

EEA GRANTS

Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area

DEGREE OF AWARENESS IN PORTUGAL

2024

MULTIDADOS, THE RESEARCH AGENCY

Iceland 
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

 **MULTIDADOS**
THE RESEARCH AGENCY

TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

UNIVERSE | SAMPLE

Sample composed of 400 citizens aged 18 or older residing in the national territory.

DATA COLLECTION | METHODOLOGY

Information was collected through online surveys (CAWI) with an approximate duration of 5 minutes.

DATES | DATA COLLECTION PERIOD

Study conducted between April 1, 2024, and April 12, 2024.

RESPONSIBILITY | RESEARCH AGENCY

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INTRODUCTION

Through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), signed in the city of Porto in May 1992, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway are partners in the internal market of the European Union Member States.

To promote a continuous and balanced strengthening of economic and commercial relations, the parties of the European Economic Area Agreement established a multi-annual Financial Mechanism, known as the EEA GRANTS, through which Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway financially support the European Union member states with the largest deviations from the European average GDP per capita, including Portugal.

The two objectives of the EEA GRANTS are:

- Reduction of the economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area
- Strengthen bilateral relations between the beneficiary countries and the donor countries

Since this Agreement came into force in 1994, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, as donor countries, have contributed to the economic and social development of Portugal.

In the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Portugal and the donor countries, the Financial Mechanism for the period 2014-2021 supports five national programs, with a total allocation of 102.7 million euros in the areas of Blue Growth, Environment, Culture, Work-Life Balance, and Civil Society, managed by the respective Program Operators. These are the Directorate-General for Maritime Policy, the Secretary General (SG) of the Environment and Climate Action (MAAC), Cultural Heritage, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), and as the manager of the Active Citizens Fund, the consortium between the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Bissaya Barreto Foundation.

Additionally, there is the Bilateral Relations Fund, with an allocation of 3.5 million euros managed by the National Focal Point of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism, responsible for ensuring that the different financing programmes contribute to the achievement of the general objectives of the Mechanism in Portugal.

The Regulation on the implementation of the EEA GRANTS 2014-2021, in Article 1.7, assigns responsibility for the promotion and visibility of the Mechanism's objectives and contributions to all entities involved in its implementation, ensuring widespread dissemination and increased awareness of the EEA GRANTS, as well as enhancing transparency regarding funding opportunities, beneficiaries, and achieved results.

Within its responsibilities, the National Focal Point must develop and implement a Communication Strategy, including an evaluation plan for the information and communication measures regarding the visibility and awareness of the EEA GRANTS (Annex 3, point 2.1.1 of the Regulation).

The evaluation plan incorporates the rules outlined in the Guidance Core Output and Outcome Indicators for the EEA and Norway GRANTS 2014-2021, which sets the methodology to guide this evaluation process, particularly regarding the timing and the data collection method to be applied, including a set of mandatory questions that must be included in the questionnaire.

In compliance with the rules set forth in this document, an initial study was conducted in 2018 after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to define the baseline level of awareness about the EEA GRANTS in Portugal.

Among other relevant data for drawing conclusions, it is noteworthy that out of the sample of 400 people who answered the survey, 4% had already heard of the EEA GRANTS.

In 2024, the second planned study was conducted, applying the same methodology as stipulated by the rules to occur in the last year of the implementation period. Six years after the first study, and based on the same sample, there is a remarkable increase, with 24% of respondents now aware of the EEA GRANTS.

