

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND



Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

SWEDEN

SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 407 million euro has been allocated to such operations in Sweden, with 83 444 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Sweden.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



► Sweden has had a low overall rate of **early school leaving (ESL)**, achieving the EU target rate of 10% or lower. However, the rate has risen consistently since 2014. The ESL rate is higher amongst men (10.4%) and migrants (17.7%) in 2018, compared to the national average of 9.3%.

► **Educational quality** and achievements in reading, mathematics and science are just above the OECD and EU average.

► The **tertiary educational attainment rate** is very high overall (52% in 2018 compared to the EU average of 40.7%), with women having a much higher attainment rate than men (59.1% compared to 45.3% in 2018).

► The rate of **participation of the adult population in education and training** is the highest in the EU.

► Sweden was one of only two EU Member States to record an increase between 2014 and 2017 in central government **expenditure on education** as a percentage of GDP. The rate was 6.7% in 2017, whereas the EU28 average was 4.6%.

► Sweden has adopted measures to facilitate the **transition from school to work** (apprenticeships reform, including an 'apprentice salary') in order to ensure the supply of young people with the necessary skills for successful integration into the labour market.

Tertiary educational attainment rate (%)
(30-34 year olds)



Participation rate in education and training by adults
aged 25-64 (%) (last 4 weeks)



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ESF European Social Fund

TO10 Thematic Objective 10

OP Operational Programme

IP Investment Priority

* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN SWEDEN

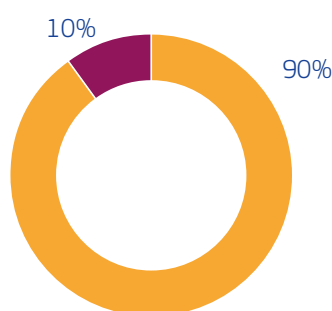
- ▶ In Sweden there are **8** ESF Operational Programmes that invest in T010.
- ▶ The **National Operational Programme ESF for investments in growth and employment 2014 – 2020** operates in **eight geographical regions** of Sweden with an action plan for each region and an action plan at national level.
- ▶ The overarching objectives of the ESF in Sweden are **skills development, improved transition to work, and the Youth Employment Initiative**.
- ▶ The OP has the following priorities relevant to T010:
 - ▶ **Strengthening equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal contexts**, raising the skills of the workforce, promoting flexible learning pathways including through professional guidance and validation of acquired competence;
 - ▶ **Improving the relevance of education to the labour market**, facilitating the transition from training to work, reinforcing vet systems and their quality; including through mechanisms to anticipate skills needs, adaptation of the curricula and the establishment and development of work-based systems for learning, including systems with both theory and practice and apprenticeship schemes.
- ▶ All EU Structural Funds in Sweden, including the ESF, take into account the **EU's macro-regional Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region**.

28% of total ESF funding¹...

€407 758 952

...is allocated to the following T010 investment priorities: **enhancing access to lifelong learning (90%)**, and **improving the labour market relevance of education and training (10%)**.

Allocation of ESF T010 funds



○ Enhancing access to lifelong learning - IP10.iii

○ Improving the labour market relevance of education and training - IP10.iv

STATE OF PLAY

66% of planned resources under T010 had been allocated in 2018, with 22% spent.

Number of overall participations in T010 operations by the end of 2018:

83 444

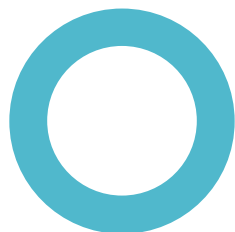
- ▶ **83 444** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning
- ▶ Operations to improve the labour market relevance of education and training are targeted at institutions, not individuals

¹ This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



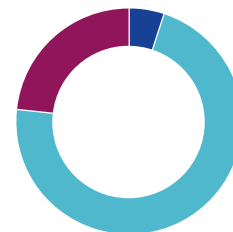
0% (24) Unemployed
 0% (41) Inactive²
 100% (82 524) Employed

