

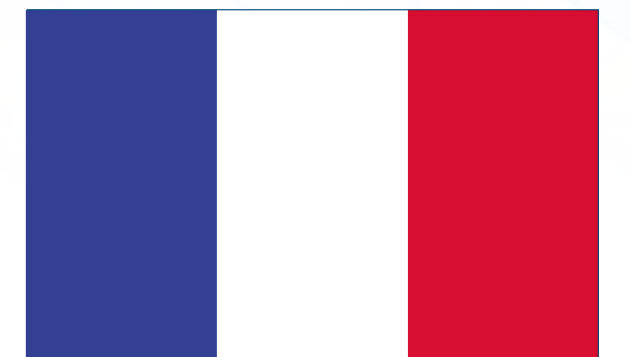
th CONFERENCE on the Evaluation of EU Cohesion Policy

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Shaping Transitions with Evidence



Impact assessment of axis 1 of the national ESF operational programme : 'Employment and Social Inclusion' (employment, entrepreneurship, school dropout reduction and prevention)



General Delegation for Employment and Professional Training
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration

FUND COVERED

- ESF

PROGRAMMING PERIOD

- 2014-2020

PROGRAMME COVERED

- The national OP ESF 'Employment and Social Inclusion'- FRANCE

THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

- TO8 and TO10

TYPE OF EVALUATION

- Impact



YEAR OF COMPLETION

- 2020

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Have ESF operations benefited the target people of the ESF PON ?
- Has the ESF made it possible to conduct certain experiments, introduce new intervention methods?
- What is the impact of the various co-financed schemes on improving the situation of participants?
- How efficient are the co-financed schemes?
- Does the ESF ultimately help to increase the number of job seekers or those who are not in the labour force, entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs, school leavers participating in prevention actions?

METHODOLOGY USED

- Reviews of written material on each issue (IP) of priority Axis 1
- Identification of a typology of actions by priority and identification of cause-effect relationships
- 8 operation studies
- Survey of business creators/buyers
- Collection of 11 "paths" of young school dropouts
- Interviews with 40 different stakeholders (DGEFP, DIRECCTE, operator networks, etc.).

DATA SOURCES

- ESF monitoring and management data
- Long term indicators survey, 2019.

MAIN FINDINGS

In November 2019, 1,516 operations were planned, amounting to €275.5 M in EU credits with a financing total of €617 M for the IPs 8.1 (access to employment), 8.3 (self-employment and entrepreneurship) and 10.1 (early school leaving prevention and equal access to good quality early-childhood) of the ESF NOP priority area 1.

- **468,393 participants took part in 1,230 operations.** More than three quarters of the participants (76%) and nearly half of the total fall under IP 8.1 operations
- **Young people form a major cohort of this priority area :** 82% of the participants in priority area 1 were less than 30 years of age, 46% had a level of education below secondary school. 75% were unemployed and 18% were economically inactive
- **The cohorts largely match those that the NOP targeted,** and reviewing the analysed documentation alongside the displayed NOP objectives shows overall consistency with each investment priority. The levers activated through these financing operations were those recognised as the most suitable for responding to the issues addressed
- The ESF credits for NOP priority area 1 actually help to **support and expand an assistance offer for unemployed and inactive persons as part of the AIJ (intensive support for young people)** as well as localised operations for the targeted parts in segments of these groups or issues also concerning business creation/takeover by relying mainly on the major national networks already in existence. Likewise, **the ESF credits help to quantitatively develop a school dropout prevention/return-to-school offer** that the ordinary credits cannot sufficiently support.

At the end of the operations, 42% of participants found employment and 13% entered vocational programmes while 4% earned skill certification.

- For IP 8.1 (Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people), the jobseekers and inactive people that made up 96% of the participants at the beginning, account for only 50% when the operations ended. But **these results vary significantly according to the types of actions.** The correlation of these results with the costs/participants brings into relief **different levels of efficiency:** inexpensive actions that have favourable results, more "expensive" actions with results positioned in the midrange are less favourable. These differences must lead the managing authorities to more closely analyse the challenges found in each cohort to determine the right higher-value level to be expected from the ESF (needs not covered, trigger effects, intensification needs for actions)

- For IP 8.3 (self-employment and entrepreneurship), the conducted survey highlights a high rate of satisfaction (88%) with the assistance, 30% when also considering the determining factor of this assistance in solidifying their project. At the end of the operations, the employment rate reached 58%, which means that the proportion of unemployed and inactive persons went from 76% to 41% at the end
- For IP 10.1 (School dropout prevention), 80% of the participants entered a vocational programme at the end of the operations, **with the priority of the actions focused on keeping the participants from this cohort in school rather than providing them with access to employment.** The operations are based on operators with diverse statuses that also have differences in result and costs
- **The justification and reporting constraints** as well as the "massive" nature of the ESF's intervention favours service offers that come from financially solid organisations that are familiar with the ESF's framework and **mobilise this resource to increase their assistance capacities rather than take the risk on innovations viewed as potentially harmful to their financial stability.**

CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations for optimising the deployment of the next NOP

- Establish a credit distribution strategy on a regional level that best accounts for the reality of local unemployment situations
- Ensure that the human resources assigned to the ESF's management match the stakes
- Look to effectively take into account all of the targeted cohorts, beyond the cohort of young people, even if it represents a fundamental challenge in the fight against unemployment
- Make the purposes and eligibility criteria for the different components of the NOP clearer to encourage a more strategic approach from the stakeholders
- Call on the leaders of associative networks involved at national level so they support their members in mobilising the ESF
- Dedicate a part of the credits for innovative actions by lifting financial and administrative risks that have impeded their deployment up until now
- Complement the performance monitoring of the NOP with a detailed action efficiency analysis (by way of actions, type of recipients, etc.)

LINKS

<http://www.fse.gouv.fr/evaluations> : Evaluation d'impact de l'axe 1 du PON FSE
<http://www.fse.gouv.fr/les-jeudis-du-fse> : Le FSE et la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire
<http://www.fse.gouv.fr/dossiers-thematiques/lutte-contre-le-decrochage-scolaire-des-initiatives-financees-par-le-fse>