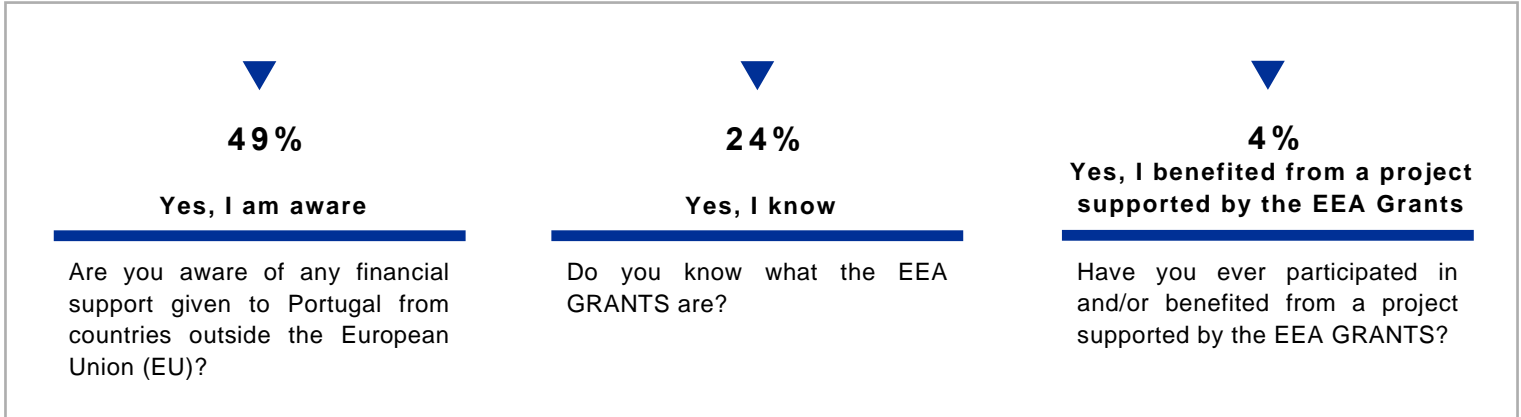
METHODOLOGY

This survey reflects a nationally representative sample, assuming a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. For Portugal, this translated into a sample of 400 people, living in the national territory, and aged over 18 years.

The sample was distributed according to gender, with 57% of respondents being female and 43% male. Regarding age, 9% of participants are between 18 and 24 years old, 16% between 25 and 34 years old, 17% between 35 and 44 years old, 19% between 45 and 54 years old, 17% between 55 and 64 years old, and 22% are over 64 years old. Regionally, the sample is stratified as follows: 3% of respondents reside in Alentejo, 5% in Algarve, 24% in the Center region, 25% in Greater Lisbon, 30% in the North, 4% in the West and Tagus Valley, 6% in the Setúbal Peninsula, 1% in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, and 2% in the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

DATA ANALYSIS

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS



The analysis of the collected data reveals various perceptions about the financial support given to Portugal from countries outside the European Union (EU), specifically regarding the EEA GRANTS.

