs, start-ups, tourism operators, local businesses, clusters and regional economic actors.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be companies or organisations established in the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

Access and funding conditions: Funding is primarily delivered through ERDF resources under the [Açores 2030 Programme](#) (Portugal 2030), complemented by the regional budget of the Azores Government and, in some cases, by programmes supported

through the PRR.

Key funding mechanisms available through or linked to DREC include:

- **Sistema de Incentivos à Transição Digital das Empresas dos Açores**, supporting the adoption and integration of digital technologies such as management systems, e-commerce, automation, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and IoT. This framework has recently included the lines [Upgrade Digital Empresarial](#) (UDE), [Empresarial Innovate](#) (EI) and [Accelerate Azores Brand](#) (AAB), launched through phased regional calls.
- [Construir 2030](#), a regional incentive system for sustainable and integrated investment, structured through sub-schemes tailored to different business profiles and development stages.
- [Voucher Incubação](#), a non-repayable support scheme for incubated or incubation-stage SMEs aimed at strengthening digital capacity, innovation and business acceleration.
[Capital Participativo Açores I](#), a financial instrument for SMEs based on participatory loans, with investments between **€20,000 and €300,000**.

Competitive regional calls and incentive programmes are published by DREC within the framework of the Açores 2030 Programme.

When to use it:

- ✓ For SME digitalisation and ICT adoption
- ✓ For innovation and business modernisation projects
- ✓ For incubated start-ups and early-stage companies
- ✓ For investment in equipment, digital tools and competitiveness upgrades
- ✓ For tourism, heritage or creative-economy businesses seeking regional business support instruments

Link to official source: [Home - Direção Regional do Empreendedorismo e Competitividade - Portal](#)

Instrumento Financeiro para a Inovação e Competitividade (IFIC)

Level: Regional / PRR-based instrument (Autonomous Region of the Azores)

Managing authority: Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, within the PRR framework, with Banco Português de Fomento acting as the implementing partner for the financial instrument.

Type of support: Financial instrument supporting business investment, innovation and competitiveness.

Objective: IFIC supports **business investment projects aimed at strengthening innovation, competitiveness, modernisation and growth capacity in the Azores**. Regional government communications also describe it as a tool to stimulate value creation and the modernisation of the regional business fabric.

Target beneficiaries: Companies operating in the Azores seeking support for investment projects linked to innovation, competitiveness and business modernisation.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: The instrument is intended for projects implemented in the Autonomous Region of the Azores. Applications in the regional rollout were submitted through the Azores administration framework linked to the PRR.

Access and funding conditions: The instrument is implemented within the PRR framework by the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, with Banco Português de Fomento acting as implementing partner. Support is provided through financial-instrument procedures for eligible business investment projects. Financing terms, eligible expenditure, application requirements and selection conditions are defined in the relevant call or product documentation.

When to use it:

- ✓ For business investment linked to innovation and competitiveness
- ✓ For company modernisation and growth projects
- ✓ For scaling innovative business activity in the Azores
- ✓ For projects needing a financial instrument rather than a small-scale grant

Link to official source: [Applications open for Financial Instrument for Innovation and Competitiveness - Communication - Portal](#)

Direção Regional do Turismo dos Açores

Level: Regional (Autonomous Region of the Azores)

Managing authority: Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores – Direção Regional do Turismo, the regional authority responsible for tourism policy, destination management and sector development across the islands.

Type of support: Grants and incentive programmes supporting tourism modernisation, sustainability and destination development.

Objective: The Direção Regional do Turismo **promotes the competitiveness, sustainability, promotion and development of the regional tourism sector**, including digital components where eligible under the relevant measure.

Target beneficiaries: Municipalities, tourism SMEs, cultural-tourism operators, destination management organisations and local tourism partnerships.

Geographical scope / Eligibility: Applicants must generally be organisations or companies established in the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

Access and funding conditions: Grants and tourism support measures are awarded through regional calls and incentive programmes financed through the Azores regional budget, ERDF resources and, where applicable, the PRR. Eligible applicants, activities, funding rates, budgets and application procedures depend on the specific tourism measure.

When to use it:

- ✓ For smart and sustainable destination development projects
- ✓ For digital interpretation of natural and cultural heritage
- ✓ For visitor experience technologies and digital tourism tools
- ✓ For tourism infrastructure upgrades
- ✓ For local authority-led tourism initiatives

Link to official source: [Página principal da Direção Regional do Turismo - Direção Regional do Turismo - Portal](#)

The Azores are an Autonomous Region of Portugal with devolved governmental powers, meaning that many economic development, innovation and tourism funding schemes are managed directly at regional level by the Regional Government, alongside access to national Portuguese programmes.

In Portugal, public funding opportunities are not published through a single mandatory national registry. Calls for proposals are distributed across different institutional portals depending on the funding source and managing authority.

For programmes co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR), open calls are published under **Portugal 2030**, the national framework for EU cohesion policy funding. The operational management of applications — including consultation of open calls, submission of proposals, document upload and monitoring of funded projects — is carried out through the **Balcão dos Fundos**, which functions as the central digital entry point for beneficiaries of EU-related programmes.

In addition, information on public subsidies and benefits granted by public entities can be consulted via the **Portal da Transparência – Subvenções e Benefícios Públicos**, managed by the Portuguese authorities to ensure transparency regarding awarded public support.

National, regional or sector-specific schemes that are not EU-funded may also be published directly on the websites of the respective ministries, agencies or public bodies. Therefore, while Portugal provides structured and transparent access to EU-related funding through centralised digital platforms, it does not operate a single comprehensive database covering all public grants at national, regional and local levels.

Official portals:

Portugal 2030: <https://portugal2030.pt/>

Balcão dos Fundos: [Balcão dos Fundos](#)

Portal da Transparência: <https://transparencia.gov.pt/>