

ECA: Double Funding with EU Money is a Blind Spot

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On 21 October 2024, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a [special report on double funding from the EU budget](#). It is of the opinion that the risk of EU funds being spent twice on the same measure is increasing, while the existing control mechanisms are not sufficient to reduce the higher risk of double funding.

As part of this audit, the ECA assessed the Commission's and Member States' systems to avoid double funding from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) on the one hand and from the Cohesion Policy Funds and the Connecting Europe Facility on the other. The auditors noted that corresponding measures in similar areas such as transport and energy infrastructure are financed from both the EU budget and the RRF. The increasing risk of double funding is corroborated by the fact that the Commission identified the first two potential cases of double funding involving RRF money in a Member State which indicates that the tools available are neither suitable for nor effective at detecting double funding. The main shortcomings to mitigate the risks of double funding were identified as follows:

- The EU legal framework, especially the definition of double funding, has not been adapted to the peculiarities of the RRF which is not linked to costs but rather reward the fulfilment of milestones and targets.
- Minimum control requirements have not been specified and there are uncertainties about which checks could address the risk of double funding effectively.
- Member States face problems with several layers of governance and audits are carried out differently. The fragmented IT landscape prevents effective cross-checks and the limited use of Arachne and other data mining tools or project databases makes double funding difficult to detect.
- The assurance the Commission is able to provide on the absence of double funding relies on limited evidence. This is due to a blind spot in the RRF design itself, which results in an accountability gap.

In particular, the ECA recommends that the Commission should strengthen controls on zero-cost measures, improve coordination between funding programmes and instruments using financing not linked to costs, and set up/use integrated and interoperable IT systems and data mining tools for all funding programmes and instruments.

This audit presented in the special report also draws on other [RRF-related reports, reviews and opinions](#) which the ECA has published in recent years and months.

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