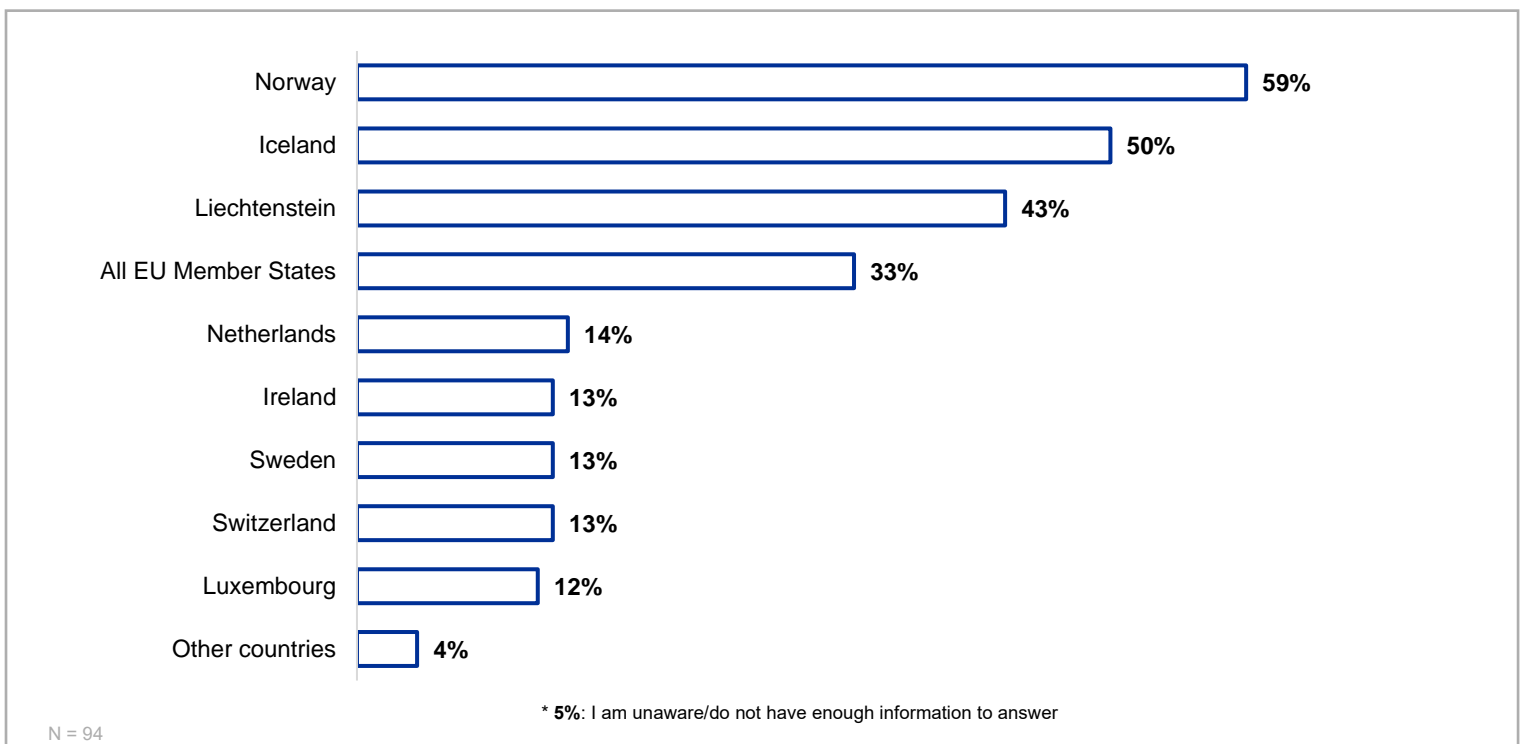
Almost half of the respondents (49%) are aware of the existence of financial support given to Portugal from outside the EU. This suggests a relative familiarity with the general concept of external financial support, although a slight majority (51%) is not aware of it.

When the question is specifically directed towards the EEA GRANTS, the level of awareness decreases, with 24% of respondents stating they know what the EEA GRANTS are, while 76% are unaware of this particular financial mechanism.

This contrast indicates that, although a substantial part of the population is aware of external financial support in general terms, the specifics of the EEA GRANTS are not widely known.

