



Programming period 2014-2020

Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy

European Social Fund

Guidance document

June 2015

"DISCLAIMER: This is a document prepared by the Commission services. On the basis of the applicable EU Law, it provides technical guidance to the attention of public authorities, practitioners, beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries, and other bodies involved in the monitoring, control or implementation of the Cohesion policy on how to interpret and apply the EU rules in this area. The aim of this document is to provide Commission's services explanations and interpretations of the said rules in order to facilitate the implementation of operational programmes and to encourage good practice(s). However this guidance note is without prejudice to the interpretation of the Court of Justice and the General Court or evolving Commission decision making practice."

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Social Fund (ESF) delivers a substantial contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and represents a considerable part of the budget of the European Union.

In the context of tighter budgets and more public attention to the effectiveness of EU policy instruments in general, the demand for demonstrating the performance, impact and added value of ESF-supported initiatives has grown. In this respect, monitoring and evaluation play a key role in providing the necessary evidence.

Against this background, the Cohesion Policy Regulations 2014-2020 entail strengthened monitoring and evaluation arrangements. They should ensure that robust and reliable data are available and can be aggregated at EU level and that evaluation activities focus on assessing the effectiveness and impact of ESF support. Nevertheless, the spirit of the 2014-2020 programming period is evolution, not a complete overhaul of the system.

This guidance is part of the overall support which the Commission intends to provide to Member States and relevant actors. The document aims at providing concise guidance for the implementation of the new rules by the competent Member State authorities as well as by all relevant actors. Whenever appropriate, the document refers to relevant sources, in particular the ones produced in the context of the ESF evaluation partnership. It is complemented by practical guidance on ESF data collection and validation in Annex D.

The guidance focusses on the main changes in the understanding and organisation of monitoring and evaluation. The most important one is the emphasis on a clearer articulation of policy objectives. This is crucial to implement a result oriented policy and to move away from a predominant focus on the absorption of funding. The second major feature is to distinguish better between tasks related to monitoring and those related to evaluation. It sets out more clearly the different types of evaluation and calls for more methodological rigour in demonstrating the effects of ESF interventions.

This paper does not include detailed guidance on evaluation methods or on the assessment of projects or operations. Guidance on methods of counterfactual impact evaluation can be found in the Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL) website referenced in Annex F. ERDF and Cohesion Fund related guidance can be found on the website of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy. Ex ante conditionalities and performance framework are equally not subject of this paper. Guidance on these issues is provided separately.

While the Structural Funds are governed by the same Common Provisions Regulations, differences remain due to the different nature of the support. Therefore this guidance paper covers only the European Social Fund. A separate guidance paper has been issued for the Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund.

2. CONTEXT – OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Operational Programmes (OPs) allow to establish a **close link between the ESF and the Europe 2020 strategy** for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The work done by the Member States in view of preparing and assessing the National Reform Programme (NRP), complemented by regional needs analyses whenever necessary, and the body of analytical evidence available in the context of the European semester constitute the basis for identifying the particular challenges a Member State or region faces in reaching its Europe 2020 objectives. National or regional statistics underpin and complement the above analyses and highlight specific regional needs.

The choice of thematic objectives within OPs, their financial allocations, the choice of the investment priorities and their corresponding specific objectives must contribute to achieving the overall objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, address the challenges identified in the NRP and the relevant country specific recommendations (CSRs).

This process of strategic programming helps managing authorities to focus on the most relevant challenges identified in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and the corresponding thematic objectives and investment priorities. **The aim of strategic programming is thus to establish a clear intervention logic** which addresses and operationalises Europe 2020 objectives at national or regional level. A clear intervention logic constitutes the essential prerequisite for the evaluability of the OPs.

OPs are built around priority axes. As a general rule, OPs should set out priority axes which are mono-fund, cover only one thematic objective and a single category of region. (Art. 96(1) CPR).

By way of derogation from this general rule, where appropriate and in order to increase its impact and effectiveness through a thematically coherent integrated approach, a priority axis may:

- (a) concern more than one category of region;
- (b) combine one or more complementary investment priorities from the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund and the ESF under one thematic objective;
- (c) in duly justified cases combine one or more complementary investment priorities from different thematic objectives in order to achieve the maximum contribution to that priority axis;
- (d) for the ESF, combine investment priorities from different thematic objectives set out in points (8), (9), (10) and (11) of the first paragraph of Article 9 in order to facilitate their contribution to other priority axes and in order to implement social innovation and transnational cooperation.

Member States may also combine two or more of the options in points (a) to (d).

For the ESF, the Regulation sets out that the ESF can be programmed under the following four **thematic objectives**:

- TO 8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
- TO 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
- TO 10: Investing in education, training, and vocational training for skills and life-long learning
- TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

Within each of these thematic objectives, the Regulation on the European Social Fund, Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013 sets out a number of **investment priorities**.

A priority axis may consist of one or more *investment priorities* from the list set out in the Fund-specific regulations. For each investment priority **at least one specific objective** has to be defined by the Member State/region. However, one specific objective cannot be linked to several investment priorities. Unlike investment priorities (which are set out at Union level), specific objectives are defined by Member States to concretely reflect the change they seek to achieve with Union support. A specific objective may not be broader than the investment priority it is linked to.

3. MONITORING & INDICATORS

Monitoring observes programme implementation through, on the one hand, a continuous and systematic process of generating quantitative and - if relevant - qualitative information on implementation; on the other hand, through discussing these data sets in the monitoring committee. This guidance will mostly deal with the former, i.e. with generating the data. Financial monitoring is not subject of this guidance.

Essential to programme monitoring is to observe on the basis of quantitative and - if relevant - also qualitative information programme implementation. Monitoring takes place both at the level of projects/operations as well as at programme level.

Monitoring helps to detect and quantify any deviation from initial plans and targets. Therefore it is recommended that monitoring data are entered into the system throughout the year (e.g. on a quarterly basis) by the beneficiaries or the bodies in charge of entering monitoring data into the system and not only at the end of the reporting year or at the end of the operation lifetime.

Indicators are the main instrument of monitoring. Indicators capture financial data, outputs and results. Although their limitations are acknowledged, they are an essential element in monitoring programme performance. Indicators should be clearly defined, closely linked to the activity, the measurement unit selected shall be indicated, and they shall be periodically measured.

Data on all indicators – common and programme-specific alike - are **submitted as a structured data set** to the European Commission **by electronic means** as part of the Annual Implementation Reports (AIR), the Youth Employment Initiative report for 2015 and the final report. An Implementing Regulation sets out the model for AIRs (to be adopted). An Implementing Regulation setting out the technical specifications of the system established under Art. 125 (2) (d) CPR to record and store data on operations and a Delegated Regulation on the data to be recorded and stored in computerised form has been adopted¹.

For each priority axis, all indicator data shall be broken down by investment priority and by category of region.

A breakdown by category of region for reporting on YEI (covering Annex I and Annex II indicators) is, however, not required.

Indicators relate to **partially or fully implemented operations** (Art. 5 ESF Regulation). Fully implemented operations² are those which have been physically completed in the sense of Art. 2 (14) CPR, even if not all related payments have yet been made by beneficiaries or the corresponding public contribution has not yet been paid. Partially implemented operations refer to operations which are not yet fully

¹Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 480/2014 of 3.3.2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, Brussels, 3.3.2014 C(2014) 1207 final.
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0480&from=EN>

² Art. 2 (9) CPR sets out the following definition of operation: Operation "means a project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the managing authorities of the programmes concerned, or under their responsibility, that contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities ..."

implemented. In the light of the definition of beneficiary set out in Art. 2(10) CPR, it is not possible to have more than one beneficiary per ESF operation.

The data for each indicator collected from partially and fully implemented operations shall be **reported in one single data set**, i.e. data stemming from fully implemented operations do not need to be reported separately from data stemming from partially implemented operations.

Member States may opt to report data for fully implemented operations only. This approach has however the disadvantage that the time-lag between participants entering an operation and reporting the data can be significant, depending of the length of the operation.

Given that **Member States can retroactively modify data** for reported years if the recorded data with regard to an individual participation record changes or in order to correct errors, the Commission recommends reporting data on partially implemented operations together with, where appropriate, data from fully implemented operations.

In case the monitoring system includes operations that are only partially implemented, the system should be able to identify those participation records which stem from partially and which stem from fully implemented operations.

It is however important to stress that the data shall reflect participants or entities who actually **benefitted directly** or are benefitting directly from support. **No data shall be reported on planned or anticipated numbers** of participants or entities or on selected operations. As a general rule no data shall be reported on entities that are beneficiaries in the sense of Art. 2 (10) CPR. A Member State may however decide to set up a specific indicator which only captures data on beneficiaries as defined therein.

The general rule set out in Art. 70(1) CPR establishes that operations supported by the ESI Funds shall be located in the **programme area**, defined in Art. 2(7) CPR as the geographical area covered by a specific programme or, in the case of a programme covering more than one category of region, the geographical area corresponding to each separate category of region.

Art. 13(2) ESF Regulation provides for a derogation to Art. 70(1) CPR according to which the ESF may provide support for expenditure incurred for operations which take place outside the programme area, but within the Union, provided, inter alia, that the operation is for the benefit of the programme area.

In such cases a pro rata has to be established ex ante to allocate the expenditure to region X and Y. Opting for the general rule of Art. 70(1) CPR implies that the expenditure for the operation is to be borne exclusively by the category of region where the operation takes place (i.e. region X in your example). It also implies that all participants are to be recorded and reported under the indicator established for the programme area where the operation takes place (region X). Recording of participants is in this case not done based on the participants' place of residence or employment, but based on the location where the operation takes place. The only exception to this provision is the common output indicator "from rural areas" where the data is always recorded based on the participant's place of residence.

If, however, the MA has opted to apply the derogation of Art. 13(2) ESF Regulation, which allows that part of the expenditure is borne by region Y (and the other part by region X), the recording and reporting of participants shall reflect the pro rata established ex ante.

If in exceptional cases, the operation takes place in region X but is exclusively for the benefit of region Y and therefore the pro rata determined ex ante is 0 for region X and 100 for region Y, the recording and reporting of participants if 100% for region Y.

Programme monitoring is built on three types of indicators: financial, output and result indicators (Art. 27(4), 96(2) CPR).

- **Financial** indicators relate to the total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by that authority in accordance with point (c) of Article 126 of Regulation (EU) (Art. 5(2) of the implementing act on the performance framework). They may be used to monitor progress in terms of the payment of the funds available for any operation, measure or programme in relation to its eligible cost. They are compulsory in the Performance Framework. As outlined above, financial indicators are not subject of this guidance.

For each investment priority, the OP shall set out:

- **Output** indicators relate to operations supported. An output is considered **what is directly produced/supplied** through the implementation of an ESF operation, measured in physical or monetary units. Outputs are measured at the level of supported people, supported entities, provided goods or services delivered. They are set at the level of investment priorities or specific objective.
- **Result** indicators capture the expected effects on participants or entities brought about by an operation. Result indicators shall correspond to the specific objectives set out for each investment priority selected. Result indicators go beyond output indicators in so far as they **capture a change in the situation, in most cases related to supported entities or participants**, e.g. in their employment situation. In order to minimise external factors influencing the value reported under the result indicators, it is advisable to set indicators which are as close as possible to the activities conducted under the respective investment priority. This implies that the effects on participants or supported entities are captured and not the overall effects on a certain group of society or categories of entities which might include people or entities who did not benefit from ESF support. Results can be immediate or longer-term. Data for result indicators are collected through various means and in varying intervals.

The general ex ante conditionality on statistical systems and result indicators (Annex XI CPR) sets out criteria for result indicators.

The result recorded, stored and reported for a participant or entity can be based on self-declaration of the entity supported or of the participant (e.g. through a signed declaration of the participant).

- **Immediate result indicators** capture the situation when the participants **leave the supported operation or when entities end their involvement** in a supported operation. This exit date does not need to coincide with the full implementation of the operation in which the reported person participated or in which the entity was involved.
- **Longer-term result indicators** refer to a participant's or entity's situation **at a certain moment in time after the exit date**. The delay when the data is recorded is to be defined by the indicator.

The **Regulations do not require impact indicators** in the sense of results on broader groups of society beyond the participants or entities directly benefiting from the support. Given the difficulties in collecting sound and timely data for impact indicators, their use is not advised for monitoring purposes. However, impact should

be assessed through **evaluations, by** the gathering of appropriate indicators and recourse to other data. The need to rely on other data sources should be anticipated.

All data related to participants need to be recorded and stored in computerised form as individual participant data, i.e. micro data (Art. 125(2)(d) CPR).

3.1 Common ESF indicators

Common ESF indicators are a limited set of output and result indicators, listed in **Annex I and II of the ESF Regulation** (Annex B of this guidance) and that represent the minimum set of indicators for each OP:

All OPs supported by the ESF (mono- and multi-fund, national and regional OPs alike) are required to record and store the data for these common indicators.