Sex

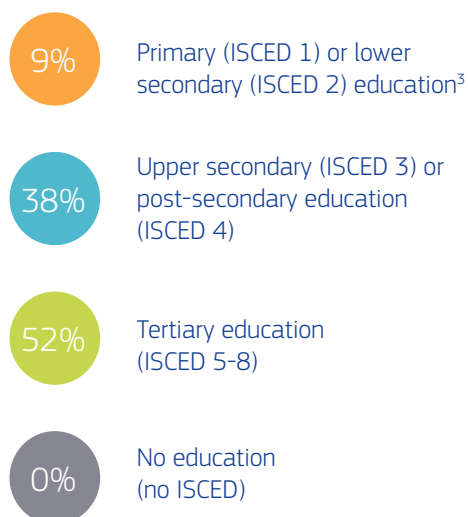
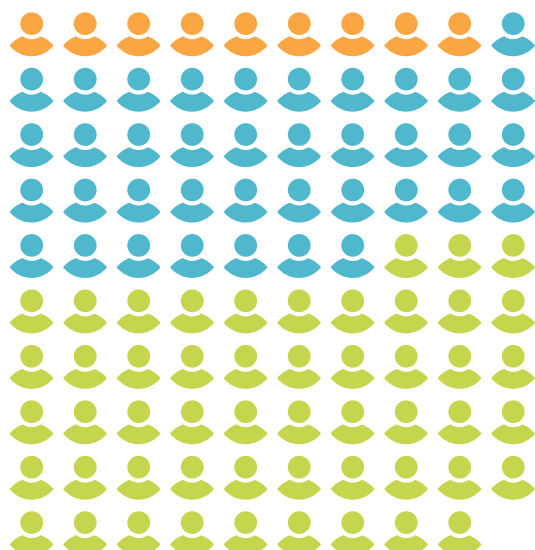


69% Women
 52% Men

Age



5% (3 858) <25 years
 71% (59 636) 25-54 years
 23% (19 095) >54 years



18 215
Migrants

594
Other disadvantaged

185
Participants with disabilities

0
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Sweden include⁴:

- ▶ **1 777** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
 - ▶ **1** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
 - ▶ **1 763** participants gained a qualification
 - ▶ **13** participants moved into employment upon leaving

² The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

³ ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

⁴ Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

► Early school leaving

One of the reasons why ESL has not been considered a priority in the past is that many early school leavers re-enter education through adult learning or vocational education and training within five years after dropping out from school. However, given the increased ESL rate since 2014, ESF funding could focus more on this issue.

► Coordination with local partners

Efficiency in the use of ESF resources has increased when operations are coordinated in conjunction with SALAR, the Swedish association of regional and municipal authorities. This has been particularly evident in operations to assist migrants and early school leavers, for example, the City of Malmö provides digital support for adult second language learners of Swedish.

► Flexibility and responsiveness

The focus of ESF funding in Sweden was adapted after the beginning of the programming period to incorporate the need to integrate migrants into the labour market. Migrants emerged as a target group particularly in need of support in Sweden with the onset of the migration crisis from 2015.

► Coherence

ESF operations are well aligned with the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The ESF and FEAD are managed by the same Managing Authority, and the YEI is part of the ESF OP.

► Data collection

The Swedish authorities are investigating ways to collect better feedback from participants on ESF operations, particularly young men, people who are unemployed or outside the labour force, and people from a migrant background. The feedback is necessary in order to measure and improve the long-term effectiveness of ESF operations.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

► DigiLitt.kom

This operation in Southern Sweden aims to improve the digital competences of staff working in social care and health care, for example, in using computers and tablets and in finding information on the internet. Businesses in these sectors will increasingly have to adapt to new technologies and this project supports these businesses in promoting continuous learning for their employees.

► Kunskap äger

Rescue service staff in Halmstad in Western Sweden received training in equality, gender equity and non-discrimination principles as part of this ESF operation. By undergoing the training, the staff and municipal authorities contributed to the EU goals of equality and anti-discrimination in the labour market and in society, as well as to regional, national and European goals of inclusive growth.

► STUNS micro and small enterprises

Micro and small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) make up over 90% of the businesses in the Västmanland and Örebro counties in Sweden. While the professional knowledge of these MSMEs is good, they may lack knowledge of how to develop their businesses and do not have the resources to hire specialists in different areas of expertise. This ESF operation provides business support services to MSME owners and entrepreneurs to help them identify and address knowledge and competence needs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Details of the ESF evaluation system in Sweden: <https://www.esf.se/Resultat/Utvarderingar/programutvardering/>

European Commission, Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

The ESF in Sweden: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=396&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Sweden: <https://www.esf.se/Om-ESF-radet/>