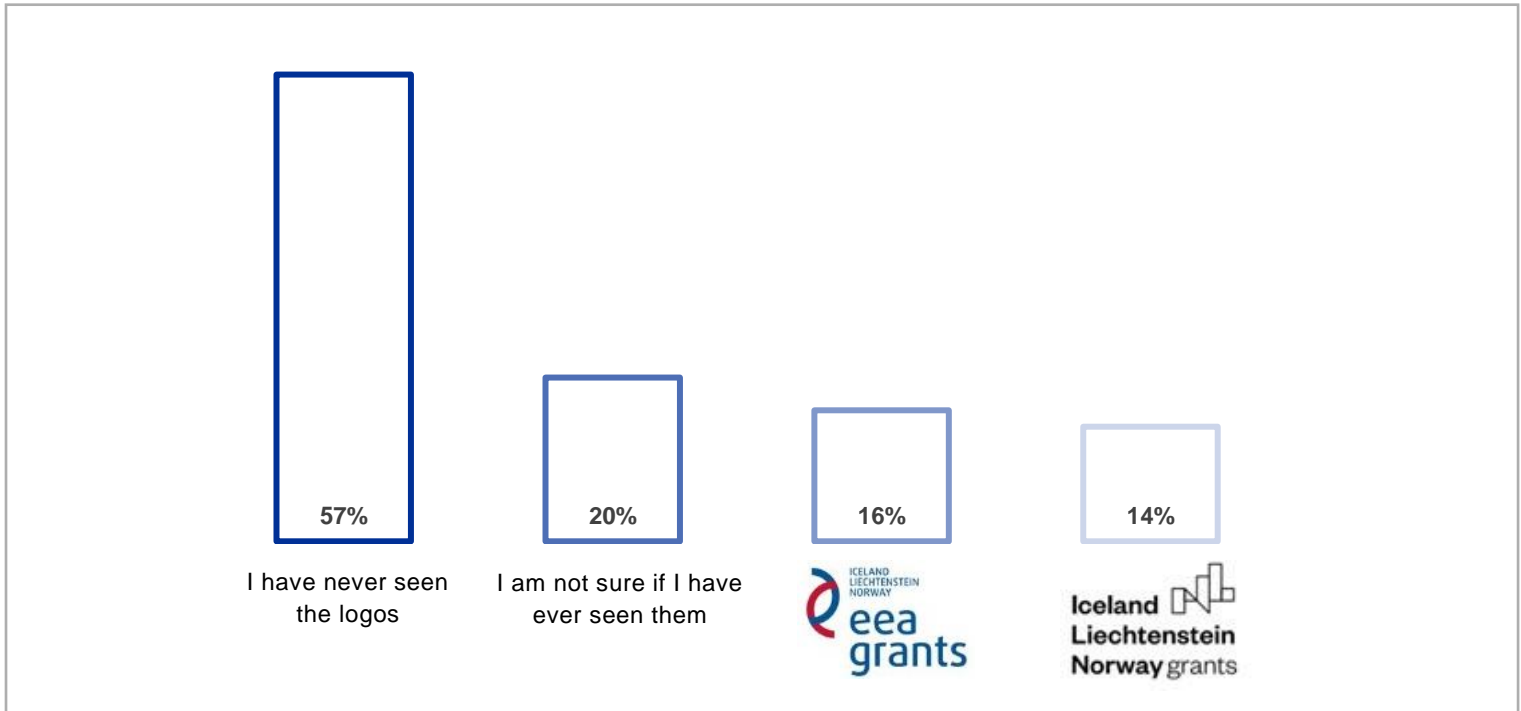
Direct participation in or benefit from projects supported by the EEA GRANTS is also limited, with 4% of respondents indicating they have benefited from a project supported by the EEA GRANTS and 2% having directly participated in a project. The majority (83%) have neither participated in nor benefited from such projects, and 11% are unsure about their participation or benefit.