Indicators set out in Annex II of the ESF Regulation are compulsory only for those programmes/priority axes or part of priority axes which are supported by the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). Programmes and priority axes not benefitting from YEI are not required to use the indicators of Annex II.

Technical assistance priorities are not required to report data on common ESF indicators.

All common indicator data relating to participants shall be broken down by gender.

Annex C of this guidance contains the **definitions** and supporting comments for each common ESF and YEI indicator. To the extent possible, they rely on common international definitions (e.g. LMP, LFS, ISCED). Member States shall use these common definitions for all the common indicators.

For the indicators covering some **disadvantaged participants**³, national definitions, whenever available, can supplement the definitions indicated in Annex C of this guidance. This approach was chosen because either no EU-wide definition is available or imposing a harmonised definition would cause considerable administrative burden. Member States should inform the Commission of the definitions used for these indicators.

With regard to the common indicators relating to people, data on all **participants entering an ESF/YEI supported operation in a given year should be recorded and stored**. If a participant enters and leaves the same operation several times during one or several reporting years, data on this person should be recorded, stored and reported only once. This also applies if a person participates in different parts of one single operation. The same principle applies to the common indicators on entities. If however, a person leaves one operation and starts in a different operation, this person shall be considered and recorded as a new participant.

*Data for all common ESF and YEI indicators set out in Annex I and II shall be recorded, stored and reported for each priority axis or part thereof supported by the YEI.
Reporting on YEI covering Annex I and Annex II indicators starts in April 2015, one year earlier than the ESF in general.*

³ i.e. Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma); Participants with disabilities; Other disadvantaged; Homeless or affected by housing exclusion

Data on each participant starting in an operation - for whom the complete set of personal non-sensitive data as set out by the common output indicators can be collected, entered and stored - is to be recorded, including participants who leave the operation early. Data on all participants who benefit directly — even if this support is in the context of a broader operation aiming at institutional reform, e.g. reform of educational system or public administration reform - must be recorded under the relevant common indicators.

3.1.1. Common output indicators

Common output indicators relate both to **persons** as well as **entities**. They are reported annually, starting in the AIR due in May 2016 (AIR 2015).

Annex I and II of the ESF Regulation use the term **participants**, specifying that "Participants refer to persons benefiting *directly* from an ESF/YEI intervention". Only those persons who can be identified and asked for their personal data (i.e. gender, employment status, age, educational attainment, household situation⁴) and for whom specific expenditure is earmarked shall be reported as one participant. Persons benefiting *indirectly* from an ESF/YEI intervention shall not be reported as participants. The same principle applies to SME support. Only those SMEs who benefit directly from support should be counted under the indicator "Number of micro, small and medium sized enterprises supported".

A **total number of participants is calculated** in the SFC2014 system based on the following three common output indicators "unemployed, including long-term unemployed", "inactive" and "employed, including self-employed". These three main categories are mutually exclusive. A participant shall therefore not be in more than one of the three categories for the same operation.

The only entity indicator under which beneficiaries initiating and implementing operations in the sense of Art. 2 (10) CPR are to be recorded is the output indicator "number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations".

Data on common output indicators are **recorded and stored when the participants enter or when the entities start their involvement in a supported operation**. Data shall be reported at the earliest possible date after a person entered the operation. That could be when the operation is still on-going (i.e. partially implemented) and the participant is still benefiting from the support. Unlike in the programming period 2007-2013 for Annex XXIII data, for common output indicators no reporting on leaving participants is needed.

All persons-related common output indicators shall record data on **the entire population** of participants, except the two common output indicators "homeless or affected by housing exclusion" and "from rural areas". As a minimum requirement, data for these indicators are to be collected for a representative sample of participants within each investment priority, and only once in the AIR submitted in 2017.

However, given the inherent difficulty to trace people without a permanent residence, managing authorities may consider collecting the necessary information from all participants at the same time as the information needed for the output indicators reported annually.

⁴ The term "household situation" should be understood as relating to the common indicators "participants who live in jobless households", "participants who live in jobless households with dependent children" and "participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children".

Provided data are collected for all participants and all years (not only up to 2016), it is recommended that participants who are homeless or affected by housing exclusion are included under the indicator "other disadvantaged". Similarly, participants from rural areas could be recorded and reported under "Other disadvantaged" if living in a rural area is considered a disadvantage at national level and if the data are collected for all participants and all years. This means that in the AIR2016 a person may be reported as homeless or from a rural area (or even both) and as other disadvantaged at the same time.

If data on homelessness and place of residence are collected only for a representative sample of participants and reported in the AIR2016, participants who are homeless or from rural areas should not be counted under the common indicator "other disadvantaged".

In order to fulfil the data completeness requirement, data on participants shall be **complete with regard to** all common output indicators covering **personal non-sensitive data**:

- gender
- employment status,
- age,
- education level⁵, and
- household situation⁶.

If not all these personal data can be recorded, no data at all on that particular participant shall be reported. This requirement does not apply to those indicators of Annex I which are marked with "***" as these capture special categories of personal data, i.e. sensitive data.

In this context a **distinction** is to be made **between monitoring** of participants on the one hand **and eligibility of participants** for financial support on the other. Whereas the former, as set out above, requires a complete set of data on all personal, non-sensitive variables, it may not be a requirement for the latter. Hence, an incomplete set of data might not affect the participant's eligibility to the support in general. However, managing authorities must be able to provide sufficient evidence that a person fulfils the eligibility criteria established for the respective operation/project. The DG REGIO/EMPL audit methodology will set out acceptable margins for under-reporting of participants under the common output indicators in question and the corresponding error levels.

There is no single common indicator in SFC capturing the grand total number of participants (including those for which the common output indicators covering personal non-sensitive data could not be collected). Nevertheless, this grand total number of participants shall be reported by the MA in the framework of the AIRs.

⁵ If a participant does not have attained ISCED level 1 but is still below the national customary exit age of ISCED level 1 education and has not successfully completed ISCED level 1, this person should not be recorded under "other disadvantaged" regarding this particular feature, but under the indicator "With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)".

⁶ The term "household situation" should be understood as relating to the common indicators "participants who live in jobless households", "participants who live in jobless households with dependent children" and "participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children",

3.1.2. Common immediate result indicators

Common immediate result indicators relate **only to persons**, not to entities. They are **reported annually**, starting in the AIR 2015 which is due in May 2016. They need to be recorded and stored as **individual** participant data.

Through the monitoring system common immediate result indicators capture **effects** which take place **when a participant leaves the operation**.

The results reported under the immediate result indicators must manifest themselves and be recorded in the time span between the day the person leaves the supported operation (exit date) and the **four weeks** which follow this event. Results which manifest themselves e.g. five weeks after leaving are not to be recorded under the immediate result indicators.

In view of recording immediate results, no difference should be made between participants who complete the intervention and those who leave early at whatever point in time. The four weeks' delay allow for follow-up of "no shows" during the last session. If a participant entered and left the same operation two or more times, the managing authority has to ensure that the recorded result data corresponds to the result achieved following the final exit date.

As for the result "participants in education/training upon leaving", it is not excluded that participants continue education or training in a separate operation also funded by the ESF.

If a participant leaves an operation but returns at a later date to the same operation there is still only one participation record. In this case, the existing participation record should be updated. The start date and information related to output indicators of this participation record should always refer to the first participation and therefore not be changed upon re-entry. Following the second participation leaving date and data related to result indicators should be updated to reflect the situation on the final exit. Revisions of individual participation records will have to be propagated up to the relevant aggregate result indicators. If the first result has already been reported in the AIR the data should be corrected for this year in the AIR submitted in the subsequent year.

3.1.3. Common longer-term result indicators

Common longer-term result indicators relate **only to persons**. Data collection for these longer-term result indicators is subject to the same legal requirements in terms of recording and storing as the common output and immediate result data. In particular, they need to be recorded and stored as **individual participant data**. They are, however, reported only in the AIR submitted in 2019 and in the final report.

Common longer-term result indicators capture **effects six months after a participant has left the operation**. The change in situation marking a result can occur any time between leaving the operation and six months after leaving, as long as it is sustained until six months after the participant left the operation. To ensure this, the result is only collected and entered six months after ending the support.

The data sets reported under the common longer-term result indicators do not need to include the entire population of participants. As set out in the Annexes of the ESF Regulation, the data collected for the longer-term result indicators shall be based on a representative sample of all participation records within each investment priority.

The common longer-term result indicators cover different groups of participants:

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Participants in employment , including self- | Participants who were unemployed |
|---|----------------------------------|

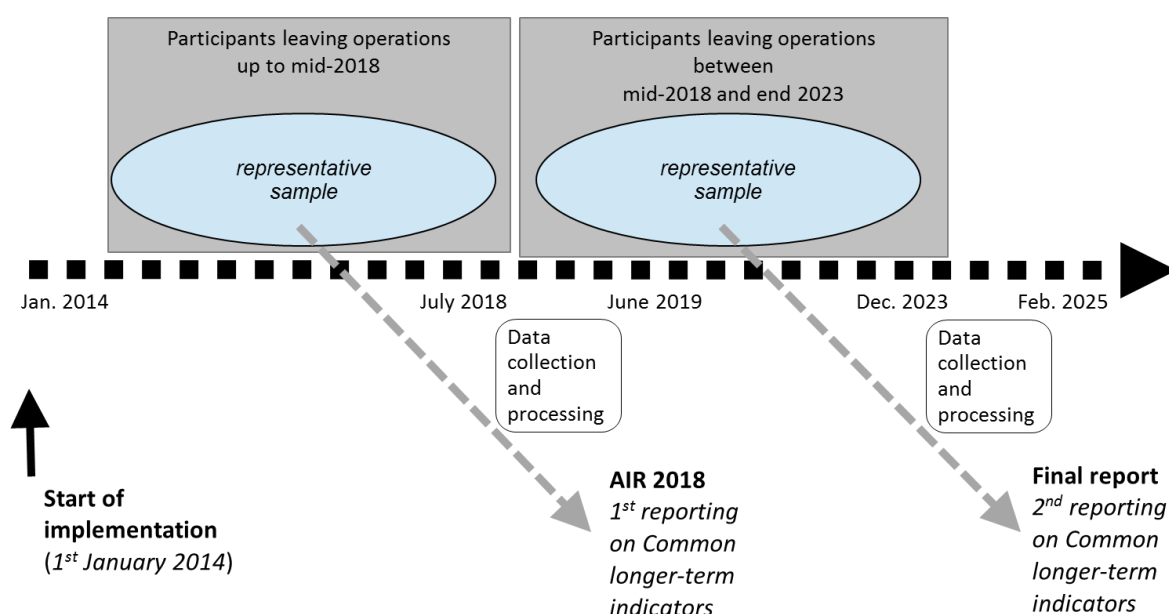
| | |
|--|--|
| employment, six months after leaving | or inactive when entering |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving | |
| Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving | Participants who were employed when entering |

For the **two reporting rounds** on longer-term result indicators (i.e. AIR submitted in 2019 & final report submitted in 2025) **two distinct representative samples with non-overlapping participants within each investment priority** shall be established. The Commission recommends the following approach:

- The data from the first set of samples is to be reported in the AIR submitted in 2019 and cover participants leaving operations up to mid-2018.
- The second set of samples covers participants who left operations between mid-2018 until the end of 2023.

It should be ensured that the **samples** are **not skewed** towards (a) particular reporting year(s). To enhance the quality of data the Commission recommends to collect these data, in particular for the 2nd reporting requirement, in higher frequency, to undertake several subsequent data collection rounds, cutting the sample into two or more.

