

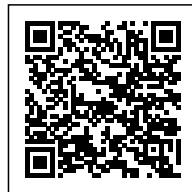
NEW EU FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION - PBBR

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As part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the “Horizon 2020 - Framework Programme for Research and Innovation”, establishes European Union research and innovation funding for 2014-2020. Since its launch by the European Commission, the framework has been considered one of the EU key tools aimed at financial stabilisation, economic and competitive growth, sustainable development and climate action. Horizon 2020 focuses resources on three different fields of action: excellent science; industrial leadership; and societal challenges.

With regard to societal challenges – and taking into consideration the current focus on EU climate and energy policies – one of the main funding targets is energy efficiency, pursuant to the EU indicative goal set for 2020 of a 20 per cent increase.

Such an increase would facilitate the transition to an energy efficient economy and a reduction in the consumption of scarce energy resources as well as a reduction in EU energy imports

dependence. In this context, the research related to clean and sustainable energy has an allocated budget of €5.931 million.

The main research and demonstration activities for energy efficiency within "Horizon 2020" relate to buildings, industry, heating and cooling, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and energy related products and services. Among the "Horizon 2020" challenges for energy efficiency is to offer opportunities for growth in Member States with low potential, such as Portugal, by providing the required financial support and enabling its development.

Within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and Horizon 2020, the "Portugal 2020 Programme" lays out the EU structural support for the 2014-2020 timeframe, combining four different operational programs (PO): competitiveness and internationalisation, human capital, social inclusion and employment, and sustainability and efficiency in the use of resources (PO SEUR). To this end, the EU partnership agreement for Portugal 2020 has been approved as well as the general rules for the application of the national and regional operational programs (POR) for 2014-2020 (to be financed by the European Investment Fund and Structural Funds were recently approved by Decree-law no. 159/2014, of October 27, 2014).

Regarding the PO SEUR, the main focusses are: transitioning to a low-carbon energy-efficient economy, with a goal of a 30 per cent reduction in energy consumption by the government, and a focus on supporting energy efficiency in areas such as transport, enterprises and residential buildings; promoting risk prevention and climate change adaptation, accounting for Portugal's coastal erosion and wildfire fight; and implementing strategies for the waste sector (PERSU 2020), for the water sector (PENSAAR 2020), for biodiversity, environmental liabilities and urban environment development.

With the of fulfilling the Portugal 2020 targets, the Portuguese National Energy Efficiency Action Plans for 2013-2016, which are currently in force, define priority measures and incentives such as awarding prizes to create visibility and distinguish companies with a better energy performance – in terms of a rational use of energy in the workplace – as well as awards to highlight best practice in public administration, in addition to different rates of vehicle tax and road tax for registered automobiles and mopeds, based on the level of CO2 emissions.

The aforementioned measures and incentives offer a good opportunity for European companies, specifically SMEs, to develop projects and stimulate investments in this research field, thus creating new jobs and leading innovation, thereby achieving the objectives and becoming more competitive.

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