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – Donor Countries



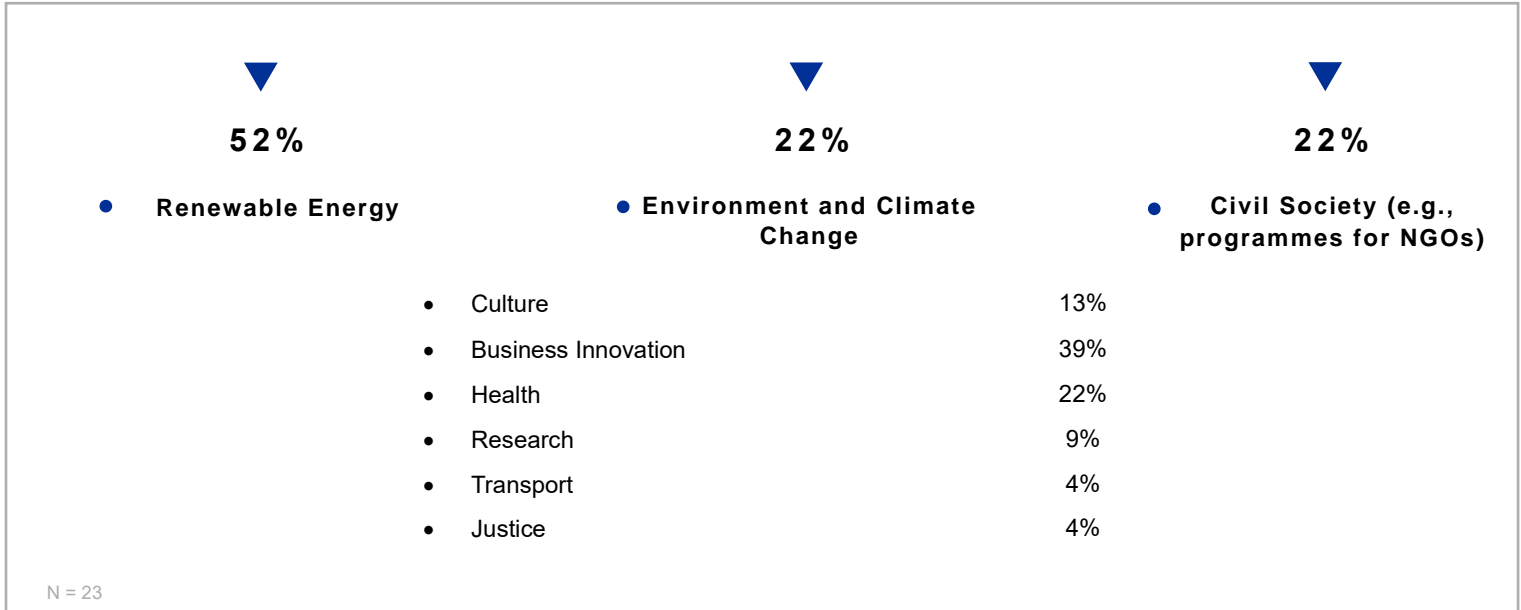
Among participants familiar with the EEA GRANTS (N=94), when asked about the donor countries funding this Financial Mechanism, Norway, with 59%, was the most indicated country, followed by Iceland with 50% and Liechtenstein with 43%. 32% of participants correctly responded by indicating the three donor countries, without including any additional options. It is noteworthy that 33% chose the option "All European Union member states" as the sole answer. 5% stated "I am unaware/do not have enough information to respond".