Schedule for collecting and reporting on common longer-term result indicators



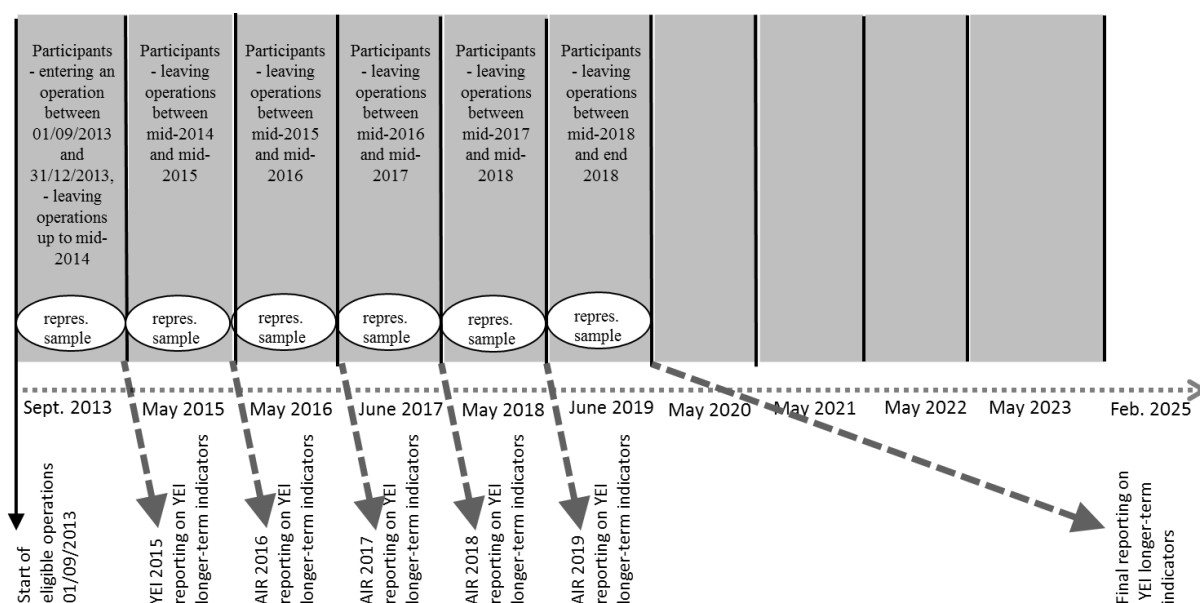
3.1.4. Specific provisions for Common YEI indicators

For YEI supported programmes, priority axes or part of priority axes, the common ESF output and result **indicators** set **out in Annex I** of the ESF Regulation **are to be recorded** in the same way as set out above for the ESF supported operations. The only difference is that for the YEI the **breakdown by category of region is not required** for any indicator.

YEI immediate and longer-term result indicators set out in **Annex II** of the ESF Regulation follow the same principles outlined in sect. 3.1.2 and 3.1.3., except for the reporting scheme. YEI immediate and longer-term result indicators are reported annually. The first report is to be submitted in April 2015 and after that at the same time as the annual implementation reports (AIR).

Similar to the common ESF longer-term result indicators, data for the YEI longer-term result indicators shall be based on a representative sample of participants.

Schedule for collecting and reporting on YEI longer-term result indicators



3.2 Programme-specific ESF indicators

OPs may use programme-specific indicators **in addition to common ESF and YEI indicators**. They can be output and/or result indicators. Result indicators may be expressed in quantitative or qualitative terms. Output indicators shall be expressed in absolute numbers.

It is for the Member States/managing authority to decide on the need for and design of programme-specific indicators. The decision about the choice of programme-specific indicators logically is taken once priority axes, investment priorities and specific objectives have been selected and established.

Specific indicators can – but do not have to – be very specific in order to highlight certain aspects of the ESF support which are of particular importance for the Member States/regions. A programme-specific indicator allows the managing authority and the

monitoring committee to **monitor more specifically** than the common indicators selected specific aspects of programme implementation.

It is obvious that the more dimensions are included in one single indicator, the more focused the indicator becomes. Although a limited number of specific indicators for monitoring may be important, a multi-dimension indicator also carries the risk of excluding (or not recording) a potentially large number of participants. When programme-specific result indicators are used, then corresponding and fully consistent output indicator(s) must be identifiable in the wording of the result indicator; either a corresponding common output indicator must be identified or a fully consistent programme-specific output indicator(s) must also be established.

An advisable way of increasing the specificity of the indicator is by combining common indicators. For example, if the specific objective targets "inactive" and "below 25 years of age", the specific output indicator would thus be "inactive participants below 25 years of age", thus combining in practice two existing common indicators. This approach is encouraged since monitoring does not pose any additional burden, given that the composing elements have to be reported for all IPs.

The Commission emphasises the importance of establishing **clear, unambiguous and easy to understand definitions** of the programme-specific indicators. The definitions need to be made available from the very start of programme implementation. Beneficiaries should be made aware of them. In this way, any ambiguity in collecting data can be avoided.

In addition to setting programme indicators, managing authorities may consider it useful setting indicators and/or targets for internal purposes only. They would not appear in the programme and would thus not be part of the Commission's decision on the operational programme.

In the context of the YEI, Member States may opt to provide support to young people up to an age of 29 years old. Since participants aged 25-29 years of age are not covered by the common output indicator related to age, the Commission strongly stresses the need to establish an output indicator for the age group not covered by the common output indicator "below 25 years of age". If such an indicator is not established it would be very difficult to determine meaningful targets for the common YEI result indicators.

Member States may also find it useful to record data for certain result indicators over a time span longer than the one captured with common longer-term result indicators. Building on collected longer-term data might be considered. For instance, if data on common longer-term results are collected from administrative data, these data could be further used with limited additional costs. If data for common longer-term results is collected through a survey, Member States could decide to conduct follow-up surveys on the same sample e.g. 12, 18 or 24 months after leaving. This approach would provide very meaningful data not lastly on the sustainability of the effects of support provided.

3.3 Targets, baselines and milestones

ESF specific reporting requirements on baselines and targets are set out in Art. 5(1) ESF Regulation.

Each OP shall set **cumulative quantified target values for output and result indicators**. Programme targets are set at the level of Investment Priority broken down by category of region, where applicable. Quantified targets for result indicators

could be either expressed in absolute numbers or in percentages. Programme-specific result indicators and related targets may be expressed in quantitative or qualitative terms.

Article 5 of the ESF Regulation says that target values for common and specific output indicators shall be set where relevant to the nature of the operations supported at the level of investment priority. The interpretation is that **not all indicators need to be linked with a target value**; only the indicators that represent the main outputs expected from the specific objective should be linked to a target.

The relevance of common indicators for target setting depends on the target group and the change sought under a specific objective. If the target group coincides with a common output indicator, it is recommended to use that indicator for targeting purposes. It is similarly recommended to establish a target for a common result indicator when it captures the expected result under a specific objective. If however the common indicators are not well attuned to capture the specificity of the intervention logic in terms of either target groups or the expected result, then specific indicators are needed (see 3.3 Programme-specific indicators).

Targets for common result indicators shall be set in function of the data reported for common output indicators. It is not possible to set a target for a common result indicator without choosing a common output indicator as reference. For each common result indicator, SFC provides a drop-down menu of common output indicators which can be used as a reference. The only common ESF result indicators for which a target value cannot be set in SFC are the result indicators on disadvantaged participants due to the absence of one single corresponding common output indicator. If a programme wants to set a target relating to results for disadvantaged participants a corresponding programme specific indicator should be developed. It is recommended that the common output indicators used as a reference for the common result indicators are also linked with a target value in order to establish a solid intervention logic.

Also for programme-specific indicators, it is recommended to logically **link targets for result indicators with targets for output indicators**.

Correspondingly, when calculating the baseline for a result target, the dimensions expressed by the corresponding output indicator should be incorporated to the extent possible, as referred to above.

Baselines shall be fixed for all common and programme-specific **result indicators for which a cumulative quantified target value for 2023 has been set**. Baselines for common and specific output indicators shall always be set at zero.

Baselines are intended to establish a **reference value** against which targets are subsequently set and assessed. They thus serve as a reference for setting targets. Since targets for result indicators are related to the change expected in supported participants or entities during the programming period 2014-2020, baselines do not constitute a starting point and they should not be included into the target value.

Baselines for result indicators should be different from zero. In principle, only by setting a baseline it is possible to set a target. Baselines can be established on the basis of existing or previous similar interventions, be it under ESF, national/regional programme or under similar ESF programmes from other countries. The closer the features of the interventions (in terms of delivery design, scope and intensity of support, target groups, intensity of funding, etc.), the more useful they will be to establish a baseline. In case the new intervention focuses on a sub-group, the baseline should reflect the success observed on this sub-group if the data can be isolated from the larger group. In addition, where the baseline is expressed in absolute numbers, it should be adjusted to take account of difference in funding levels

and inflation. All other factors, such as different intensity of support, change in delivery mechanism, macro-economic context or different level of ambition are to be taken into account when setting a target and should not be used for adjusting the baseline.

It is possible, though extremely unlikely, that for a proposed intervention, there is no analogous experience of any kind. In case of absence of any analogous experience, studies or research could be used. In duly justified and exceptional circumstances, a baseline could be zero if the nature of the operation and objectives lead to such conclusion. However this has to be assessed case by case based on adequate information, since this should be clearly an exception to the rule.

Baselines shall be expressed in the same measurement unit as the target. If percentages are considered more appropriate it should be kept in mind that numerator and denominator are expressed for the same target group.

The baseline is **established ex ante**, during the programming phase and can be considered as part of the process of defining the targets an OP is supposed to achieve. It is important that Member States properly document the methods used to establish targets and baselines so as to allow for proper interpretation and usefulness to measure progress.

In the exceptional case a Member State cannot establish a target value linked to a certain result, an action plan for the calculation of baseline and target values should be established in the framework of the general ex-ante conditionality no. 7 on statistical systems and result indicators.

For all common YEI result indicators – immediate and longer-term alike –Article 5 of the ESF Regulation requires Member States to set cumulative quantified target values and baselines. The reference common output indicator is predetermined through the name of the indicator e.g. unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention would use as reference output indicator the indicator "unemployed, including long-term unemployed".

The **performance framework** requires setting **milestones** at the level of **priority axis**. These are intermediate targets set for indicators for which a target value has been set. Milestones are to be achieved by 31 December 2018 and to be assessed in 2019. The performance framework targets which are set at priority axis level end 2023 and their accomplishment will be assessed at the closure of the programme period in 2025.

While setting the milestones, the bodies preparing the programmes do not take into account the amount of the performance reserve allocated to the priority, as it will not have any influence on performance up until the performance review in 2019. On the other hand, it will be available for the priorities which have achieved their milestones. Therefore, already at the stage of programme design, the calculation of targets must take into account the amount of the performance reserve.

For YEI programmes, priority axes or part thereof a performance framework shall be established. The resources allocated to YEI are, however, excluded for the purpose of calculating the performance reserve. For YEI the value of milestones is the same as the value of targets.

Starting with the AIR submitted in 2017, Member States shall set out information on the achievement of milestones defined in the performance framework (Art. 50(2) CPR).

For further guidance on milestones and targets used in the performance framework, please consult the Guidance Fiche on Performance Framework Review and Reserve in 2014-2020⁷.

3.4 Data processing

3.4.1. Data recording and storage

Art. 125(2) (d) and (e) CPR require the **managing authority to establish a system to record** (i.e. collect and enter) **and store data** in computerised form data **on each operation** necessary for i.a. monitoring, evaluation, including data on individual participants in operations, where applicable. The data shall be recorded and stored in a way that allows the managing authorities to perform the tasks related to monitoring and evaluation in compliance with requirements set out in Art. 56 CPR and Articles 5 and 19 and Annexes I and II of the ESF Regulation.

The Commission strongly recommends verifying as early as possible that the data recording and storage systems currently used for ESF monitoring are appropriate in the light of the above requirements set out in the CPR and the ESF Regulation. If the systems need to be further developed, this work should start as early as possible in order to avoid implementation problems.

The data for common and programme-specific indicators to be collected cover a range of personal information (including gender, employment status, age, level of education, household situation etc.), including some variables that are considered as special categories of personal data in the sense of Art. 8 of the Directive 95/46 called "sensitive" data (i.e. those related to disability, migrant or minority status, and/or other disadvantages).

In line with Art. 6 and 7 of the Directive 95/46 of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data, the **ESF regulation provides Member States with the legal basis to justify collection and processing of personal data** for the purposes of monitoring, reporting on ESF funded actions and evaluation. This means that all personal variables should be collected for all participants and the ESF regulation foresees no scope for derogation in this respect.

A **complete data set** in respect of the personal variables of the common output indicators is required in order to be able to report on the common indicators based on representative samples as set out in Annex I and Annex II ESF and their related milestones and targets which is particularly relevant for targets retained in the performance framework. For a **sample to be representative** it must reflect the characteristics of the population covered by the indicator(s) across the variables **employment status, age group, education level and household situation**.

The only case where data may, under certain conditions, be incomplete is in relation to indicators dealing with variables considered as sensitive according to Art. 8 of the Directive (i.e. those relating to disability, migrant/ethnic status and other disadvantage). For these **sensitive variables**– depending on the transposition of the Data Protection Directive in their respective Member State – individuals have the right to refuse consent for the data to be collected, if indeed the data is collected with the

⁷http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/guidance_performance_framework.pdf

consent of individuals (Art. 8(2) (a) Data protection directive). If this type of data is collected with the consent of individuals, documentary evidence showing that an attempt to collect the information was made must be maintained.

The individual participants' data for all person-related indicators must be **recorded and stored in a way that allows a Member State to perform the tasks it is legally required to perform**. Therefore all records should include, as a minimum: an identifier for the operation/project; a personal identifier that allows an individual to be traced and re-contacted; dates of starting and leaving an operation; and access to values for all variables needed for indicators.

Data on individual participants or **micro-data** are observation data collected on an individual object - in statistical terms the statistical unit, bearer of statistical characteristics⁸. The observation data on participation records, i.e. characteristics and results are collected by indicators.

Member States shall provide that personal data must be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a way incompatible with those purposes as stipulated by EU data protection legislation.⁹ This provision should not be understood as implying that micro-data are communicated to the Commission.

Although the Regulations requires Member States to collect, enter and store detailed data about each participant (i.e. to maintain micro-data), there is **no specific requirement for the data to be stored all together in one place or at any particular level**. Rather it should be interpreted that managing authorities should have the capacity – either directly or indirectly - to access the micro-data. Managing authorities themselves are thus not obliged to store and maintain micro-data but this data may be held at lower levels or by third parties (e.g. the national statistical office). However, managing authorities should be able to demonstrate that they can perform all tasks they are required to perform with regard to monitoring and evaluation, e.g. that they have access to a list of all participants supported by investment priority and, through this list, be in a position to either access directly or request from a third party the micro-data needed to calculate each of the common indicators and programme specific indicators where relevant.

In view of monitoring (common and YEI) immediate and longer-term result indicators, it is necessary to **register the exit date** (the day the person leaves the supported operation after completion or prematurely). The same applies for entities. The exit date is essential to determine the period of time six (or x) months after leaving for each single participant or entity. In addition, the exit date is an important information for counterfactual impact evaluations and for the set-up of control groups.

3.4.2. Representative sampling

All common ESF and YEI longer-term result indicators and the common output indicators on homelessness and housing exclusion and rural areas are – as a minimum requirement - to be reported on the basis of representative samples of participants. Data collection for all participants is considered as a sample covering 100% of the participants and fully representative. These types of indicators are to be **reported** according to the following schedule.

- The two common output indicators: once only in 2017.

⁸ Source: United Nations (2000): Terminology on Statistical Metadata, United Nations Statistical Commission and Economic Commission for Europe, Conference of European Statisticians, Statistical Standards and Studies – no. 53, link:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/coded_files/UNECE_TERMINOLOGY_STAT_METADATA_2000_EN.pdf

⁹ Art. 6, directive 95/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

- Common longer-term result indicators: in 2019 and in the final report.
- YEI longer-term result indicators: annually, starting from 2015.

As with all common ESF and YEI indicators, values are to be reported (and therefore the relevant samples drawn) at the level of the investment priority and broken down by gender and - except in the case of YEI indicators - by category of region.

It is not possible to establish one single sample for all indicators for which data collection is to be based on a sample. As a minimum there should be one sample per type of indicator (common output, common longer-term or YEI longer-term) and per reporting period, but it is also possible to draw separate samples for each indicator or even each sub-group. Note that for the common longer-term result indicators, the reference population varies between indicators (see Table 2.2. in Annex B). Accordingly, in case different reference populations enter the IP, a sample covering all four common longer-term result indicators would have to be established in function of not only gender and category of region but also the different characteristics of the reference populations (i.e. employed or not, disadvantaged or not, and over 54 or not). If, however, a certain reference population is excluded from the IP (e.g. 'employed'), the corresponding indicator (e.g. 'participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving') is omitted (and thus reported with 0). The sample for the remaining indicators can then be established without reference to the affected dimension (i.e. employed or not) since the sample frame can only cover persons in the other situation (i.e. unemployed or inactive).

Samples for each of the above-mentioned indicators are also required to reflect the socio-economic characteristics (variables) of the relevant reference population as captured by the common output indicators covering personal non-sensitive data (employment status, age, educational attainment and household situation). Moreover, the sample should avoid distortion in relation to the territorial dimension and time, i.e. the over- or under-representation of groups of participants with specific territorial residence or time of entry. The distribution of these characteristics should be documented both for the selected sample and the corresponding (sub-)population.

The **sampling design, method of sample selection and actual sampling methods** should be developed **before** starting any data collection and be **fully documented** at all stages of the process (from initial selection of the approach through to final assessment of results), with particular attention to data quality.¹⁰ The documentation should describe the steps to minimise the total survey error, including errors related to the definition of the target population, coverage error, non-response error and measurement error. Internal validity of the sample should be ensured. That means that biases imputable to data collection should be limited, and corrected to the extent possible, so that indicator data can be reliably generalised at the level of investment priority for each relevant dimension. Non-probability, convenience sampling is not considered an appropriate sampling method.

To be considered fully reliable (see section 3.4.3 below on data quality), indicator values based on representative sampling are to be reported with a margin of error not exceeding 2 percentage points using a 95 % confidence level for a proportion (i.e. a confidence interval of length 4 percentage points). Figures reported with an estimated maximum margin of error exceeding 2 percentage points and not exceeding 5 percentage points are deemed less reliable, implying that with a view to ensuring the overall reliability of the monitoring and information system, improvements could be considered. Estimations with a margin of error exceeding 5 percentage points are

¹⁰ Guidance on sample design and survey methodology can be found e.g. in <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-RA-08-003>

considered not sufficiently reliable if the subgroup represents more than 10 % of the population.

In order to ensure a statistically sound and unbiased sample which accurately reflects the relevant reference population(s) under the investment priority and which allows values to be inferred or extrapolated from the sample to the population, it is considered **good practice to entrust** the task of **drawing the sample and drafting the survey questions to experts** in the field, preferably an independent body or expert.

3.4.3. Data quality

Managing authorities in each Member State have responsibility for delivering data according to the specifications of the Regulations and this data is expected to be of good quality and reliable. Art. 142(1)(d) CPR allows the Commission to suspend all or part of the interim payments at the level of the priorities or OPs in the case “there is a serious deficiency in the quality and reliability of the monitoring system or of the data on common and specific indicators”.

Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union) defines quality of data used for statistics in relation to six criteria¹¹: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence. Three elements are particularly relevant in the context of this guidance:

- **Accuracy**: refers to the correct recording of the actual situation and implies that monitoring systems should have the capacity to support retroactive correction of data in case of recording errors;
- **Comparability**: refers to comparison through time and between countries and is therefore dependent on adherence to common definitions in the collection and treatment of data, including complete data sets for all common indicators;
- **Coherence**: refers to the adequacy of data to be reliably combined in different ways.

The application of **common definitions** for the common indicators is a basic requirement for the comparability of common indicators across the EU and thus for quality of data. For programme-specific indicators, comparability of indicators applies only within the OP. For both types of indicators, common and programme-specific alike, it is important that all definitions are clearly documented and disseminated to all beneficiaries and steps are taken to ensure that these are applied in practice. Official definitions for the different common indicators and underlying variables are laid out in Annex C of this document. The only exception to the application of common definitions is in the definition of disadvantage which may be determined at the national level. However, in order that the nationally defined meaning of the term is uniformly applied by organisations running projects, the definitions used must be well documented, sent to the Commission and, where possible, should refer to existing official (national) definitions.

Article 5(1) of the ESF Regulation requires values for all common output and result indicators to be provided for all chosen investment priorities. This, together with the need to ensure coherence means that **all different indicators based on participants should, at any point of the process of collecting and entering, cover the same (total) population of participants.**

¹¹ Eurostat, Methodological documents – definition of quality in statistics, Luxembourg 2003, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4373735/02-ESS-quality-definition.pdf/f0fdc8d8-6a9b-48e8-a636-9a34d073410f>

Quality data also refers to the underlying **participation records** which **must be complete for all variables of personal data**. In particular, participation records that are incomplete for any variables captured by the output indicators must be excluded from any process of aggregation used to produce these indicators. This requirement is also explained in the definition of the total number of participants ("participants with complete data records including all personal non-sensitive data") in the model of the Annual Implementation Report¹². The only exceptions are variables covering "sensitive" personal information (i.e. disability, migrant or minority status, and other disadvantage), where values may be missing in the case that participants have refused consent for this information to be collected if the system indeed is based on consent (in which case there should be documented evidence of this).

All data should be subject to basic validation procedures to ensure that data are complete and internally consistent (see Annex D).

3.4.4 Data protection

National data protection rules implementing Directive 95/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data shall **apply** to the processing of data.

The data collected, entered and stored shall be processed in order to be used for management, evaluation and audit purposes. The **Commission** does not require nor receive the micro data but solely **aggregated data sets** of ESF and YEI operations.

The Member State/managing authority shall ensure the physical and logical protection of confidential data by regulatory, administrative, technical and organisational measures (statistical disclosure control). These measures should however not be so excessive as to limit the utility of the data for the purposes set out in the Regulations and this guidance. Member States should take appropriate measures to prevent and sanction any violation of statistical confidentiality.

To be in line with data protection rules, the Member State/managing authority has to determine at which level of the chain of decision within the management and control system Member States will establish the **data controller** in the meaning of Art. 2 of Directive 95/46. This article states that the data controller is the authority who "determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data". The purpose for processing the data is determined by the CPR. Determining the means would imply controlling essential elements of the means, which may be technical or organisational (e.g., the retention period, access rights etc.). From a data protection point of view, it is important that the Commission and the data subjects know who the controller is. Therefore, the Member State/managing authority should clearly state which authority is the data controller, inform the Commission and publicise it to data subjects (e.g., in the form they have to fill to attend a course). If a Member State decides to establish both the MA and the IBs as data controllers (joint control), that Member State needs to specify which of the controllers should be the addressee of requests of data subjects for access to, rectification, blocking and erasing of data. It also needs to determine which controller would be accountable in case of specific breaches of the data protection legislation (for example, for security breaches). Data subjects should be informed accordingly.

¹² Footnote 2 of Table 4A in Annex V of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/207 of 20 January 2015 laying down detailed rules implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the models for the progress report, submission of the information on a major project, the joint action plan, the implementation reports for the Investment for growth and jobs goal, the management declaration, the audit strategy, the audit opinion and the annual control report and the methodology for carrying out the cost-benefit analysis and pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the model for the implementation reports for the European territorial cooperation goal

As far as personal data are concerned, Art. 7 of the Directive makes clear that personal data processing is legitimate when necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject. The CPR and ESF Regulation establish the legal basis for the legitimate processing of personal data by the MA. How the processing is organised will be regulated by the applicable national law. The CPR and the ESF Regulations thus establish a legal obligation on the managing authority to process personal data in the form of individual participants' data. This obligation lies with the Member State.

As regards sensitive data, EU data protection legislation prohibits in principle the processing of sensitive data as defined by Art. 8 of the Directive, although, subject to the provision of suitable safeguards, Member States may, for reasons of substantial public interest, lay down exemptions to the prohibition of processing special categories of personal data either by national law or by decision of the supervisory authority.

In case of expected issues regarding national data protection rules, the Commission recommends that managing authorities pro-actively **seek advice from national data protection authorities** about how to implement the data processing obligations set out in the Regulations. The Commission is prepared to provide assistance in this process.

3.5 Reporting

The first Annual Implementation Report (AIR) is due in 2016 (Art. 50 and 111 CPR). This AIR shall cover the financial years 2014 and 2015. The deadline for submitting this and the following AIRs is 31 May, except in 2017 and 2019 where the deadline is 30 June. The deadline for submitting the final report for the ESI Funds is 15 February 2025 or 1 March 2025 (Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation).

The first report covering YEI is due on 30 April 2015 and in subsequent years at the same time as the normal AIR.

Summary reporting schedule

| ESF supported interventions | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Report | | AIR 2015 | AIR 2016 | AIR 2017 | AIR 2018 | AIR 2019 | AIR 2020 | AIR 2021 | AIR 2022 | Final report |
| Date of submission ¹³ | | 31.05. 2016 | 30.06. 2017 | 31.05. 2018 | 30.06. 2019 | 31.05. 2020 | 31.05. 2021 | 31.05. 2022 | 31.05. 2023 | 15.02. 2025 ¹⁴ |
| Common output ¹⁵ & immediate result indicators coverage | | 2014 & 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Common longer-term result indicators coverage for participants leaving | | | | | Up to mid- 2018 | | | | | Mid-2018 to end- 2023 |
| YEI supported interventions | | | | | | | | | | |
| Report | YEI report 2013-14 | AIR 2015 | AIR 2016 | AIR 2017 | AIR 2018 | AIR 2019 | AIR 2020 | AIR 2021 | AIR 2022 | Final report |
| Date of submission | 30.04. 2015 | 31.05. 2016 | 30.06. 2017 | 31.05. 2018 | 30.06. 2019 | 31.05. 2020 | 31.05. 2021 | 31.05. 2022 | 31.05. 2023 | 15.02. 2025 ¹⁶ |
| Common output ¹⁷ & immediate result indicators coverage | Sept. 2013 to 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | | | | | |

¹³ Art. 111, 1. and 2 CPR.

¹⁴ The legal basis is Art. 138 CPR and Art. 59(5) of the Financial Regulation. The deadline for submission of the final report is the same as the one for the submission of the closure documents. The date for submission may exceptionally be extended by the Commission to 1/03/2025.

¹⁵ Except the two output indicators "homeless or affected by housing exclusion" and "from rural areas". These two indicators are only reported in the AIR submitted in 2017

¹⁶ The legal basis is Art. 138 CPR and Art. 59(5) of the Financial Regulation. The deadline for submission of the final report is the same as the one for the submission of the closure documents. The date for submission may exceptionally be extended by the Commission to 1/03/2025.