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – Logos



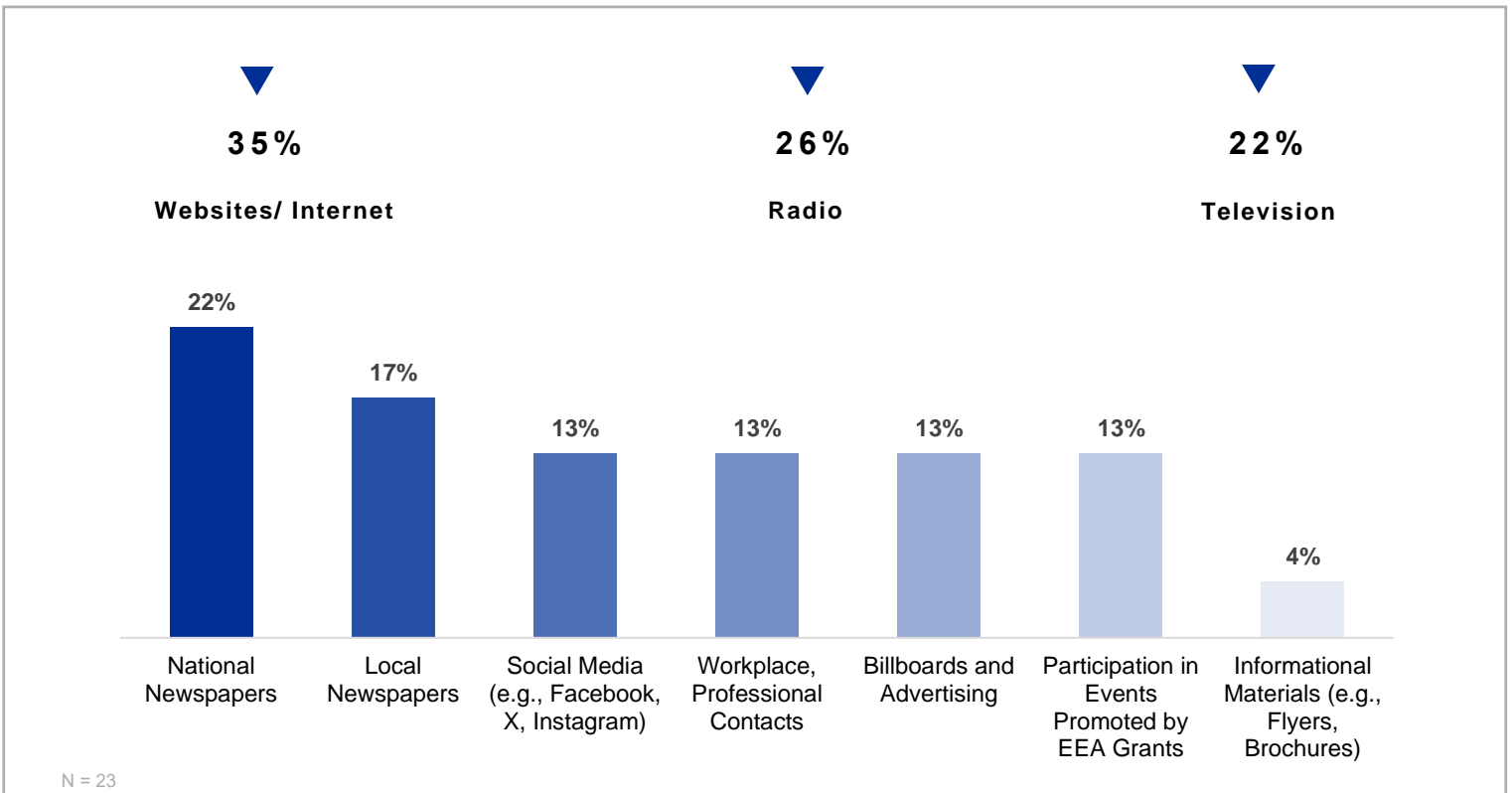
When the logos were presented to the entire sample, their recognition ranged from 14% to 16%. More than half of the survey participants (57%) stated "I have never seen the logos," and 20% indicated they were not sure if they had ever seen them.

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – Priority Areas



From the priority areas supported, respondents who had already participated in or benefited from EEA GRANTS funding were asked if they knew which ones were covered by the current Financial Mechanism. The most recognized area was Renewable Energy, indicated by 52% of the respondents. No respondent stated that they were unaware of which areas received support.

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – Communication Channels



The main source of knowledge about the EEA GRANTS was the Internet, with 35% of respondents mentioning websites as their source of information. Radio (26%) and television (22%) also played a significant role in dissemination, followed by national newspapers (22%) and local newspapers (17%). Social media, workplaces, billboards, and participation in events each represent 13%. Informational materials such as flyers and brochures were the least mentioned source, with only 4%.

This distribution indicates diversification in the sources of knowledge, with a prevalence of digital and traditional media.

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – General Objectives

Reduce economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area	29%
Strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States	23%
Contribute to the growth of economic, social, and territorial cohesion, the sustainable development of rural and maritime areas, and the sustainable management of natural resources	31%
Create a strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the European Union	21%

* 47% Don't know/ No response

The analysis of data on the general objectives of the EEA GRANTS reveals a diversity of perceptions among respondents. Considering the main objectives defined for the Financial Mechanism, 29% of respondents identified the objective of reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area, and 23% identified the second objective of strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States.

Regarding the remaining responses, 31% indicated that the EEA GRANTS aim to contribute to the growth of economic, social, and territorial cohesion, the sustainable development of rural and maritime areas, and the sustainable management of natural resources. Additionally, 21% of respondents identified creating a strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the European Union as an objective of the EEA GRANTS.