¹⁷ Except the two output indicators "homeless or affected by housing exclusion" and "from rural areas". These two indicators are only reported in the AIR submitted in 2017.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|----------------------|
| Common longer-term result indicators coverage | | | | | Up to mid-2018 | | | | | Mid-2018 to end-2018 |
| YEI immediate result indicators coverage | Sept. 2013 to 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | | | | | |
| YEI longer-term result indicators coverage for participants leaving | Up to mid-2014 | Mid-2014 to mid-2015 | Mid-2015 to mid-2016 | Mid- 2016 to mid-2017 | Mid- 2017 to mid-2018 | Mid-2018 to end 2018 | | | | |

Notes:

- The report submitted in 2015 covers only YEI supported interventions.
- The report submitted in 2017 should include data for the common output indicators based on representative sampling (homelessness/housing exclusion and persons living in rural areas)

Most annual implementation reports follow a simplified procedure ("light" AIRs submitted in 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023) whereas the annual report to be submitted in 2017 (AIR 2016) and 2019 (AIR 2018) as well as the final report of 2025 are "comprehensive" and of a more strategic nature.

The Commission will consider the implementation reports admissible only if they contain all the required information as set out in the CPR and the ESF Regulation, including data on all common indicators for each Investment Priority selected. If an implementation report submitted to the Commission does not provide data on one or several common or programme specific indicators the report is considered as not admissible. Zero values can be reported if indeed no data was recorded for that indicator under the IP concerned.

The light AIR is mostly geared to **provide quantitative data sets on OP implementation**. Besides financial data, this will require providing quantified values for common indicators and, where appropriate quantitative or qualitative values for programme-specific indicators at the level of investment priorities broken down by category of region, except for the YEI, and information on programme performance as well as any issues affecting programme implementation. Starting with the report submitted in 2017, Member States are required to submit data on the milestones' achievement set in the performance framework.

The data sets reported shall reflect the participation records recorded for the reporting year.

If a programme contains a target for a common ESF result indicator (immediate and longer-term), the report must provide data for the respective result indicator with regard to the selected target group (i.e. the common output indicator used as a reference) and separately in addition, data for the entire population of participants who achieved the respective result in the Investment Priority.

The reporting for the YEI is subject to specific provisions set out in Art. 19 of the ESF Regulation. The first report is to be submitted in April 2015 and in subsequent years at the same time as the normal annual implementation reports. It shall set out information on the implementation of the YEI. It shall contain indicator data for each programme, priority axis or any part thereof supporting the YEI. These reports shall provide data on the indicators set out in Annex I and II ESF Regulation and, where applicable, on programme specific indicators.

The reports submitted in May 2016 and in June 2019 shall present the main findings of the specific YEI evaluations required by the Regulation for end 2015 and end 2018. The reports shall also set out and assess the quality of employment offers received by YEI participants, including disadvantaged persons, those from marginalised communities and those leaving education without qualifications. The reports shall also set out and assess their progress in continuing education, finding sustainable and decent jobs, or moving into apprenticeships or quality traineeships.

4. EVALUATION

Evaluations shall assess the **effectiveness, efficiency and impact** of programmes (Art. 54(1) CPR). They are also meant to improve the design and implementation of programmes. In this way, they support implementing bodies and decision makers in shaping their strategies, inform them about what works and what doesn't and *in fine* allow them to learn what has been achieved with the ESF support.

Member States are required to provide the necessary **resources** and to ensure that **procedures** are in place in order to produce and collect the data necessary to carry out

evaluations (Art. 54(2) CPR). Evaluation is a specific form of analysis and research. In order to fulfil the obligations set out in the CPR and the ESF Regulation, data access for evaluators should be governed by the same legal framework as **access to confidential data** for academic research and scientific analysis. In the interest of strengthening evidence based policy-making, evaluators should be granted access to confidential data used for programme monitoring.

It is necessary that Member States/regions establish from the start of the programme a data access system – possibly remote data access - for accredited researchers or designated institutions to access restricted micro data for evaluation purposes, possibly through approved safe data centres (e.g. research data centres). Information technology developments permit secure and cross-border access to confidential data for evaluation purposes, using well-established secure solutions for remote access which do not entail the risk of a leak of confidential information. In this respect, in line with the national rules implementing article 17 of Directive 95/46, and in order not to compromise the high level of protection that confidential data require, the data controller must implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction or accidental loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure or access, in particular where the processing involves the transmission of data over a network, and against all other unlawful forms of processing.

The **overall approach to evaluation should be linked to the intervention logic and in particular to the specific objectives and longer-term results a programme aims to achieve**. Longer-term results, by their very nature as they respond to the particular challenges of a Member State or region, are not only influenced by the programme's interventions, but also by external factors. It is one of the primary tasks of evaluations to identify the effects which can be *directly* attributed to the ESF.

4.1 Ex ante evaluation

The Member States/regions are responsible for the ex ante evaluation (Art. 55 CPR). The CPR sets out a number of requirements for the ex ante evaluation. Apart from its principal role in supporting and improving the quality of programming, the ex ante evaluation should also play a useful role in verifying baselines for targets and understanding data needs for future evaluations.

The final report on ex ante evaluation shall contain an executive summary and shall be submitted to the Commission together with the OP.

Member States should keep in mind that the OPs shall be submitted to the Commission within three months of the submission of the Partnership Contract (Art. 26 CPR) and that the latter must set out a summary analysis of the ex ante evaluations of the programmes.

The Commission published guidance on the ex ante evaluation in July 2012.¹⁸

4.2. Evaluation plan

The purpose of an evaluation plan is to improve the quality of evaluations carried out during the programming period and the management of the OP. A crucial element for quality improvement is to strategically plan and schedule evaluations.

An evaluation plan shall be drawn up **by the managing authority or Member States** for one or more OPs. Thus each OP shall be covered by one evaluation plan or part thereof (Art. 114 CPR).

¹⁸ Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=701&langId=en>

The evaluation plan shall be submitted to the monitoring committee **no later than one year after the programme adoption**. The Commission recommends that the monitoring committee approves the plan in its first or second meeting.

In addition, if a Member State sees it fit, it may establish a national or multi-regional or thematic evaluation plan, covering several OPs.

Given the crucial importance of the evaluation in a performance oriented cohesion policy, the Commission has drafted a separate guidance on the evaluation plan.¹⁹

4.3. Evaluation during the programming period

During the programming period, managing authorities shall ensure that evaluations including evaluations to assess **effectiveness, efficiency and impact, for each programme** are carried out on the basis of the evaluation plan. At least once during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess how support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority axes (Art. 56(3) CPR).

Evaluations can be horizontal, covering one or several programmes, priority axes, category of regions, themes across programmes, etc. Member States may find it useful to carry out a mid-term evaluation.

Evaluations shall be carried out by **experts that are functionally independent** of the authorities responsible for programme implementation. This provision does not exclude the possibility that internal experts within the administration undertake evaluations. Verification of functional independence should be carried out on a case by case basis. As a general rule, functional independence within the same institution may be assumed when the entity carrying out evaluations does not have a hierarchical link with the entity responsible for programme implementation.²⁰

This guidance paper focuses on two types of impact evaluations without wishing to diminish the importance other types of evaluations may have for the Member States or the Commission.

4.3.1 Implementation evaluations

Implementation evaluations are likely to be carried out in the early stages of implementation. They typically look at how a programme is being implemented and managed.

4.3.2. Impact evaluations

To date, ESF evaluations have tended to focus more on implementation issues than capturing the effects of interventions while for the 2014-2020 programming period the regulations reinforce evaluations assessing on the impact of ESF interventions. The CPR has substantially strengthened the role of impact evaluation as an essential element of the strengthened results-focus of the policy, making the **assessment to what extent the objectives under each priority axis have been achieved compulsory for the managing authorities**.

A **variety of methods** are available to capture the impacts of ESF supported interventions: it is for the managing authorities to decide which one, or which combination of methods, is most suitable to satisfy the regulatory requirements.

Two broad categories of impact evaluations are widely recognised:

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/evaluations/guidance_en.cfm#1 .

²⁰ This recommendation is inspired by Art. 146 of the implementing rules to the financial regulation applicable to the budget of the European Communities.

- **Theory-based impact evaluation**, which follows each step of the intervention logic identifying mechanisms of change, answering the questions *why* and *how* an intervention works. This approach mainly produces a qualitative estimate of the impacts.
- **Counterfactual impact evaluation**, which uses control or comparison groups. This method is useful in answering *how much of the change* is due to the intervention and *for whom*, and in comparing the effects of different instruments (or the same instrument applied to different target groups). Rigorous quantification of the impacts of programmes/interventions involves *counterfactuals* which allow to identify/estimate what would have happened in the absence of a specific intervention. Defining such counterfactuals requires to identify a *control group* (comprising people who might have been targeted, but were not subject to the intervention/programme) and to compare it with a group of programme participants (the *treatment group*). Essentially, two approaches to establishing a control group can be distinguished, i.e. *experimental* or *quasi-experimental* designs.

Counterfactual impact evaluations and theory based impact evaluations should **complement each other**. Experience shows that many of the types of support of the previous programming period continue with a new programme. Therefore, the Commission encourages managing authorities to consider as far as possible including in impact evaluations data of previous programming periods.

Some Member States carried out impact evaluations already during the programming period 2007-2013. DG EMPL organised events where Member States shared their motivation for conducting such evaluations and the methodologies used. This showed that a considerable body of experience exists in the managing authorities in using such methodologies to different types of ESF interventions and target groups.

At the same time, experience has shown that conducting impact evaluations entail significant challenges, relating notably to availability and accessibility of data, capacity within the public administration and the evaluation community, and cooperation among authorities holding relevant data. Therefore, in order to support Member States in their efforts, DG EMPL has produced a **practical guidance** document for managing authorities to carry out counterfactual impact evaluations. This guidance provides practical recommendations on when and how to carry out such evaluations and suggesting practical ways to overcome possible difficulties, such as data availability.

DG EMPL strongly encourages MS to build upon existing experience with such evaluations and further develop capacity in this respect.

When evaluating the impact of a programme, it is recommended that sustainability of the observed effects should be among the assessment criteria.

4.4. Reporting on evaluation

Every AIR shall set out a **synthesis of the findings** of all evaluations of the programme that have become available during the previous financial year. The annual implementation reports submitted in 2017 and 2019 shall report progress in the implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations (Art. 111(4)(a) CPR).

By December 2022 managing authorities shall submit a report for each OP (Art. 114(2) CPR). This report shall summarise the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period and the main outputs and results of the OP, providing comments on the reported information. The main purpose of this report is twofold:

- to assist Member States in preparing for the next programming period;

- to support the ex post evaluation that is under the main responsibility of the European Commission in close cooperation with the Member States.

4.5. Ex post evaluation

The purpose of the ex post evaluation shall be to obtain a **view of the programming period as a whole**. It will examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Funds and their contribution to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The ex post evaluations shall be **carried out by the Commission**, in close cooperation with the Member States and managing authorities. They shall be completed **by 31 December 2024**. For each of the ESI funds the Commission shall prepare by 31 December 2025 a synthesis report outlining the main conclusions of ex-post evaluations.

The ex post evaluations will be facilitated by evaluations of Member States and Commission during the programming period, especially by the Member States' summary report of evaluations and main outputs and results.

Member States may find it useful to carry out their own ex post evaluation covering one or several programmes or specific issues within a programme they consider particularly relevant.

4.6. Transparency

The CPR foresees an important role for the monitoring committee in relation to evaluation in order to ensure transparency. It shall approve the evaluation plan and any amendment of the plan, including where is part of a common evaluation plan. Evaluations and their follow-up shall be examined by the monitoring committee. The monitoring committee shall examine the progress made in implementation of the evaluation and the follow-up given to findings of evaluations (Art. 110(1)(b) CPR). It may make observations to the managing authority regarding the evaluation of the programme and monitor actions taken as a result of its observations (Art. 49(4)).

All evaluations are to be sent to the Commission.

All final evaluation reports shall be made public in their entirety, preferably via internet. English executive summaries are recommended in order to allow for a wider European exchange of evaluation findings.

4.7. Role of the European Commission

The European Commission may carry out evaluations (Art 56(4) CPR). Moreover, the Commission will cooperate with MS and will further support them, when necessary.

DG EMPL:

- makes the knowledge and experiences of MS and regions in the field of evaluation available to their peers, for example via the publication of all evaluation reports on its CIRCA website;
- facilitates the exchange of experience across MS, for example via the ESF Evaluation Partnership convened three times a year;
- provides further guidance on evaluation approaches and methods;
- organises seminars and conferences on evaluation topics.

ANNEXES

A Legal references

B List of Common and YEI indicators

C Definitions for the Common and YEI indicators

D [Practical Guidance on data collection and validation \(separate document\)](#)

E Further Guidance Documents

F Changes to the September version of the guidance

Annex A – Legal references

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0320:0469:EN:PDF>

Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0470:0486:EN:PDF>

Annex B – List of Common and YEI indicators

ESF Regulation Annex I - Common Indicators reported by investment priority, category of region and gender

1. Output indicators

1.1 Participants

| Indicator dimension | Name of indicator | Reporting frequency | Reference population | Representativeness of sample regarding |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| Employment status | unemployed, including long-term unemployed* | annually | all participants | |
| | long-term unemployed* | annually | all participants | |
| | inactive* | annually | all participants | |
| | inactive, not in education or training* | annually | all participants | |
| | employed, including self-employed* | annually | all participants | |
| Age | below 25 years of age* | annually | all participants | |
| | above 54 years of age * | annually | all participants | |
| | above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training* | annually | all participants | |
| Educational attainment | with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)* | annually | all participants | |
| | with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)* | annually | all participants | |
| | with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)* | annually | all participants | |
| Disadvantaged participants | participants who live in jobless households* | annually | all participants | |
| | participants who live in jobless households with dependent children* | annually | all participants | |
| | participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children* | annually | all participants | |
| | migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)** | annually | all participants | |
| | participants with disabilities** | annually | all participants | |
| | other disadvantaged** | annually | all participants | |
| | homeless or affected by housing exclusion* | once in 2017 | all participants | 1) employment status 2) age group 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |
| | from rural areas* | once in 2017 | all participants | 1) employment status 2) age group 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |

1.2 Entities

| Name of indicator | Reporting frequency | Reference population |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations | annually | all projects |
| number of projects dedicated to sustainable participation and progress of women in employment | annually | all projects |
| number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level | annually | all projects |
| number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy) | annually | all SMEs directly supported |

2. Result indicators

2.1 Immediate result indicators

| Name of indicator | Reporting frequency | Reference population |
|--|---------------------|--|
| inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving* | annually | inactive participants |
| participants in education/training upon leaving* | annually | all participants, except participants who were engaged in education/training upon entering |
| participants gaining a qualification upon leaving* | annually | all participants |
| participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving* | annually | - unemployed - inactive participants |
| disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving** | annually | Disadvantaged participants who achieve a result understood as a change in the situation upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation. Disadvantaged participants are: - participants who live in jobless households* - participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children* - migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)** - participants with disabilities** - other disadvantaged** |

2.2. Longer-term result indicators²¹

| Name of indicator | Reporting frequency | Reference population | Representativeness of sample regarding |
|--|---------------------|--|---|
| participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving* | 2019 and 2025 | - unemployed - inactive participants | 1a) unemployed 1b) inactive 2) age group 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |
| participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving* | 2019 and 2025 | - employed participants | 1) age group 2) educational attainment 3) household situation |
| participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving* | 2019 and 2025 | - unemployed - inactive participants above 54 years of age | 1a) unemployed 1b) inactive 2) educational attainment 3) household situation |
| disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving** | 2019 and 2025 | - unemployed - inactive participants with any of the following disadvantage(s) (not mutually exclusive): - participants who live in jobless households* - participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children* - migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)** - participants with disabilities** - other disadvantaged** | 1a) unemployed 1b) inactive 2) age group 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |

²¹ If the reported data for these indicators concern YEI support, the reporting population called "inactive" should be understood as "inactive not in education or training".

ESF Regulation Annex II - YEI Indicators – applicable only to YEI OPs/priorities/parts of priorities

1. Immediate result indicators²²

| Name of indicator | Reporting frequency | Reference population |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention | annually | - unemployed participants |
| Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving | annually | - unemployed participants |
| Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | annually | - unemployed participants |
| Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention | annually | - long-term unemployed participants |
| Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving | annually | - long-term unemployed participants |
| Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | annually | - long-term unemployed participants |
| Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention | annually | - inactive, not in education or training participants |
| Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving | annually | - inactive, not in education or training participants |
| Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | annually | - inactive, not in education or training participants |

2. Longer-term result indicators

| Name of indicator | Reporting frequency | Reference population | Representativeness of sample regarding |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving | annually | all participants | 1a) unemployed 1b) inactive, not in education or training 2) age group (if relevant) ²³ 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |
| Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving | annually | all participants | 1a) unemployed 1b) inactive, not in education or training 2) age group (if relevant) 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |
| Participants in self-employment six months after leaving | annually | all participants | 1a) unemployed 1b) inactive, not in education or training 2) age group (if relevant) 3) educational attainment 4) household situation |

²² The definition of Long-term unemployed (LTU) varies with age:
 - Youth (<25 years of age) – more than 6 months continuous spell of unemployment (>6 months).
 - Adult (25 years of age or more) – more than 12 months continuous spell of unemployment (>12 months).
 For reference see definition in Annex C1 – Common ESF Indicator no.2

²³ It is relevant for all those OPs where YEI support includes participants above 24 years of age.

Annex C1 - Definitions for Common ESF Indicators

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | 0 | Total number of participation records (calculated, sum of indicator 1 + 3 + 5) | | |
| Common output indicators on participants | 1 | Unemployed, including long-term unemployed | Unemployed are <i>persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered as registered unemployed according to national definitions are always included here even if they do not fulfil all three of these criteria.</i> | <p>Source: Eurostat, Labour market policy database (LMP) http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935673/KS-GQ-13-002-EN.PDF The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition. This entails both the Labour Force Survey definition of unemployed plus registered unemployed.</p> <p>Full-time students, even if they fulfil the criteria for unemployed as set out in this definition, are considered as "inactive".</p> <p>People with maternity or paternity- related entitlement while unemployed are always considered as "unemployed".</p> <p>The employment status is determined on the date of entering the ESF operation.</p> |
| | 2 | Long-term unemployed | <p><i>The definition of Long-term unemployed (LTU) varies with age:</i> - Youth (<25 years of age) – <i>more than 6 months continuous spell of unemployment (>6 months).</i> - Adult (25 years of age or more) – <i>more than 12 months continuous spell of unemployment (>12 months).</i></p> <p>"Unemployed" is defined as in the indicator "Unemployed, including LTU" above, of which the indicator "LTU" is a sub-group.</p> | <p>Source: Eurostat, Labour market policy database (LMP) http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935673/KS-GQ-13-002-EN.PDF The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition.</p> <p>The age of the participant is calculated from the date of birth and determined on the date of entering the project.</p> <p>The employment status is determined on the date of entering the ESF operation.</p> |
| | 3 | Inactive | "Inactive" are <i>persons currently not part of the labour force (in the sense that they are not employed or unemployed according to the definitions provided).</i> | <p>Source: LMP http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935673/KS-GQ-13-002-EN.PDF The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition.</p> <p>Full-time students are considered as "inactive".</p> <p>People in full-time parental leave (understood as absence from work to bring up a child of young age for a period which does not fall under the classification of maternity or paternity leave) should be considered as "inactive", unless already registered as "unemployed", in which case this should take priority.</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | <p>"Self-employed" (including helping family members) are not considered as "inactive".</p> <p>The employment status is determined on the date of entering the ESF operation.</p> |
| | 4 | Inactive, not in education or training | <p>Inactive persons who are not in training or education.</p> <p>"Inactive" is defined as in the indicator "Inactive" above, of which the indicator "Inactive, not in education or training" is a sub-group.</p> | <p>The employment status is determined on the date of entering the ESF operation.</p> |
| | 5 | Employed, including self-employed | <p><i>Employed persons are persons aged 15 and over who performed work for pay, profit or family gain or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of, for instance, illness, holidays, industrial dispute, and education or training.</i></p> <p><i>Self-employed persons with a business, farm or professional practice are also considered to be working if one of the following applies:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>A person works in his/her own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit, even if the enterprise is failing to make a profit.</i> 2) <i>A person spends time on the operation of a business, professional practice or farm even if no sales were made, no professional services were rendered, or nothing was actually produced (for example, a farmer who engages in farm maintenance activities; an architect who spends time waiting for clients in his/her office; a fisherman who repairs his boat or nets for future operations; a person who attends a convention or seminar).</i> 3) <i>A person is in the process of setting up a business, farm or professional practice; this includes the buying or installing of equipment, and ordering of supplies in preparation for opening a new business. An unpaid family worker is said to be working if the work contributes directly to a business, farm or professional practice owned or operated by a related member of the same household.</i> | <p>Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (LFS) http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/lfsa_esms.htm</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5873749/KS-BF-03-002-EN.PDF</p> <p>The wording in italics is identical to the LFS definition.</p> <p>Helping family members are considered as "self-employed".</p> <p>Conscripts who performed some work for pay or profit during the reference week are not considered as "employed".</p> <p>People in maternity or paternity leave (understood as an employee benefit that provides paid or unpaid time off work for giving birth and subsequent short term care of the baby) are always considered as "employed".</p> <p>People in full-time parental leave (understood as absence from work to bring up a child of young age for a period which does not fall under the classification of maternity or paternity leave) should be considered as "inactive", unless already registered as "unemployed", in which case this should take priority.</p> <p>People in "subsidised employment" are considered as "employed". It should be understood as employment incentives according to the LMP definitions (§68-§71): <i>Employment incentives (category 4) covers measures that facilitate the recruitment of unemployed persons and other target groups, or help to ensure the continued employment of persons at risk of involuntary job loss. Employment incentives refer to subsidies for open market jobs which might exist or be created without</i></p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| | | | | <p><i>the public subsidy and which will hopefully be sustainable after the end of the subsidy period. The jobs that may be subsidised are usually in the private sector, but public or non-profit sector jobs are eligible too and no distinction is requested. With employment incentives the public money represents a contribution to the labour costs of the person employed and, typically, the majority of the labour costs are still covered by the employer. However, this does not preclude cases where all costs are covered by the public money for a limited period.</i></p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935673/KS-GQ-13-002-EN.PDF</p> <p>The employment status is determined on the date of entering the ESF operation.</p> |
| | 6 | Below 25 years of age | The age of the participant is calculated from the date of birth and determined on the date of entering the ESF operation. | |
| | 7 | Above 54 years of age | The age of the participant is calculated from the date of birth and determined on the date of entering the ESF operation. | |
| | 8 | Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training | "Above 54 years of age" is defined as in the indicator "Above 54 years of age" of which the indicator "Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training" is a sub-group. "unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training" are defined as in the indicators "Unemployed, including long-term unemployed" and "Inactive, not in education or training" respectively. | |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
|--|----|--|--|---|
| | 9 | With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2) | <p><i>ISCED LEVEL 1 - PRIMARY education Programmes at ISCED level 1, or "primary" education, are typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy), and to establish a sound foundation for learning and understanding of core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, preparing for lower secondary education. It focuses on learning at a basic level of complexity with little if any specialisation. Age is typically the only entry requirement at this level. The customary or legal age of entry is usually neither younger than 5 years nor older than 7 years. For pupils primary education typically lasts until age 10 to 12.</i></p> <p><i>ISCED LEVEL 2 – LOWER SECONDARY education Programmes at ISCED level 2, or "lower secondary" education, are typically designed to build upon the learning outcomes from ISCED level 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which education systems may systematically expand further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer vocational education programmes at ISCED level 2 to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment. Programmes at this level are usually organized around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects. For pupils ISCED level 2 begins after 4 to 7 years of ISCED level 1 education, with 6 years of ISCED level 1 being the most common duration. Students enter ISCED level 2 typically between age 10 and 13 (age 12 being the most common). If a programme spans ISCED levels 1 and 2, the terms elementary education or basic school (stage two/upper grades) are often used.</i></p> | <p>Source: ISCED 2011 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/UNESCO_GC_36C-19_ISCED_EN.pdf The wording in italics is identical to the definition of UNESCO.</p> <p>Participants entering an ESF operation should only be counted once, at the highest ISCED level successfully completed, except for participants who have not yet completed ISCED level 1 and 2, but are still within the national customary or legal age.</p> <p>The educational attainment is determined on the date of entering the operation.</p> |
| | 10 | With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4) | <p><i>ISCED LEVEL 3 – UPPER SECONDARY education Programmes at ISCED level 3, or "upper secondary" education, are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education, or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programmes at this level offer students more varied, specialised and in-depth instruction than programmes at ISCED level 2. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available. For pupils ISCED level 3</i></p> | <p>Source: ISCED 2011 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/UNESCO_GC_36C-19_ISCED_EN.pdf The wording in italics is identical to the definition of UNESCO.</p> <p>Participants entering an ESF operation should only be counted once, at the highest ISCED level successfully completed.</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
|--|----|--|--|---|
| | | | <p><i>begins after 8 to 11 years of education since the beginning of ISCED level 1. Pupils enter this level typically between age 14 and 16. ISCED level 3 programmes usually end 12 or 13 years after the beginning of ISCED level 1 (or around age 18), with 12 years being the most widespread cumulative duration.</i></p> <p><i>ISCED LEVEL 4 - POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY education</i> <i>Post-secondary non-tertiary education provides learning experiences building on secondary education and preparing for labour market entry as well as tertiary education. It aims at the individual acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies below the high level of complexity characteristic of tertiary education. Programmes at ISCED level 4, or "post-secondary non-tertiary" education, are typically designed to provide individuals who completed ISCED level 3 with non-tertiary qualifications that they require for progression to tertiary education or for employment when their ISCED level 3 qualification does not grant such access. For example, graduates from general ISCED level 3 programmes may choose to complete a non-tertiary vocational qualification; or graduates from vocational ISCED level 3 programmes may choose to increase their level of qualification or specialise further. Given the complexity of their content, ISCED level 4 programmes cannot be regarded as tertiary education programmes, although they are clearly post-secondary education. The completion of an ISCED level 3 programme is required to enter ISCED level 4 programmes. Usually, programmes at this level are designed for direct labour market entry. In some education systems, there are general programmes at this level.</i></p> | <p>The educational attainment is determined on the date of entering the operation.</p> |
| | 11 | With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8) | <p><i>ISCED levels 5-8 – SHORT-CYCLE TERTIARY, BACHELOR, MASTER, DOCTORAL OR EQUIVALENT education</i> <i>Programmes at ISCED level 5, or "short-cycle tertiary" education, are often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. Typically, they are practically based, occupationally specific and prepare students to enter the labour market. However, programmes may also provide a pathway to other tertiary education programmes. Academic tertiary education programmes below the level of a bachelor programme or equivalent are also</i></p> | <p>Source: ISCED 2011 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/UNESCO_GC_36C-19_ISCED_EN.pdf The wording in italics is identical to the definition of UNESCO.</p> <p>Participants entering an ESF operation should only be counted once, at the highest ISCED level successfully completed.</p> <p>The educational attainment is determined on the date of entering the operation.</p> |

| | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
|----|---|---|---|
| | | <p><i>classified as ISCED level 5. Entry to ISCED level 5 programmes requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 with access to tertiary education. Programmes at ISCED level 5 have more complex content than programmes in ISCED levels 3 and 4, but they are shorter and usually less theoretically oriented than ISCED level 6 programmes.</i></p> <p><i>Programmes at ISCED level 6, or "bachelor or equivalent", are often designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level are typically theoretically based but may include practical components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice. They are traditionally offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions. Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education. Entry to educational programmes at this level may depend on subject choice and/or grades achieved at ISCED levels 3 and/or 4.</i></p> <p><i>Programmes at ISCED level 7, or "master or equivalent", are often designed to provide participants with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level may have a substantial research component, but do not yet lead to the award of a doctoral qualification.</i></p> <p><i>Programmes at ISCED level 8, or "doctoral or equivalent", are designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification. Programmes at this ISCED level are devoted to advanced study and original research and typically offered only by research-oriented tertiary educational institutions such as universities.</i></p> | |
| 12 | Participants who live in jobless households | <p><i>Jobless households are households where no member is in employment, i.e. all members are either unemployed or inactive.</i></p> <p>"employed" is defined as in the indicator "Employed, including self-employed".</p> <p>"inactive" is defined as in the indicator "Inactive".</p> | <p>Source: Eurostat, Household – social statistics http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Household - social statistics The wording in italics is identical to the Eurostat – social statistics definition.</p> <p>Not interpreted as a household should be: Collective households or institutional households (as opposed to private households). These are for instance: hospitals, old people's</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | | <p><i>A household, is defined as a housekeeping unit or, operationally, as a social unit:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>having common arrangements;</i> <i>sharing household expenses or daily needs;</i> <i>in a shared common residence.</i> <p><i>A household includes either one person living alone or a group of people, not necessarily related, living at the same address with common housekeeping, i.e. sharing at least one meal per day or sharing a living or sitting room.</i></p> | <p>homes, residential homes, prisons, military barracks, religious institutions, boarding houses and workers' hostels, etc.</p> <p>The household situation is determined on the date of entering the operation. It might capture the current household situation or – if unavailable - the status in the year before entering.</p> <p>Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 13 | Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children | <p>"Jobless" and "households" are defined as in the indicator "Participants who live in jobless households" of which the indicator "Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children" is a sub-group.</p> <p>Dependent children refers to <i>individuals aged 0-17 years and 18-24 years if inactive and living with at least one parent.</i></p> | <p>Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Dependent_children</p> <p>The wording in italics is identical to the EU-SILC definition. The age is calculated from the date of birth and determined on the date of the participant entering the ESF operation. The household situation is determined on the date of entering the operation. It might capture the current household situation or – if unavailable - the status in the year before entering.</p> <p>Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 14 | Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children | <p>An "adult" is a person above 18 years of age.</p> <p>"Household" is defined as in the indicator "Participants who live in jobless households".</p> <p>"Dependent children" is defined as in the indicator "Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children".</p> | <p>The age of the participant is calculated from the date of birth and determined on the date of entering the ESF operation. The household situation is determined on the date of entering the operation. It might capture the current household situation or – if unavailable - the status in the year before entering.</p> <p>Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 15 | Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma) | <p><i>Non-national permanent residents in a country, people with a foreign background or nationals from a minority (according to national definitions).</i></p> | <p>Source: LMP http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935673/KS-GQ-13-002-EN.PDF</p> <p>The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition.</p> <p>The definitions of people with foreign background and nationals from a minority are quite heterogeneous across Member States. In the absence of a national definition for "nationals from a minority" MS are invited to adopt the working definitions of the <i>Evaluation of ESF Support for Enhancing Access to the Labour Market and the Social Inclusion of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities (Final Report, table 1.5)</i> http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=701&langId=en&internal_pagesId=619&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=INTERNAL_PAGES</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | | | <p>In the absence of a national definition for "people with a foreign background" the term should be understood according to the following international recommendation (UNECE, 2006; §398): persons with a foreign background are "...those persons whose parents were born outside the country. The persons in this group may or may not have directly experienced an international migration" as cited in: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3888793/5850217/KS-RA-11-019-EN.PDF Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 16 | Participants with disabilities | "Participants with disabilities" are <i>persons who are registered disabled according to national definitions.</i> | <p>Source: LMP http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935673/KS-GQ-13-002-EN.PDF The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition. Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 17 | Other disadvantaged | "Other disadvantaged" refers to any disadvantage(s) not covered by the preceding indicators. | <p>This indicator refers to all kinds of disadvantaged participants, such as people facing social exclusion. An example for the type of participant that can be registered under this indicator is a participant with an ISCED level 0 (which should be understood as not having successfully completed ISCED level 1) and is beyond the national customary exit age of ISCED level 1 that means participants typically over age 10 to 12. Others could be ex-offenders, drug addicts etc.</p> <p>If the data on homelessness and place of residence are collected only for a representative sample of participants and reported in the AIR2016, participants who are homeless or from rural areas should not be counted under the common indicator "other disadvantaged".</p> <p>If these data are collected for all participants and all years, it is recommended that "Homeless or affected by housing exclusion" is reported under this indicator. Participants from rural areas should be considered as disadvantaged only if living in a rural area is considered a disadvantage at national level.</p> <p>Disadvantages relating to gender, the employment status, such as LTU, age or educational achievement of at least ISCED level 1 are covered by the common indicators and should not be counted under this indicator.</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| Common output indicators for | 18 | Homeless or affected by housing exclusion | Persons who are defined as homeless or affected by housing exclusion according to national definitions. | <p>Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> <p>Data under this indicator are to be reported only in the year 2017.</p> <p>Adults living with their parents should not be registered under this indicator unless they are all homeless or living in insecure or in inadequate housing.</p> <p>In the absence of a national definition for "homeless or affected by housing exclusion" the term should be understood according to the ETHOS (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion) definition which is derived from the physical, social and legal interpretation of what a 'home' means. It classifies the following four living circumstances as homelessness or extreme forms of housing exclusion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rooflessness (people living rough and people in emergency accommodation), 2. Houselessness (people in accommodation for the homeless, in women's shelters, in accommodation for immigrants, people due to be released from institutions and people receiving long-term support due to homelessness), 3. Insecure accommodation (people living in insecure tenancies, under threat of eviction or violence), and 4. Inadequate housing (living in unfit housing, non-conventional dwellings e.g. in caravans without adequate access to public utilities such as water, electricity or gas or in situations of extreme overcrowding). <p>(H. Frazer, E. Marlier and I. Nicaise: A Social Inclusion Roadmap for Europe 2020. Garant, 2010, as cited in Commission Staff Working Document "Confronting Homelessness in the European Union" SWD(2013) 42 final)</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9770&langId=en</p> <p>Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 19 | From rural areas | <p>"From rural areas" is to be understood as persons residing in <i>thinly populated areas</i> according to the Degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA category 3) classification.</p> <p>Thinly-populated areas means that more than 50 % of the population lives in rural grid cells.</p> | <p>Source:</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/methodology</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/documents/DEGURBA/DEGURBA_Methodology_DG_REGIO.zip (DEGURBA methodology)</p> <p>Data under this indicator are to be reported only in the year 2017.</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | | | <p>The data shall be collected at the Local Administrative Unit level of LAU 2 (local administration/communes).The DEGURBA category 3 shall be established according to http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/miscellaneous/index.cfm?TargetUrl=DSP_DEGURBA tables under header "for reference year 2012".</p> <p>Persons may cumulate several disadvantages.</p> |
| | 20 | Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations | <p><i>'Social partners' is a term generally used in Europe to refer to representatives of management and labour (employers' organisations and trade unions).</i></p> <p><i>A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information.</i></p> <p>A project is "partially implemented" by social partners or non-governmental organisations when the beneficiary includes - amongst other types of beneficiaries – social partners or non-governmental organisations.</p> | <p>Source: Eurofound http://www.old.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/europeansocialpartners.htm</p> <p>NGO Global Network http://www.ngo.org/ngoinfo/define.html</p> <p>Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the Eurofound and NGO Global Network definitions.</p> <p>This indicator covers beneficiaries initiating and implementing operations as defined in Art. 2 (10) CPR</p> |
| | 21 | Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment | <p><i>Projects with the aim of increasing the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment, thus combating the feminisation of poverty, reducing gender-based segregation and combating gender stereotypes in the labour market and in education and training, promoting reconciliation of work and personal life for all and equal sharing of care responsibilities between men and women.</i></p> | <p>Source: Regulation on the European Social Fund Regulation (EC) No 1304/2013, Art. 7, Promotion of equality between men and women</p> <p>The wording in italics is identical to the ESF Regulation.</p> |
| | 22 | Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local | <p>ESF support enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration at national, regional or local level.</p> | <p>Source: Regulation on the European Social Fund Regulation (EC) No 1304/2013, Art. 3.1.(d)</p> <p>The number of projects aiming to provide support in these areas should be recorded.</p> <p>"Public services" is any public or private body which delivers a public</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | level | | service. This is relevant for some MS since there may exist services that are outsourced by the state to large private or semi-private providers- i.e. private bodies with a public function. |
| | 23 | Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy) | Number of micro, small and medium sized enterprises supported, including social enterprises. <i>An enterprise is considered to be any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form.</i> <i>Staff headcount and financial ceilings determining enterprise categories:</i> <i>1. The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.</i> | Source: Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (2003/361/EC) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003H0361:EN:HTML The wording in italics is identical to the Commission recommendation. Only those SMEs who benefit directly from support should be recorded under the indicator, which typically excludes SMEs being beneficiaries in the sense of Art. 2 CPR. An entity engaged in economic activity should be understood as including cooperative enterprises and enterprises of the social economy. |
| Common immediate result indicators on participants | 24 | Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving | Inactive persons who have received ESF support and who are newly engaged in job searching activities upon leaving the ESF operation. "Inactive" is defined as in the indicator "Inactive". "Engaged in job searching" is to be understood as persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work as defined in the indicator "Unemployed" "upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant. | Persons who have newly registered with the public employment services as jobseeker should always be counted even if they are not immediately available for work. This indicator is to be understood as a change in the employment status upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant being inactive, not engaged in job searching for work, when entering the ESF operation). |
| | 25 | Participants in education/training upon leaving | Persons who have received ESF support and who are newly engaged in education (lifelong learning, formal education) or training activities (off-the-job/in-the-job training, vocational training, etc.) immediately upon leaving the ESF operation. "upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant. | This indicator is to be understood as a change in the situation upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant not being in education/training when entering the ESF operation). The source of funding of the ensuing training is not relevant. |
| | 26 | Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving | Persons who have received ESF support and who gained a qualification upon leaving the ESF operation. <i>Qualification means a formal outcome of an assessment and</i> | Source: European Commission, European Qualifications Framework - https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/glossary The wording in italics is identical to the EQF definition. |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | | <p><i>validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.</i></p> <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | <p>This indicator can be further split by ISCED and EQF levels, registering the highest level achieved. Only qualifications which have been achieved as a result of an ESF intervention should be reported. They should be reported only once per participant/operation.</p> |
| | 27 | Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | <p>Unemployed or inactive persons who have received ESF support, and who are in employment, including self-employment, immediately upon leaving the ESF operation, whereby "Unemployed" is defined as in the indicator "Unemployed, including LTU".</p> <p>"Inactive" is defined as in the indicator "Inactive".</p> <p>"in employment, including self-employment" is defined as in the indicator "Employed, including self-employed".</p> <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | <p>This indicator is to be understood as a change in the employment status upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant being unemployed or inactive when entering the ESF operation).</p> |
| Common immediate result indicators on participants | 28 | Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | <p>"Disadvantaged participants" are defined as in the indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Participants who live in jobless households", - "Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children", - "Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)", - "Participants with disabilities", - "Other disadvantaged" <p>"in job searching" is defined as in the indicator "Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving"</p> <p>"education/training" is defined as in the indicator "Participants in education/training upon leaving".</p> <p>"gaining a qualification" is defined as in the indicator "Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving".</p> <p>"Employment" is defined as in the indicator "Employed, including self-employed".</p> <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | |
| | 29 | Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving the ESF operation. | <p>Unemployed or inactive persons who have received ESF support and who are in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving the ESF operation.</p> | <p>This indicator is to be understood as change in the employment status 6 months after leaving compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant being unemployed or inactive when entering the ESF operation).</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | months after leaving | "Unemployed" is defined as in the indicator "Unemployed, including LTU". "Inactive" is defined as in the indicator "Inactive". "in employment, including self-employment" is defined as in the indicator "Employed, including self-employed". | |
| Common immediate result indicators on participants | 30 | Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving | Persons who are employed when entering ESF support and who, following the support, transitioned from precarious to stable employment, and/or from underemployment to full employment, and/or have moved to a job requiring higher competences/skills/qualifications, entailing more responsibilities, and/or received a promotion 6 months after leaving the ESF operation. Precarious employment should be understood as the "temporary employment" and "work contract of limited duration". <i>Given institutional discrepancies, the concepts of 'temporary employment' and 'work contract of limited duration' describe situations which, in different institutional contexts, may be considered similar. Employees with a limited duration job/contract are employees whose main job will terminate either after a period fixed in advance, or after a period not known in advance, but nevertheless defined by objective criteria, such as the completion of an assignment or the period of absence of an employee temporarily replaced. Underemployment should be understood as involuntary part-time employment. This is when respondents declare that they work part-time because they are unable to find full-time work.</i> | Source: Eurostat, LFS http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_labour_force_survey_-_methodology The wording in italics is identical to the LFS definition. Competences should be understood as <i>the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.</i> http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/living_and_working_in_the_internal_market/c11104_en.htm EQF framework: http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f[0]=im_field_entity_type%3A97# "Qualification" is defined as in the indicator "Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving". In accordance with Council Decision of 21 Oct. 2010 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (2010/707/EU) Guideline no. 7: <i>Member States should tackle labour market segmentation with measures addressing precarious employment, underemployment and undeclared work.</i> http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:308:0046:0051:EN:PDF This indicator is to be understood as a change in the status 6 months after leaving compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation. |
| Common | 31 | Participants above 54 years | "Above 54 years of age" is defined as in the indicator "Above | This indicator is to be understood as a change in the employment status 6 months after leaving compared to the situation when entering |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All indicators relating to persons are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving | 54 years of age" "in employment, including self-employment" is defined as in the indicator "Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving" of which "Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving" is a sub-group. | the ESF operation (with the participant being unemployed or inactive when entering the ESF operation). |
| | 32 | Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving | Disadvantaged persons who are in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving the ESF operation. "Disadvantaged participants" are defined as in the indicators: - "Participants who live in jobless households", - "Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children", - "Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)", - "Participants with disabilities", - "Other disadvantaged". "in employment, including self-employment" is defined as in the indicator "Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving" of which "Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving" is a sub-group. | This indicator is to be understood as a change in the employment status six months after leaving compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant being unemployed or inactive when entering the ESF operation). |