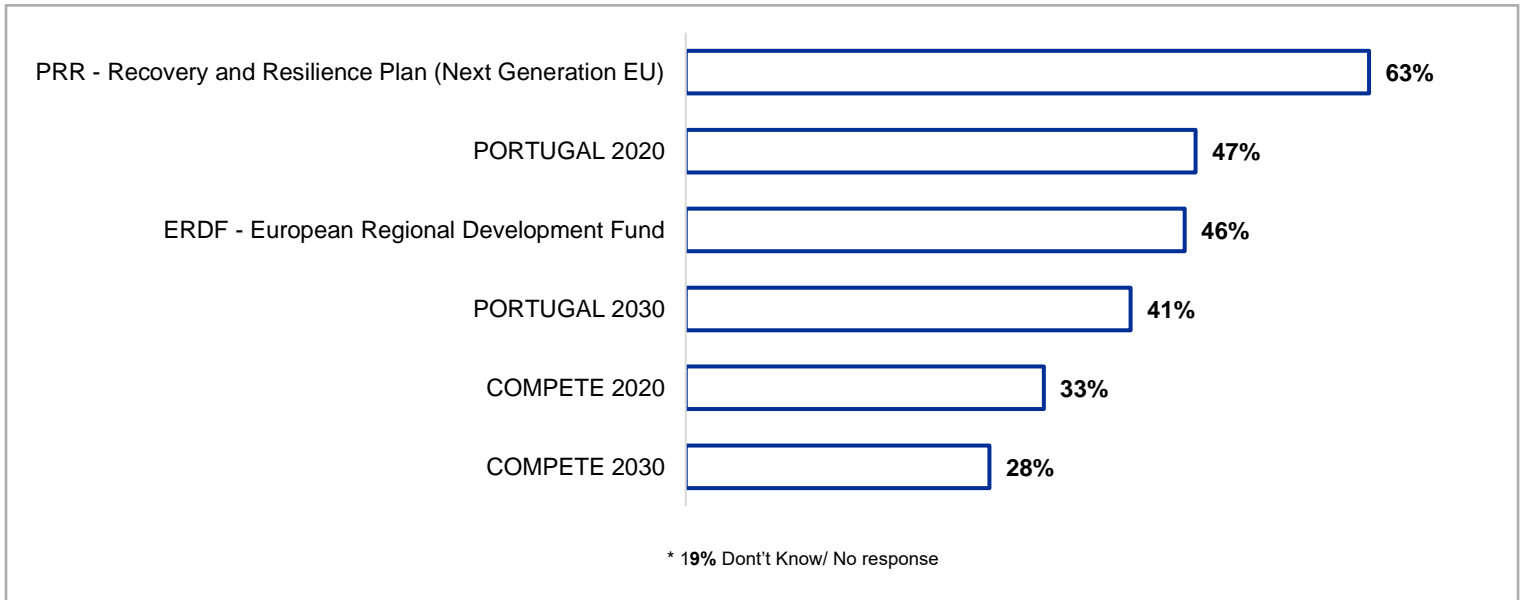
Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – Bilateral Relations

Strengthen cooperation, knowledge, and mutual understanding between the donor and beneficiary states	52%
Enhance international political relations within the European Union	18%
Strengthen relations between Portugal and the donor countries	15%
Reinforce cooperation for job creation in the beneficiary states	9%
Enhance Portugal's image among the donor countries	6%

When asked about the meaning of the phrase "Strengthening bilateral relations" in the context of the EEA GRANTS, 15% of respondents referred to the specific objective of the EEA GRANTS Bilateral Relations Fund, "Strengthening relations between Portugal and the donor countries".

The majority, 52%, indicated that they understand it as "strengthening cooperation, knowledge, and mutual understanding between the donor and beneficiary states." This response highlights a clear perception of the EEA GRANTS' objective to promote close and beneficial collaboration between the involved parties. On the other hand, 18% of respondents associated the strengthening of bilateral relations with "enhancing international political relations within the European Union." This view suggests an understanding of bilateral relations as part of a broader effort of political integration and cooperation within the European context. Fewer respondents, 9%, associated the strengthening of bilateral relations with "cooperation for job creation in the beneficiary states." Although relevant, this perception is less common among participants, suggesting that job creation is not seen as the focus of bilateral relations. Finally, only 6% of respondents interpreted the term as "enhancing Portugal's image among the donor countries".