Annex C2 - Definitions for YEI indicators

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All are to be broken down by gender - |
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| Immediate results indicators on participants | 1 | Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention | <p>Unemployed persons who complete the YEI supported intervention.</p> <p>"Unemployed participants" is defined as in the common indicator "Unemployed, including long-term unemployed".</p> <p>Completion of intervention is to be understood that the participant attends the intervention according to schedule until the last day/last session of its scheduled end.</p> | Any participant who does not attend according to schedule and/or drops out before the scheduled end of the intervention, for whatever reason, shall not be recorded hereunder. |
| | 2 | Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving | <p>Unemployed persons who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving the YEI supported operation.</p> <p>"Unemployed participants" is defined as in the common indicator "Unemployed, including long-term unemployed".</p> <p>An offer is defined as a voluntary but conditional promise, submitted for acceptance by an offeror (e.g. employer, training organisation) to the participant, as long as it clearly indicates the offeror's willingness to enter into an agreement under specific terms with the participant and that it is made in a manner that a reasonable person would understand its acceptance will result in a binding agreement. Once the participant accepts it becomes an agreement which legally commits both parties.</p> <p>"employment" is defined as in the common indicator "Employed, including self-employed"</p> <p>"continued education" is to be understood as the enrolment in formal education or training programmes leading to a recognised vocational qualification.</p> <p>Traineeships are generally understood as a limited period of work practice spent at business, public bodies or non-profit institutions, in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment. They generally last a few weeks</p> | The characteristics of the apprenticeship (e.g. occupation, duration, skills to be acquired, wage or allowance) are defined in a training contract or formal agreement between the apprentice and the employer directly or via the education institution. Apprenticeships are normally part of formal education and training at upper secondary level (ISCED 3), the duration of the training is on average 3 years, and a successful completion leads to a nationally recognised qualification in a specific occupation. |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | | | <p>to a few months, and are usually not considered to constitute employment contracts, as their main aim is to provide a training experience, not a paid work opportunity.</p> <p>One may distinguish five major – partly overlapping - types of traineeships:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Traineeships forming an optional or compulsory part of academic and/or vocational curricula (i.e. traineeships during education); 2.) Traineeships which form part of mandatory professional training (e.g. law, medicine, teaching, architecture, accounting, etc.); 3.) Traineeships as part of active labour market policies; 4.) Traineeships agreed between trainee and a host organisation (business, non-profit or government) without the involvement of a third party, generally conducted after completion of studies and/or as part of a job search, known as 'post-studies' or 'open-market' traineeships; 5.) Transnational traineeships, which may include types 1, 2 and 4. <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | |
| | 3 | Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | <p>Unemployed persons who are in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment upon leaving the YEI supported operation.</p> <p>"Unemployed participants" is defined as in the common indicator "Unemployed, including long-term unemployed".</p> <p>"In education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment, including self-employment upon leaving" are defined as in the common indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Participants in education/training upon leaving", - "Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving", - "Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving" <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | <p>This indicator is to be understood as a change in the situation upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant not being in education/training or in employment when entering the ESF operation).</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All are to be broken down by gender - |
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| | 4 | Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention | <p>Long-term unemployed persons who complete the YEI supported intervention.</p> <p>"Long-term unemployed participants" is defined as in the common indicator "Long-term unemployed".</p> <p>Completion of intervention is to be understood that the participant attends the intervention according to schedule until the last day/last session of its scheduled end.</p> | <p>Any participant who does not attend according to schedule and/or drops out before the scheduled end of the intervention, for whatever reason, shall not be recorded hereunder.</p> |
| | 5 | Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving | <p>Long-term unemployed persons who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving the YEI supported operation.</p> <p>"Long-term unemployed participants" is defined as in the common indicator "Long-term unemployed".</p> <p>"offer", "continued education", "apprenticeship" and "traineeship" are defined as in the indicator "Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving."</p> <p>"employment" is defined as in the common indicator "Employed, including self-employed"</p> <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | |
| | 6 | Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | <p>Long-term unemployed persons who are in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment upon leaving the YEI supported operation.</p> <p>"Long-term unemployed participants" is defined as in the common indicator "Long-term unemployed".</p> <p>"in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment upon leaving" are defined as in the common indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Participants in education/training upon leaving", - "Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving", - "Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving". | <p>This indicator is to be understood as a change in the situation upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant not being in education/training or in employment when entering the ESF operation).</p> |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All are to be broken down by gender - |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| | | | "upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant. | |
| | 7 | Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention | <p>Inactive persons not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention.</p> <p>"Inactive participants not in education or training" is defined as in the common indicator "Inactive, not in education or training ".</p> <p>Completion of intervention is to be understood that the participant attends the intervention according to schedule until the last day/last session of its scheduled end.</p> | Any participant who does not attend according to schedule and/or drops out before the scheduled end of the intervention, for whatever reason, shall not be recorded hereunder. |
| | 8 | Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving | <p>Inactive persons not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving the YEI supported operation.</p> <p>"Inactive participants not in education or training" is defined as in the common indicator "Inactive, not in education or training ".</p> <p>"offer", "continued education", "apprenticeship" and "traineeship" are defined as in the indicator "Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving."</p> <p>"employment" is defined as in the common indicator "Employed, including self-employed"</p> <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | |
| Longer term result indicators on participants | 9 | Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving | <p>Inactive persons not in education or training who are in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment upon leaving the YEI supported operation.</p> <p>"Inactive participants not in education or training" are defined as in the common indicator "Inactive, not in education or training".</p> <p>"in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment upon leaving" are defined as in the common indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Participants in education/training upon leaving", - "Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving", | This indicator is to be understood as a change in the situation upon leaving, compared to the situation when entering the ESF operation (with the participant not being in education/training or in employment when entering the ESF operation). |

| | | Indicator | Definitions | Source of the definition and additional comments- All are to be broken down by gender - |
|--|----|--|--|--|
| | | | <p>- "Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving"</p> <p>"upon leaving" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the exit date of the participant.</p> | |
| | 10 | Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving | <p>Persons who have received YEI support and who are in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving the YEI operation.</p> <p>"continued education", "apprenticeship" and "traineeship" are defined as in the YEI indicator "Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving"</p> <p>"training programmes leading to a qualification" are to be understood as training aiming at a qualification as defined in the common indicator "Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving"</p> | |
| | 11 | Participants in employment, six months after leaving | <p>Persons who have received YEI support and who are in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving the YEI operation.</p> <p>"in employment, including self-employment" is defined as in the common indicator "Employed, including self-employed".</p> | |
| | 12 | Participants in self-employment six months after leaving | <p>"Participants in self-employment six months after leaving" is a sub-category of the YEI indicator "Participants in employment, six months after leaving"</p> | |

Annex D - Practical Guidance on data collection and validation (separate document)

Annex E - Further guidance documents

- [Guidance Document on Indicators of Public Administration Capacity Building - Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - European Social Fund](#)
- [Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans - Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund](#)
- [Guidance on Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative](#)

Annex F - Changes to the 2014 September version of the guidance

Compared to the version of the Guidance document on the Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - European Social Fund published on 30 September 2014, this updated version contains the following changes.

- A disclaimer has been added on the front page.
- In section 3.1.1. *Common output indicators*, on page 9-10, from paragraph 7 onwards, the minimum requirement concerning the data collection for the common indicators "homeless or affected by housing exclusion" and "from rural areas" has been clarified, and a recommendation for the treatment of these data under the common indicator "Other disadvantaged" has been included.
- In section 3.4.1. *Data recording and storage*, on page 17, in paragraph 5 "gender" has been deleted.
- In section 3.4.2. *Representative sampling*, on page 18-20, the break-downs in which the indicators are reported as well as the reference populations and sub-groups according to which the representativeness of the samples is to be ensured have been clarified; documentation requirements have been added; and precision thresholds have been changed.
- In section 3.4.3. *Data quality*, on page 20, in paragraph 4 a reference to Article 5(1) of the ESF Regulation and common output and result indicators has been added. In the 5th paragraph, a reference to the AIR model has been added ("This requirement is also explained in the definition of the total number of participants ("participants with complete data records including all personal non-sensitive data") in the model of the Annual Implementation Report.").
- In section 4.3. Evaluation during the programming period, on page 27, the wording of the obligation of carrying out evaluations has been brought fully in line with that in Article 56(3).
- In *Annex B - List of Common and YEI indicators*, in table 2.2. *Longer-term result indicators*, on page 34, "household situation" has been added to the characteristics regarding the representativeness of the samples in the row for the longer-term result indicator "disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving**".
- Also in *Annex B*, in the section *ESF Regulation Annex II - YEI Indicators - applicable only to YEI OPs/priorities/parts of priorities*, in table 2. *Longer-term result indicators*, on page 38-39, long-term unemployed ("LTU") has been deleted from among the characteristics regarding representativeness of the samples.
- In *Annex C1 - Definitions for Common ESF Indicators*, from page 40, links to webpages with sources of definitions have been updated.