Awareness of the EEA GRANTS – European Funds



Although 51% of respondents initially stated in the questionnaire that they were unaware of any support being granted to Portugal from countries outside the EU, when presented with a list of European funds from which Portugal benefits, only 19% maintained that position, indicating that they do not know or are not aware of these funds. Among the funds presented, the PRR- Recovery and Resilience Plan (Next Generation EU) is the most recognized, with 63% of respondents mentioning it. Additionally, 47% of participants identified PORTUGAL 2020, 46% are familiar with the FEDER - European Regional Development Fund, 41% mentioned PORTUGAL 2030, 33% recognized COMPETE 2020, and 28% indicated COMPETE 2030.

CONCLUSIONS

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) are aware of the existence financial support allocated to Portugal from outside the EU, and of these, 24% claim to know the EEA GRANTS, while 76% are unaware of these specific Financial Mechanism.

Direct participation or benefit from projects supported by the EEA GRANTS is limited, with 4% of respondents indicating that they have benefited from a project supported by the EEA GRANTS and 2% having participated directly in a project.

Among participants familiar with the EEA GRANTS (N=94), when asked which the donor countries are funding the EEA GRANTS, 32% of participants correctly identified Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein without including any other options. When individually selected, 59% of respondents indicated Norway (the most frequently mentioned country), followed by Iceland with 50% and Liechtenstein with 43%. The option "All member countries of the European Union" was chosen by 33%.

When presented with the logos of the EEA GRANTS to the entire sample, recognition varied between 14% and 16%, with 20% indicating they were not sure if they had ever seen them.

Respondents who had already participated in or benefited from a project supported by the EEA GRANTS identified Renewable Energy as the supported area, with 52% of respondents mentioning it.

The main source of knowledge about the EEA GRANTS is the Internet, with 35% of respondents referring to websites as their source of information. Radio (26%) and television (22%) also play a significant role in dissemination, followed by national newspapers (22%) and local newspapers (17%).

When asked which of the hypotheses correspond or could correspond to the main objectives of the EEA GRANTS, 29% of respondents recognized that reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area is one of the objectives of the EEA GRANTS. Concerning the second objective, 23% identified the strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States.

It is noteworthy that 31% indicated that they aim to contribute to the growth of economic, social, and territorial cohesion, sustainable development of rural and maritime areas, and sustainable management of natural resources. Additionally, 21% identified creating a strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the European Union as an objective.

The majority, 52%, understand "Strengthening bilateral relations" as "strengthening cooperation, knowledge, and mutual understanding between the donor and beneficiary states". 18% of respondents associated strengthening bilateral relations with "enhancing international political relations within the European Union," while 15% indicated "strengthening relations between Portugal and the donor countries." Fewer respondents, 9%, associated strengthening bilateral relations with "cooperation for job creation in the beneficiary states," and only 6% interpreted the term as "enhancing Portugal's image among the donor countries".

As Portugal also benefits from other funds, among the list presented, the Recovery and Resilience Plan (Next Generation EU) is the most recognized, with 63% of respondents mentioning it. Additionally, 47% of participants identified PORTUGAL 2020, 46% are familiar with the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER), 41% mentioned PORTUGAL 2030, 33% recognized COMPETE 2020, and 28% indicated COMPETE 2030.

In summary, the data reveals familiarity with external financial supports to Portugal, with deeper knowledge about the European funds that Portugal benefits from compared to the EEA GRANTS. Recognition of the EEA GRANTS logos isn't high, and there is diversification of the sources used to obtain the information, with digital and traditional media predominating. Respondents have different perceptions of the objectives of the EEA GRANTS, with a significant focus on mutual cooperation and sustainable development.



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